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An Unforgetting Wrath:  
Dynastic Conflicts, Vendetta Politics, and Civil War Violence

By

Joseph M. Gardner

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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in the

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of the

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Committee in charge:

Dr. Steven Weber, Chair

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Abstract

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This dissertation analyzes the impact of dynasticism on contemporary political violence. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, I seek to demonstrate that high levels of dynasticism and kinship-centered politics increase a state's vulnerability to large-scale outbreaks of civil war violence.

In my first chapter, I briefly review two current strands of political science research: analyses of the causes and contributors of civil wars, and the much smaller literature on the influence of dynasticism on contemporary politics. I then synthesize these research agendas to argue that political systems heavily shaped by kinship and dynasticism may be particularly prone to feuding and vendettas between political elites. I further hypothesize that this feuding culture can in turn increase a heavily dynastic state's vulnerability to broader civil war conflicts.

In my second chapter, I elaborate on the theoretical mechanisms underlying this hypothesis. I combine insights from research into ethnic violence with a widespread review of kinship literature drawn from other social science fields such as anthropology, sociology, economics, and psychology. I show that the three main theoretical approaches emphasized in the ethnic conflict literature (essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism) can also be applied to the smaller scale of kinship-based conflict and explore the potential implications of each theoretical approach.

In my third chapter, I rely on the detailed genealogical and conflict records surrounding the dynastic relations of early modern European monarchies to test the effectiveness of each theoretical lens. Based on a statistical analysis of the correlation between relatedness and the likelihood of wars between monarchs, I argue that wars between monarchs were primarily shaped by social expectations regarding which kin merited loyalty and which constituted untrustworthy inheritance threats. From this, I conclude that a constructivist approach focusing on cultural norms and kin identities is likely to most effectively capture the causes of kinship-based conflict.

In my fourth chapter, I extend my analysis into the present day through a case study of dynastic politics in the Philippines and its relationship with that country's ongoing civil war conflicts. I statistically analyze the correlation between the prevalence of dynasticism among each Philippine province's elected officials, on the one hand, with sub-state variation in civil war conflict onsets, on the other. I find a significant positive relationship between increased conflict and the polarization of political offices between competing dynasties in a province. I conclude that this evidence is consistent with the theory that provinces split between competing dynastic elites tend to see this conflict spill over into civil war incidents through competing dynasties' destabilizing political feuds.

In my fifth chapter, I test whether the relationship between kinship and political conflict can be generalized beyond the Philippines. I use consanguineous marriage, the practice of endogamously marrying cousins or other close relatives, as a proxy for the type of strong kinship-focused traditions associated with dynasticism. Using country-level estimates of consanguineous marriage rates and civil war onset data, I find a positive correlation between higher rates of consanguinity and civil war. After eliminating possible alternative explanations, I conclude that there is evidence supporting the theory that particular kinship practices are associated with heightened civil war in a wide variety of countries today.

In my final chapter, I address the salience and importance of this insight for future research and policy planning. I begin with a qualitative case study of the ongoing Yemeni Crisis. Through this case, I show how kinship politics at the heart of the Saleh regime has exacerbated and promoted the country's ongoing civil war. Through this case, I demonstrate that the politics of dynasticism can play a central role in provoking a modern civil war. I conclude with a discussion regarding how academics and policymakers might better understand and address the importance of kinship and its complex relationship with political violence today.

*“Apollo! Oh healer, I call on you,  
Lest holy Artemis make contrary winds for the Danaans,  
Long delays that keep the ship from sailing,  
In her urge for a second sacrifice,  
One with no music, no feasting,  
An architect of feuds born in the family,  
Dissolving wife’s reverence for husband.  
For there stays in wait a fearsome, resurgent,  
Treachorous keeper of the house, an unforgetting wrath,  
That avenges children.”*

- Agamemnon<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, Oxford University Press, 2002 lines 146-155, with slight modifications to enhance the clarity of the excerpt.

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## Glossary of Terms

This dissertation is intended primarily for a political science audience. As such, some of the terminology used in this work – particularly the technical terms describing kin relationships – may be unfamiliar to readers. For the sake of clarity, this glossary has been included to explain certain terms referenced as part of my argument.

**Affinal Kin** – Kin derived from a marriage – whether formal or common-law. Such kin are also referred to as *affines*. The most significant affinal kinship relationship is that between *ego* and their spouse, but all forms of in-law relationships (father-in-law, sister-in-law, etc.) also constitute part of *ego*'s affinal kin network.

**Agnatic Kin** – Kin connected to *ego* through a strictly male line of ancestry; such kin are referred to as *agnates*. In other words, this refers to kin connected through a shared *patriline* – e.g. kin of *ego*'s father's father, father's father's father, etc. Agnates are a subset of *cognatic kin*. See also "*Patriline*," and "*Patrilateral / Matrilateral Kin*."

**Alter** – The object of a described relationship. If we refer to a marriage of a man with his mother's brother's daughter, alter is the female cousin to be wed. Contrast with "*Ego*."

**Bride price / Dower / Dowry**: Any transfer of wealth between a newly married couple and their kin. Practices vary considerably across cultures and time periods, particularly regarding how such wealth is allocated to heirs after the couple's death. A *dowry* is wealth transferred from the bride's family to the groom and/or his kin. A *bride price* (also known as *bride wealth*) is wealth given from the groom's family to the family of the bride. It can be contrasted with a *dower*, which signifies resources transferred directly from the groom's family to the bride herself – typically as a guarantor of income should she be left a widow, or to ensure that resources don't pass to her male kin.

**Cadet Branch** – A branch of a family or kin group distinct from the "main" line. In *patrilineal* societies, a cadet branch typically denotes a line of descendants originating from younger brothers.

**Clan** – In this dissertation I use this term to refer to an extended network of interconnected *families* – several distinct family groups that can nonetheless trace their common ancestry and view themselves as more closely interconnected to one another than the broader kin network. For example, in the contemporary United States, we might speak of the contemporary "Trump clan" as including Donald Trump and his offspring, despite some of them having spouses and families of their own – one of which, the Kushner's, does not retain the Trump name. This usage does not match prevailing terminology among kinship anthropologists, but matches usage of the term in the Philippines, where several closely-knit families connected through bonds of family and shared descent often operate as a unified clan.

**Cognatic Kin** – Kin related through any combination of male and female ancestors – in other words, the entirety of the *natal kin* relationships *ego* acquires directly through birth, rather than through any links of marriage or fictive relationships. Included as subsets within the population of *ego*'s *cognates* are their *agnatic kin*, who share a common *patriline*, and their *uterine kin*, who are related through a strictly female line of descent and thus share a common *matriline*. Contrast with "*Agnatic Kin*." See also "*Patriline*," and "*Patrilateral / Matrilateral Kin*."

**Collateral Kin** – Any genetically related kin that are not direct ancestors or descendants of one another. All collateral kin derive ultimately from siblings or half-siblings and the respective descendants of each. Contrast with "*Lineal Kin*."

**Consanguineous Marriage** – This term refers to a type of *endogamy* in which spouses are selected among individuals with a preexisting kinship link. Specific norms and taboos vary widely across cultures, but common types of marriage include *avunculate marriage* between an uncle and a niece, *cross-cousin marriage* where the children of opposite sex siblings marry (e.g. *ego* marries the child of their father's sister or their mother's brother), and *parallel-cousin marriages* between the children of same-sex siblings (e.g. *ego* marries the child of their father's brother or mother's sister).

### Glossary of Terms (Continued)

**Dynastic Capture:** I use this term to refer to instances in which a position that was initially designed to be acquired through personal accomplishments – such as an elected office in a democracy – becomes effectively dominated by one or more political *dynasties*. This typically occurs through informal means of influence and can vary substantially from a single instance of multiple family members using their connections to support one another’s political ambitions, to an office becoming an effectively inherited position.

**Dynasty** – A dynasty is a *family* or *clan* that has successfully integrated its kin and familial network into the political selection and governance process.

**Ego** – The central subject whose relationship is being described. If we refer to a man’s marriage to his mother’s brother’s daughter, for example, ego is the male who is marrying his female cousin. *Compare to “Alter.”*

**Endogamy** – The process of marrying within the same group; the reverse, involving any marriage that is notably “outside” a given group, is *exogamy*. The general process of individuals within a society finding and selecting endogamous mates based on a given criterion – such as wealth or education level – is known as *assortative mating*. There are multiple important variations of the practice: endogamy along class and wealth lines is known as *homogamy* (in contrast to *hypergamy* – marriage to someone of a higher class – or to *hypogamy* – marriage to someone of a lower class). Marriage to people in the same small geographic area is a *homolocal marriage*. And most relevant for this dissertation (see Chapter 6), marriages within the same kin network are *consanguineous marriages*.

**Family / Familial Kin** –I use this term, derived from Latin terminology for a household servant, to highlight those kin in a societally privileged and emphasized relationship, as opposed to more *peripheral kin*. This term is necessarily ambiguous and subject to debate. Examples include kin with a shared patriline in aristocratic Europe, members of a small and close-knit tribe in a highly tribal society, or the nuclear family living together in a household in the contemporary United States. *Contrast with “Peripheral Kin.”*

**Fictive Kin** – Those “kin-like” relationships that are not based on either shared genetic relatedness (see *Lineal Kin* and *Collateral Kin*) or a culturally or legally recognized marital relationship (see *Affinal Kin*). Examples might include adopted children, long-term dating relationships without marital status, close family friendships or trusted neighbors, religious ties such as godparents, and any other type of relationship conceptualized by its participants or by a give society or subculture in terms comparable to a biological or legal kin relationship.

**Kinship** – The network of social relationships and identities that cultures or individuals use to map out genetic relationships, along with other associations that are viewed as being comparable or analogical to these biological ties. Kin relationships can be divided between *Affinal*, *Collateral*, *Fictive*, and *Lineal Kin*. They can be conceptualized as a web of linkages with a *family* at the center, and links to more *peripheral kin* spreading outward from this center. The totality of these kinship ties, as recognized by a given set of actors, constitute a *kin network*.

**Lineal Kin** – All kin that are direct ancestors or descendants of one another. *Contrast with “Collateral Kin.”*

**Partible Inheritance** – Inheritance systems that divide up wealth and property relatively equally across multiple heirs. *Contrast with “Unitary Inheritance.”*

**Patrilateral / Matrilateral Kin** – Patrilateral kin are those kin connected to ego via ego’s father – i.e. kin associated with both the father’s father and the father’s mother. Matrilateral kin are the equivalent kin on ego’s mother’s side – i.e. kin tied to both mother’s father and mother’s mother. *See also “Agnatic Kin”; contrast with “Patriline.”*

### **Glossary of Terms (Concluded)**

**Patriline** – A line of descent that is passed down through the exclusively male, or *agnatic*, line of ancestry - this is often acknowledged through a *patronym*, i.e. a “family name” as applied in the majority of contemporary societies. Kin that share the same patriline (i.e. ego’s agnates) are also known as *patrilineal kin*. The equivalent in societies where exclusively female lines of descent are also acknowledged are *matrilineal kin*, but these are comparatively rare in contemporary societies. It is far more common to speak of *matrilateral kin* (i.e. all the kin on the mother’s side) or even *ego’s mother’s patriline* (such as in Western societies’ references to a mother’s maiden name – a mother’s patronym). *See also* “*Agnatic Kin*”; *contrast with* “*Patrilateral / Matrilateral Kin*”

**Peripheral Kin** – In this dissertation, I use this term to refer to any kinship ties outside of the culturally prioritized central *family* relationships. There are almost universally degrees of peripherality among these kin – in some societies, such as those with a *segmentary kinship system*, there will be clear levels of hierarchy prioritizing some kin above others, while in other societies peripheral kin ties may gradually fade as kin grow more distant in biological relatedness and geographic distance. At its outer edges, peripheral kinship fades into more amorphous loyalties to ethnicity and nation.

**Segmentary Kinship Systems:** A term used to define societies in which hierarchies of kin identity and expected kin loyalties are well-defined and used to segment out kin alliances. Best defined by the cliché of “My brother and I against our cousin, my cousin and I against our *tribe*, my *tribe* and I against strangers.” In practice, segmentary kin systems shape identities but loyalty ideals may diverge sharply from actual political behavior – especially at more peripheral levels.

**Tribes:** In this work, I use this term to refer to a subset of peripheral kin that view themselves as sharing a common kin identity more cohesive than that of a broader ethnic group, but whose members cannot clearly trace their common ancestry to one another. Tribes do not exist in all societies, and they are often associated with *segmentary kinship systems*, a generally-recognized internal status hierarchy with leading families at the top, and communally owned land. This usage does not necessarily fit with anthropological conventions, but matches usage of the term in Yemen and the wider Arab world – the primary context in which I use the term in this dissertation.

**Unitary Inheritance** – Inheritance systems that avoid dividing up inherited wealth by bestowing it primarily on a single heir. The most common form in aristocratic Europe has been *primogeniture*, in which inheritance was primarily bestowed on the eldest child (until recently, this was almost universally with a preference for male offspring over female). *Salic Law* represents a notable sub-category of primogeniture in which females and their descendants had no formal legal right to inheritance – for example, if a noble died with only daughters, property would not pass to them, but instead inheritance would work its way back through his ancestors until an appropriate heir could be found that traced his ancestry through an unbroken male line to a younger brother of the deceased’s ancestors. *Contrast with* “*Partible Inheritance*.”

**Vendetta** – Also known as a *blood feud*, signifies a cultural norm demanding the use of reciprocal communal violence to maintain a *family* or *kin network’s* honor after a perceived slight or crime has occurred. The term originally derives from Italian, in reference to the bitter feuds common among Sicilian and Corsican families. Equivalent terms include *rido* in the Philippines, *thar* in Yemen and other Arab states, *svadja* among Montenegrins (along with equivalent terms in neighboring Balkans societies), and *badal* among Pashtuns. Vendetta traditions are often accompanied by elaborate rules of *restorative justice* to resolve outstanding conflicts when both sides agree to end their conflict – examples include the paying of a *wergild* or *blood price*, or the negotiation of a marriage and accompanying exchange of gifts to bring the families together.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction:

### Blood Politics

*“Two households, both alike in dignity  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life  
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows  
Do with their death bury their parents’ strife.”*

*William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, Prologue*

**Abstract:** In this introductory chapter, I lay out the questions and general concepts that will guide the rest of this dissertation. Based on insights initially developed through fieldwork research, I observe that dynastic politics remains a powerful and influential force that is often overlooked by political scientists. I further hypothesize that this observation has potentially important implications for our understanding of civil war violence and related phenomena. I proceed to analyze the concept of dynastic politics, and review how prior political science literature has addressed the political impact of dynasties, family networks, and related institutions. Next, I review the current state of the literature on the causes of civil war violence and discuss in general terms how dynasticism might be expected to influence modern civil wars. I finish this chapter with an overview and summary of the rest of the dissertation, which will seek to provide detailed evidence and analysis supporting my hypothesis that dynasticism is a significant and understudied driver of contemporary civil wars.

### Introduction

The political institutions and social forces that define our modern world trace their ultimate origins, in large part, to a foundation built upon human beings’ conception of kinship. Far from living in the state of constant solipsism and enmity as imagined by Hobbes,<sup>1</sup> early humans evolved already possessing extensive social instincts and impulses. Most of these social instincts – like those of our great ape relatives – centered on cooperation and communication with the extended kin networks that comprised much of primordial humanity’s social horizon.<sup>2</sup> As human society gradually grew in complexity and size, our relationships with our kin network slowly transformed from the overriding mode of human social interaction to but one of many types of interpersonal social exchanges, albeit often still among the central relationships for most individuals.<sup>3</sup> But kinship’s foundational role in human society continues to shape our language, our institutions, and our political concepts in subtle and pervasive ways into the present day. The term we use for our global system of trade and production – *economics* – refers originally to the management of household finances, and derives from Aristotle’s treatise on the proper

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<sup>1</sup> “The condition of Man... is a condition of Warre of every one against every one,” Hobbes 2006 p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Gough 1971, Chapais 2009, Vigilant et al. 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Maynes and Waltner 2012.

organization of a family's resources and how that structure parallels a ruler's organization of his kingdom.<sup>4</sup> The legal institutions of the United States itself (as well as those of other countries emerging out of the United Kingdom's colonial empire) trace their earliest roots back to the Germanic *wergild* system – one of many early restorative justice systems centered around formalizing the payment of restitution for crimes in order to deter families from engaging in prolonged blood feuds.<sup>5</sup> Even the edifice of the nation-state itself – perhaps the quintessential “modern” political institution – shares deep conceptual ties with historical Western European thinking about dynastic and familial relationships. The concept of a *nation*, with its implications of a shared ethno-linguistic confraternity, is etymologically derived from the Latin *natio*, meaning “birth.” Similar familial terminology continues to be utilized in a wide variety of contexts in reference to individuals' relationship to the state – as in references to a “fatherland,” or “motherland,” and in our term for “patriotism,” which derives from the Greek term for fatherhood.<sup>6</sup> And the Weberian conception of statehood itself traces its ultimate origins back to historically familial concepts – Weber, after all, emphasizes the issue of sovereignty as the primary characteristic of statehood, a concept that in Western thought derives directly from monarchical practices regarding the personal rights and duties derived from a sovereign ruler's birthright inheritance over a given territory.<sup>7</sup>

The political practice of warfare is similarly invested with deep historical associations with kin- and family-based relationships. Humanity's earliest organized “wars” were likely tribal conflicts among extended kin groups. Once again, we can look to the behavior of our close primate relatives – such as in the aggressive fights observed between neighboring chimpanzee bands – and hypothesize that the kin-based roots of warfare extend back further than the evolution of modern humans.<sup>8</sup> Ancient epics traced civilization-defining wars back to familial relations among the ruling elites – the Iliad of Homeric Greece tells the tale of a war instigated by failed marriage negotiations,<sup>9</sup> while India's Mahabharata recounts an epochal struggle between rival dynasties. The Roman Empire traced its own origins back to the rape of the Sabine women and the eventual marriages between Roman and Sabine populations that were negotiated as restitution for the raid. The Hebrew Bible, too, is replete with themes calling back to the tribal Israelite society from which it emerged – themes which often conflate family ties with brutal violence. This is perhaps best exemplified in the vengeance narrative of Genesis 34, which

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<sup>4</sup> Economics, in Aristotle's conceptualization, studied man “under the social relations of the family,” just as politics was the study of man under the social relations of the polis; Bohn 1853, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Mellinkoff 2004, p. 40 and Bloch 2014 pp. 133-138; this *wergild* system has parallels in the types of restorative justice systems and “blood money” practices that remain prevalent in societies with strong tribal or clan-based organizations. For more on these practices, see Braithwaite 2002 and Johnstone 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson 1987, McClintock 1993, Holper 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Jackson 2007 pp. 49-77.

<sup>8</sup> Keeley 1997; for more on the comparison between early human warfare and chimpanzee patrols, see Wrangham & Glowacki 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, ancient Greek folklore and mythology is replete with examples of family-based violence and vengeance narratives – likely reflecting contemporary norms regarding a family's duty to pursue vendettas against those who target its members. The title of this dissertation itself emerges from another such incident in the broader canon of literature depicting the Trojan War: in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the eponymous king of Mycenae is driven to sacrifice his own daughter Iphigenia to compel the gods to grant him favorable winds to sail to Troy. This act of kin-slaying in turn compels Agamemnon's wife Clytemnestra to take a new lover and plot her husband's demise. For discussion of these revenge narratives and their associations with ancient Greek legal practices, see Patterson 2009 and Gagné 2013 pp. 398-416.

memorably depicts a brutal attack by the Israelites' forefathers against a city after its prince abducted and raped their sister.<sup>10</sup>

Beyond the realm of mythic and legendary narratives, the confluence of warfare and blood relations has continued to shape politics throughout recorded history. The partible inheritance rules of the Babylonian empire, which divided family-owned lands into ever-smaller and less cohesive properties over time, likely contributed to widespread economic disparities and social conflicts among Mesopotamian elites.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the primogeniture system of medieval Europe may have also contributed to violence and disruption – best exemplified by the large numbers of younger sons from noble backgrounds who flocked to the Crusades in the hopes of gaining territories in Muslim lands after being excluded from inheritance at home.<sup>12</sup> Among Muslims themselves, the devastating First Fitna – from which the split between Sunni and Shi'ite branches of Islam emerged – originated in a succession crisis between the Umayyad and Alid dynasties, whose rivalry was itself an extension of generations-old tensions between the Banu Umayya and Banu Hashim clans for dominance of the Quraysh tribe of Mecca.<sup>13</sup> And when both Christian and Muslim civilization came under assault from the expanding Mongol Empire, it was the specific traditions of Mongol dynastic succession that spared Europe from a more concerted and aggressive assault.<sup>14</sup>

The strong interrelationship between dynastic politics and political violence certainly appears to have declined in recent centuries alongside the waning of old aristocratic political systems, but kinship politics' violent consequences have never entirely disappeared from the world stage. The close family ties between Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, King George V of the United Kingdom, and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia likely contributed to the diplomatic misperceptions and mixed signals that helped drag their nations into the First World War, for example.<sup>15</sup> Even into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, international relations and great power politics are not as clearly divorced from dynastic politics as we may be inclined to believe – as evidenced by President George W. Bush's appeal to an assassination attempt against his father as one reason to distrust Saddam Hussein,<sup>16</sup> or by Chairman Kim Jong-Un's willingness to risk international censure in order to stage a trans-border assassination against his half-brother Jong-Nam rather than allowing him to remain as a potential threat against his rule.<sup>17</sup> Family has also continued to impact non-elites' relationship with warfare and political violence. The United States, perhaps the quintessential "modern" state, has accrued a wide body of folklore in its short history surrounding familial feuds such as that between the Hatfield and McCoy clans – many of them emerging out of simmering resentments brought on by acts of violence during the American Civil War.<sup>18</sup> In contemporary societies, family ties still often play a critical role in individuals'

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the tribal context that permeated Israelite society, see Part I of De Vaux 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Yoffee 1988, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Riley-Smith 1983, Asbridge 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Madelung 1998.

<sup>14</sup> The death of Ogedei Khan in 1241, and subsequent in-fighting between rival Mongolian princes, forced the rapid withdrawal of forces invading Europe (Saunders 2001, pp. 87-89).

<sup>15</sup> For efforts at communications, and the general failure of these efforts to deliver credible political commitments, see Carter 2010. For the broader role of misperception in instigating war, see Levy 1983.

<sup>16</sup> Bush remarked regarding Hussein that "this is the man who tried to kill my dad," while discussing Hussein at a Houston fundraiser in 2002 (Zeleny 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Madden 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Otterbein 2000 and Waller 2012.

decisions to join both formal state militaries and informal militias and insurgencies.<sup>19</sup> This relationship between family and warfare also operates in the opposite direction, so that warfare can have profound effects reshaping individuals' kin relationships – both through disruption and transformation of existing ties,<sup>20</sup> and through the manufacturing of new conceptions of kinship and fraternity in warfare as exemplified in Shakespeare's portrayal of comrades in arms as a "band of brothers."<sup>21</sup>

But does kinship continue to systematically influence contemporary security and warfare on a significant scale in the contemporary world? Or are these examples of kinship's continued salience in warfare merely outlying exceptions, and unreflective of a contemporary political reality that has largely succeeded in privatizing kinship and minimizing its role in security concerns? There is certainly ample reason to believe that kin relationships may have all but lost their capacity to directly drive international relations as they once did. Explicitly monarchical systems, after all, are a rarity today – and of those that continue to exist, the majority have relegated their heads of state to symbolic, peripheral positions.<sup>22</sup> While a great number of contemporary states are still ruled by modern dictators with political power comparable to – or exceeding – the authority of monarchs in earlier centuries, in the vast majority of cases the legitimacy and claim to power of these rulers does not rest directly on their familial heritage and bloodline.<sup>23</sup> This decline of monarchical power in contemporary politics has in turn resulted in the end of the transnational web of dynastic marriage alliances that once dominated international relations; even among the few states still ruled by dynastic monarchies, the strategy of regularly choosing spouses from among the families of other monarchs has largely been abandoned.

If dynasticism still influences contemporary security issues, it is likely to be in a form more similar to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century examples described above: subtle and informal, intertwined with more explicit political motivations and distinct from the direct succession and inheritance disputes that launched wars between great powers in prior centuries. Indeed, when examining the security implications of dynasticism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it is likely that the most fruitful analysis will come not from examining transnational warfare, but through observations of political violence at the sub-state level. At the level of domestic politics, dynasties continue to exert significant influence on local and national institutions in a wide variety of countries into the present day. Even in the most democratic states, informal political dynasties continue to impact voter choice and institutional access. And among less democratic or more economically stratified

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<sup>19</sup> Gibson et al. 2007 discusses the impact of family on propensity to join a formal military. Among insurgent groups and non-state actors, the elaborate strategic incentives surrounding Palestinian suicide bombers offer a particularly explicit pattern of family-based consequences. State sponsors of terrorism such as Baathist Iraq and non-state actors like Hamas have at times offered payments to suicide bombers' families to encourage the practice, while the Israeli government has responded with punitive actions against those same families as a deterrent (Moghadam 2003).

<sup>20</sup> Farhood et al. 1993; another indirect manner by which warfare can reshape family links is through its impact on demographics and domestic life, as in Doepke et al. 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Henry V, Act IV. While this type of comradeship and fraternity among soldiers is often lauded and supported for the sake of unit cohesion, we can also draw parallels between this form of fictive kinship with more predatory practices, such as the recruitment and indoctrination of child soldiers by offering them a surrogate sense of family that they often lacked in their pre-conflict lives – see Brett & Specht 2004.

<sup>22</sup> One report estimates the number of contemporary nations with monarchical heads of state at 42. Of these, only 10 bestow unconstrained power on the ruling monarch. A further 5 states host monarchies with significant but constrained authority. The remaining 27 states have monarchs with purely ceremonial authority; 16 of the states in this final category are members of the British Commonwealth, all of whom recognize the same Windsor dynasty as their sovereign (Dewey & Fisher 2013).

<sup>23</sup> For further discussion on dynasticism in authoritarianism, see Section II of this chapter.



societies, significant inequalities in power, wealth, and influence can persist along familial lines for generations, potentially allowing the most powerful families to maintain a persistent and entrenched influence in local politics.<sup>24</sup> It is certainly plausible to speculate that high levels of dynasticism may make a society more prone to conflict – a society that privileges some families, after all, is also likely to exclude other political actors, potentially generating tense standoffs for influence and political access that can pay dividends for winning families for generations to come.<sup>25</sup>

And indeed, anecdotal reports do suggest that the continuing power of political dynasties and elite families continues to have important implications for intra-state political violence. Insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan have maintained a remarkable level of persistence at least in part because of their success in coupling transnational jihadist ideologies with the interests and political agendas of local kinship-based tribal networks.<sup>26</sup> By contrast, in situations where these alliances between tribes and transnational extremist groups have waned, such as in Iraq during the late-AQI/early-ISIL period and in sporadic instances during the history of AQAP in Yemen, the campaigns of violent groups have tended to rapidly falter as they lost the capacity to operate openly in lands controlled by receptive tribes and elite families.<sup>27</sup> Reports on Chechen insurgencies similarly suggest that blood feuds and retributive killings in the name of clan honor often play a critical role in incentivizing and spreading outbursts of violence there – and that these conflicts frequently bleed over into local secessionist organizations.<sup>28</sup> In Bangladesh, entrenched tensions between the country's two dominant political dynasties – the Zia and Sheikh-Wazed families – have repeatedly resulted in violent electoral impasses and assassinations against members of both clans, who have intertwined their family interests with the political parties they dominate.<sup>29</sup> In El Salvador, a more cohesive oligarchy of elite families has historically dominated the state, but the consequent suppression of poorer populations outside these elite alliances has similarly resulted in bloodshed.<sup>30</sup> And even among non-elites, social stratification and heavy reliance on kin networks and inheritance can have destabilizing political repercussions. In both Rwanda and Burundi, for example, family disputes over land inheritance generate a feedback loop with broader political and ethnic conflicts, as already-fragile customary land-inheritance rules fail to protect the property rights of individuals and families displaced by violence, which in turn incentivizes further violence as such disputes spread.<sup>31</sup> If these examples are indicative of a broader relationship between dynasticism and contemporary political violence, this association may have important policy consequences. As globalization increases transnational interconnectedness, state failures and civil wars have taken

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<sup>24</sup> The complex interrelationship between systemic economic inequality and levels of democratic governance are beyond the scope of this dissertation. For a much more thorough discussion of this topic, see Boix 2003 and Acemoglu et al. 2008.

<sup>25</sup> For further discussion on elite and economic exclusion as a cause of political violence, see Hartzell & Hoddie 2003 and Call 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Kilcullen 2005.

<sup>27</sup> Phillips 2009, Hull 2011 p. xxvii, 121.

<sup>28</sup> Souleimanov and Aliyev 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Mallet 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Stanley 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Discussion of this dynamic in Rwanda can be found in Takeuchi & Marara 2011; similar problems are reported in Burundi in Keenan 2015.

on an increasingly prominent role in the security priorities of great power states.<sup>32</sup> Understanding how local dynastic structures may shape and incentivize such violence is important both to the residents of states engulfed in civil wars and to policymakers and academics outside these states who hope to find successful ways to resolve and avoid civil war violence in the future.

In the following pages, I intend to demonstrate that kin-based institutions and social organization play an important role in incentivizing and increasing the likelihood of civil war violence. I will thus show that dynasticism, far from having disappeared from modern warfare, remains a significant driver of violent political conflicts in the contemporary world. While civil wars today are rarely fought on explicitly dynastic grounds, I will show that the dominance of politically powerful family networks still has a measurable impact on the likelihood of civil war violence emerging within a state or sub-state region. Based on both historical and contemporary cases, I will further argue that this association is a causal relationship – one that emerges primarily out of the socially constructed nature of human kinship itself. Rather than being the result of individual self-interest or deep inborn evolutionary impulses, dynastic violence is best understood as a product of the paradoxical nature of human kin relationships. As deeply embedded social identities, family ties are often perceived by members as fundamental and non-negotiable, and thus tend to compel fierce retaliation through vendettas and feuds in their defense. And yet, in practice, the ambiguities surrounding kinship – whether in the form of locating the boundaries between kin and non-kin, managing the specific duties and privileges expected by members across the kin network, or the uncertainties inherent in tying political legitimacies to the caprice of human reproduction and mortality – means that the apparently non-negotiable loyalties among kin paradoxically rest on an ever-shifting and constantly contested social foundation.<sup>33</sup> As we shall see in future chapters, the same dynastic culture that permits a family to dominate a given country's politics also presents countless opportunities for schisms and contestation over the legitimate allocation of inheritance and dynastic legacy, and the same vendetta culture that mandates retaliation for a slight on one's family honor also creates endless opportunity for disputes and disagreements over the relative imbalance in honor deficits between feuding families. Through the accumulation of such parochial disputes, particularly among the most politically powerful families, cooperation and security within a dynastic society gradually deteriorates over time, so that even carefully negotiated family truces are forgotten and cast aside over time as new generations and changing circumstances reignite old familial tensions or cause new vendettas to emerge.

The research presented in this dissertation represents an important contribution to the extensive political science literature dedicated to better understanding civil war violence in recent decades – a literature that has above all served to demonstrate that civil wars and similar incidents of state failure are not monocausal problems that can be easily traced back to singular issues or disputes. Prior research suggests that a wide variety of different social, economic, and political factors may play a role in determining when and where civil war violence might emerge. This is in large part because sustained political violence necessarily requires the

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<sup>32</sup> Discussion on civil wars as a transnational issue can be found in Gleditsch 2007; the salience of civil wars and state failure for the political agendas of more powerful states is discussed in a wide variety of works, including Regan 2002, Krahmman 2003, and Buzan 2008.

<sup>33</sup> The scholarly recognition that kinship ties can encompass a significant amount of cultural ambivalence and can – in different circumstances – generate both powerful loyalties and significant animosities can be traced at least as far back as Sigmund Freud and his theories concerning the Oedipal Complex. For a more contemporary overview of the concept of ambivalence and kinship, see Luescher & Pillemer 1998.

confluence of multiple factors that incentivize rebellion and minimize the state's capacity or inclination to suppress this violence.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, as past civil war research attests, the line between civil war violence and more prosaic or personalistic acts of violence are often not as clear as they may at first appear.<sup>35</sup> While civil wars typically involve central disputes that help drive violence – such as a conflict between particular ethnicities or a dispute between different factions hoping to control the state – these large-scale issues can often be less predictive of civil war onset than the accumulation of more prosaic factors that influence the individual-level incentives to engage in violence. Individualized factors that operate on a smaller scale – such as potential combatants' economic prospects and the degree to which they can personally rely on the state as their primary guarantor of security – are often at least as important for understanding the emergence of conflict in a country as are the nominal end goals of the belligerent factions in a civil war.<sup>36</sup> Dynasticism, despite its ubiquity as a phenomenon in political systems across the world today, has to date failed to receive significant attention as a similar underlying driver for political violence. And as I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, it is precisely this type of in-depth analysis that is crucial for understanding the complex ways in which dynasticism can incentivize and direct violence in unexpected directions. The research presented in this dissertation will thus not only demonstrate dynasticism's continued political salience but will also contribute important new insights into the nature of both kinship and violence, and how each phenomenon ultimately impacts political outcomes.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to explaining the overarching focus of this dissertation in greater detail, and to presenting core concepts that will aid the reader in understanding and evaluating the broader argument that binds this dissertation together. In Section I, I will elaborate on the core motivating puzzle that inspired this project – specifically, uncovering whether dynasticism is a significant driver of contemporary civil war violence, and if so, identifying primary mechanisms through which this relationship operates. I will offer further information on the initial case study insights that first prompted this research question and will thus ground readers in the empirical evidence and policy issues that first hinted at dynasticism's role as a crucial and understudied driver of conflict. In Section II, I will focus on further explicating my independent variable, dynasticism, and introduce core concepts regarding the distinction between families, kinship, and dynasties. To help situate readers and provide them with a greater understanding of the context for this dissertation project, this section will also include a broader overview of past political science literature on political dynasties and the different ways in which they have been theorized to impact different political institutions and outcomes. In Section III, I will move on to discuss my dependent variable, civil war violence. This section will begin with a broad discussion about the nature of political and civil war violence, and how we might distinguish them from non-political violence. I will then review the current state of empirical research on the politics of civil wars, describing some of the major contemporary findings and debates regarding potential causes of modern civil wars. The major theme of this review will center on contemporary researchers' consensus view that civil wars are not a singular dynamic with only one or two major causes, but rather are the outgrowth of systematic institutional failures and multiple social forces and interests that converge into a

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<sup>34</sup> See Section III of this chapter, along with Rotberg 2010 and Chapter 7 of Levy and Thompson 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Kilcullen 2011 and King 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Collier and Sambanis 2002 make a comparable distinction between the broader causes of a conflict and the expressed motivations of participants. Further analysis on the relationship between these dimensions of causation can be found in Ballentine 2003 and Korf 2005.

pattern of sustained violence. I will then present an informal discussion of the ways in which familial and dynastic interests can potentially become interwoven with these dynamics. Finally, in Section IV, I will offer further detail on the rest of the dissertation by explaining my methodological choices and summarizing the major topics to be addressed in each of the following chapters – explaining how each of the subsequent chapters contribute to a larger argument about how dynasticism serves as a driver of civil war violence.

### *Section I* *Motivating Puzzle*

In August of 2004, an outburst of violence erupted in the Philippine province of Maguindanao between government forces (along with affiliated Civilian Volunteer Organization paramilitary militias) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.<sup>37</sup> But despite the involvement of organized belligerent groups on both sides, the ceasefire monitors that subsequently investigated the incident found that this most recent flare-up had little to do with national political disputes. Instead, the incident appeared to trace its origins to more localized tensions – specifically, a conflict between an uncle and his nephew. In the preceding June, a long-standing dispute over ownership of a local coconut grove between Kempen Bagandan – a local elected official – and his nephew Gandang Palaguyan boiled over into confrontation. Palaguyan and his immediate family had long resented Bagandan’s possession of the property and its profits, and this resentment had only increased when Bagandan began allowing the military to operate a patrol station on the land to disincentivize any efforts to seize or sabotage the territory. This decision had the opposite effect, leading to a rapid escalation in the dispute. Palaguyan responded by declaring a *rido* – a formal vendetta – and seeking aid from local MILF members to conduct a raid and seize firearms from his uncle. Bagandan, in turn, responded by seeking aid from the local mayor, who had originally loaned the expensive firearms to Bagandan – and who was himself a member of the powerful Ampatuan dynasty and son of the province’s governor. By August, both sides of the family had mobilized a network of allies and organizations, creating a powder keg where old family resentments and political antagonisms mixed uneasily with one another. The political battle that exploded out of this standoff was far from unique. Traditions of family vendettas are prevalent among several Philippine ethnic groups and are particularly associated with the minority Muslim Moro population. These conflicts regularly spark acts of violence between members of different factions, or even fighters for the same faction, which in turn generates a cloud of uncertainty and paranoia that severely hampers efforts to broker peace among different sides in the civil war.<sup>38</sup>

Six years earlier, Yemeni officials were confronted with a crisis that presented an inverse dilemma. In December 1998, the Yemeni government learned that over a dozen foreign tourists had been kidnapped in Southern Yemen.<sup>39</sup> Yemenis were accustomed to such kidnappings, which had long been carried out by the powerful tribes that dominated Yemeni society and

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<sup>37</sup> A detailed account of this incident from one of the ceasefire monitors tasked with researching and investigating its causes is provided in Canuday 2014 pp. 230-234.

<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Canuday reports that during the build-up of the Bagandan-Palaguyan confrontation, tensions grew worse when one of the CVO members sent to support Bagandan shot a MILF member as part of a totally separate, preexisting *rido* between their own families. For further information on the destabilizing effects of *rido* in the Philippines, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation and IDMC 2011 p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> A report on this incident can be found in Whitaker 1998.

politics. The government, itself filled with tribal elites in both its executive and legislative branches and in its armed forces, understood these kidnappings in the context of long-standing tribal customs, and had developed an informal but relatively routine process for negotiating peaceful resolutions.<sup>40</sup> As per its usual approach, the government quickly identified the tribal affiliation of the kidnappers, and then sent negotiators to approach the tribe's sheikhs to ascertain what their demands might be – in a typical case, concessions might involve relatively benign demands, such as paving long-neglected roads in the area or offering jobs from nearby companies to keep tribesmen employed.<sup>41</sup> But upon investigating this case, the Yemeni government soon realized that it had been woefully incorrect in its assumptions. The kidnappers in this case had not been tribal actors focused on attainable goals, but rather were members of a radical religious group, the Islamic Army of Aden. It rapidly became clear that this Islamist group was uninterested in following the traditional norms of tribal negotiations on which the Yemeni government had grown heavily reliant. Instead of the slow haggling and gradual compromises that characterized the stereotypical tribal kidnapping, this new group was committed to demonstrating its zeal and prepared to kill hostages to signal its resolve. Out of its element and rushing to make up for its initially slow response, the Yemeni government was forced to conduct a rushed raid on the hostage-takers' base, resulting in fatalities among both the kidnappers and the hostages. Because of its commitment to accommodating traditional tribal kinship-based authority structures and operating according to culturally entrenched rules of conflict, the Yemeni government had misjudged its opponents and overestimated their ties to local kinship traditions. This presented a reverse image of the Philippine state's approach but generated an equivalent degree of confusion and has similarly fatal consequences.

These two examples, drawn from the countries that inspired my interest in the topic of dynastic conflict and contemporary political violence, illustrate the troubling and complex problems that arise when kin-based violence becomes intertwined with broader political security issues. They raise important questions that may seem odd and anachronistic to many Western readers, but that can become matters of life and death for people living in countries in which strong family networks are willing to use violence to maintain their power or achieve political and economic goals. When two extended families with patronage ties to local politicians become locked in a cycle of revenge against one another, or when two tribal groups become embroiled in a deadly conflict over local land rights and require mediation, what are the consequences of this violence for a state's broader mandate to suppress large-scale insurgencies, rebellions, and violent groups? Do these types of disputes – which often operate on a small scale but whose ubiquity potentially has a cumulative effect on the security and stability of weaker states – have a measurable and consistent effect on political violence at the scale of a major civil war? And to what degree can we take individual observations of such incidents and extend them into a broader and generalizable theory about the relationships between kinship and conflict?<sup>42</sup>

The two countries that inspired this research – Yemen and the Philippines – were notable from the start because of the degree to which conflicts in both countries exhibited “strong

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<sup>40</sup> The traditional norms that surround hostage-taking in Yemen have contributed to a romanticized, but not wholly inaccurate, view of kidnapping in the country as a peculiarly restrained form of resistance (Stuster 2013).

<sup>41</sup> Abu-Nasr 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Because my interest is primarily on the security implications of dynasticism, this dissertation primarily concerns itself with the phenomenon as it relates to relatively weak and unstable states. Dynasticism, like other phenomena such as ethnic tensions and economic insecurities, also manifests in the politics of more powerful and stable states, but in ways that are likely to be less directly destabilizing. For more on what distinguishes stable and unstable seats, see the works on the causes of civil war that are cited throughout this dissertation, as well as Zartman 1995.

society, weak state,” dynamics.<sup>43</sup> In both states, traditional actors such as tribal and religious leaders and old entrenched land-owning families appeared to play a significant role in shaping the direction and intensity of violence. This was perhaps unsurprising, given that members of these traditional elites tended to hold positions of influence in either the formal government or in insurgent groups. As a result, conflicts and civil wars in these countries – and potentially in many others with similarly powerful traditional institutions – often failed to follow a straight-forward dynamic of clearly identifiable factions fighting over defined policy objectives. While governments and rebel groups were nominally committed to specific political agendas, the interplay between different actors with competing political and family loyalties often meant that alliances were unreliable, violence could be unpredictable, and conflicts vacillated across a wide spectrum of outcomes, from negotiation-heavy strategies such as kidnappings and restrained responses to direct efforts to eliminate rival factions.

As my research into these case studies progressed, it became increasingly clear that political dynasties and kinship networks often played a crucial role in the persistent civil war conflicts that plagued both countries. Indeed, in many cases dynastic disputes offered more explanatory power than the nominal agendas of the central political disputants in the conflict. Repeatedly, instances emerged of apparent flare-ups between the government and rebel groups that, with deeper analysis, turned out to have been sparked by tensions between local family factions. Similarly, the behavior and strategies utilized by both states and rebel groups were often constrained or guided by the interests of powerful local families, who often intertwined their own interests and resources with those of broader political institutions. To be sure, this was not a novel observation – the political influence of tribes and their leading families in Yemen and of dynastic clans in the Philippines were already well-attested by both observers and participants. But it quickly became apparent that we as political scientists have generally failed to develop generalizable theories from these observations in a systematic and theoretically rigorous fashion, or to test whether these examples reflected a broader cross-national pattern. While anecdotal reports of the influence of dynasticism on political outcomes appear fairly regularly – especially in the context of underdeveloped countries – these case-specific insights had not been synthesized into general debates into the security implications of dynasticism comparable to literature on similar issues such as ethnic conflict.<sup>44</sup> Without such prior literature, it remained unclear how extensively and consistently dynasticism may be influencing security issues, and what the mechanisms are that determine how dynasticism influences political outcomes.

For those living in highly dynastic political systems, these questions are far from a purely academic concern. Where dynasties are powerful, even non-dynastic actors are routinely confronted with the question of how much power to delegate to influential dynasties, and whether the political and material costs of confronting powerful families are balanced by the long-term autonomy gained by not intertwining official institutions with the ambiguities of kinship loyalties. Moreover, in both Yemen and the Philippines, supporters of dynastic politics can accurately claim that these traditional dynastic authorities often also play a regularized role in maintaining order and negotiating peace in an area.<sup>45</sup> Cultural norms that imbue certain

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<sup>43</sup> Migdal 1998.

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter 2 of this dissertation for an in-depth discussion.

<sup>45</sup> Indeed, among the most important questions my research initially sought to test was whether kin-based elites exhibited any restraining effects on conflict, or solely served to exacerbate violence. The research presented in the following chapters largely concludes that the latter hypothesis holds more accuracy, though I discuss the possibility of a contingent restraining effect in Chapter 6. An argument for viewing traditional elites, including though those

prestigious families with credibility give those families immense power to destabilize an area and draw a wide variety of political actors into familial disputes – but in both countries, such elite families are also regularly relied on as mediators and third parties whose credibility can be leveraged to facilitate negotiation. This dissertation is devoted to unearthing the ambiguities such as these that lie at the heart of modern dynastic politics, and to determining whether dynasties today tend to promote conflict, resolve it, or have no discernible impact – and to determine what mechanisms govern any impact dynasticism does appear to have. To reframe this issue in terms of the quote that began this chapter, through this dissertation I seek to determine which better describes the true face of dynasticism: is it defined more by the “ancient grudges” and “civil blood” of persistent entrenched feuds, or by the capacity of “star-cross’d lovers” to come together and “bury their parents’ strife?”

## Section II Independent Variable: Dynastic Politics

To analyze the impact of dynasticism on civil wars, it is first crucial to define relevant terms. Dynasties are deeply interlinked with concepts related to family and kinship – concepts that we tend to assume we understand intuitively, but to which we in fact unconsciously attach a wide variety of personal and cultural assumptions. When it comes to identifying family and kin relationships, we may be inclined to believe we “know it when we see it.”<sup>46</sup> But as I will discuss at length in the next chapter, concepts of relatedness and kinship are not simply objective descriptions of genealogical ties, but also deeply associated with culturally constructed relationships. It is thus important to carefully unpack these terms and their meanings. We can begin this process by first acknowledging the existence of *biological relatedness* – which we in modern times conceptualize primarily in terms of individuals’ degree of shared genetic inheritance. This form of relatedness stems from the biological process of parents passing on genetic information to their offspring, and by extension, also refers to all other biological relationships that emerge out of reproductive events – whether in the form of *lineal* relatives who are connected to one another through a direct line of descent from ancestors to descendants, or of *collateral* lines to siblings, aunts or uncles, cousins, or any other genetic relatives who are not direct ancestors or descendants of one another.

But far more important, from the perspective of the social sciences, is the social concept of *kinship*. We can define kinship as the network of social relationships, symbols, and identities that surround and define a given culture or community’s understanding of the process of human mating, reproduction, and child-rearing.<sup>47</sup> Kinship can be conceived of as a “map” that a community uses to standardize its understanding of human reproductive patterns, and as with all maps, it serves as a symbol that is not perfectly coterminous with the process it represents. Thus, kin relationships are not interchangeable with biological ones, though there is obviously a significant overlap between the two. Examples of kinship relationships that don’t involve direct relatedness come in a wide variety of forms – the most obvious and widespread of which being the *affinal kinship* that exists between a married couple, as well as the networks of in-law

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that derive their influence from kinship, as a potentially positive or complementary force for states is presented in Boege et al. 2009.

<sup>46</sup> To paraphrase Justice Stewart’s remark regarding his threshold for censoring obscenity.

<sup>47</sup> For accessible introductory works on concepts surrounding family, kinship, and kinship studies, see Parkin 1997 and Klein & White 1996.

relatives that are connected to each other through this marriage link. While long-term mating bonds have clear parallels in the animal kingdom, the specific norms and rules shaping marriage and similar practices vary widely across cultures and time periods.<sup>48</sup> Rules governing marriage can be explicit, as is the case for most societies' regulations banning particular degrees of *consanguineous marriage* – that is, inbreeding among already-related individuals. But many other norms surrounding marriage only operate informally – in Western societies, for example, nebulous concepts surrounding class, race, educational attainment, and shared social ties have generally resulted in an informal pattern of *assortative mating* in which marriage is not officially restricted along class and educational levels, but in practice tends to be endogamous with these social cleavages.<sup>49</sup> Beyond affinity, a wide variety of different *fictive kin*<sup>50</sup> – or “kin-like” – relationships predominate in most human societies, from adopted children, to god-parents and god-children, to the extended network of long-time family friends that serve as family surrogates in many communities. Close biological relatedness without a parallel kinship relationship is rarer, but certainly not unknown: relatives who have no relationship and no social awareness of one another, such as an entirely absent parent or a donor of reproductive material that never encounters their offspring, may be biologically related but lack substantive kinship ties. And just as biological relatedness among humans gradually diminishes into increasingly distant relationships, so too do kin relations gradually fade at their peripheries into other institutional ties. College sororities and fraternities, patrimonial patronage networks, ethno-nationalist movements and a wide range of other institutions all often represent themselves through pseudo-kinship symbolism, and the degree to which this constitutes a “real” kinship relationship largely depends on how seriously this symbolism is taken and how broadly observers and participants conceive of kinship.

Kin relationships take on a staggering variety of forms across cultures, and indeed often vary within a given society across sub-cultures and social groups. But we can nonetheless describe a few general cleavage points that are often used in contemporary cultures to categorize and organize kin relationships. For example, the existence of a family name (in most contemporary societies, a *patronym* tracing one's male ancestors – also known as the *patrilineal* or *agnatic*, line of ancestry) can in some patriarchal societies create a notable distinction between the family that shares an individual's last name, versus all other kin descended from either female or a mix of male and female ancestry (*non-agnatic kin*). Within the patriline itself, societies that practice primogeniture also sometimes make a distinction between the primary male line, descended from the eldest son of each generation, versus *cadet* lines descended from younger brothers. Outside this patriline, different cultures vary in the degree to which relative importance is given to kin from the mother's side of the family (*matrilateral kin*) versus kin related through *ego's* father (*patrilateral kin*). In many cases, cultures and political institutions will prioritize certain kin configurations based on expectations of how families “normally” live – for example, some societies may see the nuclear family as the natural core of kinship based on the expectations that most homes will comprise a married couple and any non-adult children they are raising. These distinctions are reinforced by both cultural expectations as well as, in many cases, legal rules that entrench family relationships through particular inheritance laws, marriage rules, or other regulations.

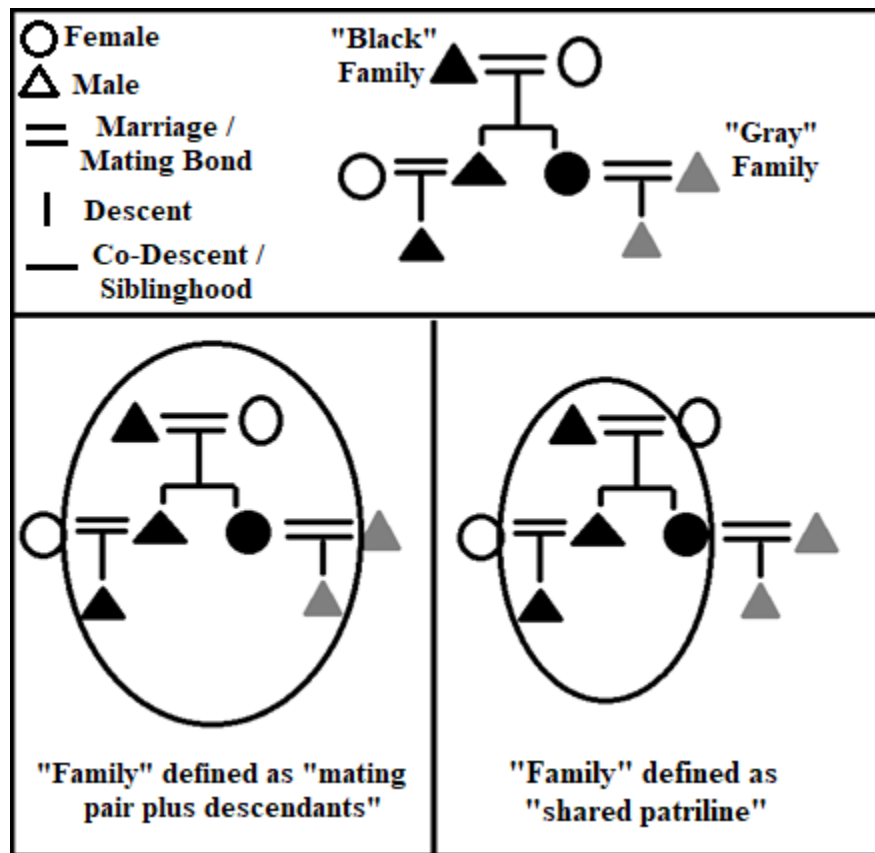
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<sup>48</sup> Coontz 2006.

<sup>49</sup> Mare 1991, Schwartz & Mare 2005.

<sup>50</sup> Ebaugh & Curry 2000.



**Figure 1.1**

Taken together, we can conceptualize these distinctions as creating a boundary between more distant, culturally marginalized kin, which I refer to as *peripheral kin*, versus individuals that are prioritized as composing the core connections at the center of *ego's* kin network. I term this core kinship group *familial kin* or a *family*.<sup>51</sup> If kinship is constructed, then the boundary between peripheral kin and the family core is doubly so. Not only do the various within-kin distinctions mentioned above potentially create the possibility for wildly variant prioritizations of kin relationships, but there is no guarantee that the same priorities will be uniform across a given culture or subculture. In Figure 1.1, I use a standard kinship diagram to illustrate how the same kin group might be viewed differently through two distinct normative lenses. On the bottom left, the distinction between a family and the broader kin network is defined in terms of the type of extended nuclear family structure often prioritized in Western societies – a mated pair as well as all their children and grandchildren. We can contrast this categorization with an alternate concept of family illustrated on the right – one more common to patriarchal or tribal societies, in which

<sup>51</sup> This distinction shares some similarities with Bourdieu's distinction between formal vs. practical kinship, insofar as Bourdieu conceptualizes the boundary between the two as reflecting social legitimation (Bourdieu 1977). If we instead choose to conceptualize kin relationships in network theory terms, we can alternately describe a family as the (often small) core of the kinship network, where strong social ties and significant homophily predominate. Peripheral kin, by contrast, are bound to each other by weaker ties and to possess more peripheral relationships (Borgatti & Everett 2000, McPherson et al. 2001).

only members sharing a male patriline are viewed as members of the same family.<sup>52</sup> Of course, as noted above, consensus is never universal within a society. Both the right-hand and left-hand concepts of family, for example, may well coexist and carry some social weight within the same culture, in which case individuals such as the Black family matriarch or the Gray family heir are likely to inhabit an ambiguous and amorphous place within the family hierarchy.<sup>53</sup> I will return to discuss the distinction between family vs. peripheral kin in greater detail in the next chapter, but at present the point I seek to emphasize is simply this: in all societies, distinctions are made between which types of relationships are at the core of a kin network and which are more peripheral, but these distinctions are necessarily fluid and permeable, creating extensive opportunities for strategic uncertainties and relational ambiguities to emerge across and within a kin network.

This discussion of kinship networks may at first seem far removed from the typical purview of political science, but these concepts become critical for understanding situations in which kin networks and explicitly political networks overlap and converge<sup>54</sup> – namely, in situations in which a family becomes a *dynasty*. I define a dynasty here as a family or kin group that has succeeded in interweaving its familial and kinship network into the process for entry into government office or for the accumulation of political influence. The most iconic forms of dynasties, of course, are monarchies and other aristocratic systems, in which kin relationships and political authority are explicitly interconnected and are part of the formal mechanism of succession. The monarchies and even the early republics in early modern Europe’s great power state system, which I will discuss in Chapter 3, are emblematic of this type of dynasticism. But less directly, we also often see informal dynastic politics emerge in other types of authoritarian regimes, where power isn’t explicitly based on familial descent but nonetheless often accrues to one or more powerful families who dominate the political system across several generations. Dynastic patterns in authoritarian systems can also operate at lower levels of authority, even if they fail to control the ultimate selection of leadership – in Yemen, for example, dynastic

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<sup>52</sup> Because the relative importance of kinship ties varies so widely across cultures, any analysis of kinship’s effect on politics likely requires at least a passing familiarity with the particular kinship norms and priorities of a given society. Some social practices – such as marriage traditions and naming conventions – can provide important clues regarding prioritization, but these are not fool-proof. For example, we can generally infer that a culture that uses a patronym to designate family ties is unlikely to heavily prioritize maternal kin over paternal kin. But naming conventions are heavily informed by path dependence and historical contingency (Pierson & Skocpol 2002) and can thus be misleading. In the Western world, patronyms have slowly grown more standardized in recent centuries, even as matrilineal and patrilineal kin ties have become more equal in status.

<sup>53</sup> In Muslim Middle Eastern societies, for example, traditional emphasis is placed on male lines of descent – best reflected in the Arab practice of determining a child’s tribe via their patriline. But this does not mean that a mother’s lineage is irrelevant. Maternal relatives may be important sources of wealth, status, or alliances – particularly in polygamous households, where children of different mothers compete against one another. In the Ottoman Empire, for example, mothers of competing heirs to the Sultan’s position used their family connections to maximize their sons’ positions (Peirce 1992). A similar ambiguity exists in Jewish traditions, where a child’s maternal lineage is often used to determine their status as a Jew, but membership in the elite priestly kohen lineages is passed down through the patriline.

<sup>54</sup> On a broader and more fundamental level, of course, politics and kinship are deeply intertwined – as exemplified in the relatively recent debates in the United States over the definition of marriage and the implications of including same-sex partnerships in legal definitions. The full range of ways in which politics and kinship intersect and impact each other, not only directly but also indirectly through economic and demographic impact, is far beyond the scope of this dissertation.

succession has not been used to select a leader since the overthrow of the Imamate in 1962,<sup>55</sup> but elite tribal families have nonetheless largely succeeded in dominating the selection process for top positions in the state bureaucracy, military, and legislative Majlis.<sup>56</sup> Finally, we also regularly see dynasties emerge in democratic systems, both within weak democracies (such as that of the Philippines, discussed in Chapter 4) and even among strong democracies such as the United States. Indeed, the tendency to attempt to pass power off to family members is so prevalent in human societies that it is often helpful to conceptualize dynasticism as a universal spectrum – where some societies and political systems are far less dynastic than others, but none are wholly free of the dynamic. From this perspective, we can refer to examples of originally non-dynastic institutions that become gradually more dominated by dynastic patterns of authority, whether in democratic or authoritarian systems, as examples of *dynastic capture*.<sup>57</sup> Overt dynasties are not the only way in which kin networks influence political systems – wealthy elite families, for example, can often use generationally accumulated wealth to influence governments in the same manner as other wealthy actors in the economy – but the inherent tendency in dynasticism to conflate and amalgamate political and familial networks with one another makes this phenomenon particularly suitable for examination by political scientists. And while the discipline has not, to date, devoted sustained attention to the explicit issue of dynasticism itself, the far-reaching implications of the practice have nonetheless often been noted in prior political science research efforts.

### ***What We Know About Dynasticism and the Politics of Kinship***

Because of their continued ubiquity and political salience, dynastic institutions and practices are regularly observed in political science literature – but their dynastic qualities remain undertheorized and under-analyzed. Perhaps because of dynasticism’s implicit association with monarchy and aristocracy, political science has until recently tended to avoid explicit analysis of dynastic political processes in favor of more archetypically “modern” conceptualizations of identity and organization such as class, nationalism, or individual economic self-interest. This is not to say, however, that prior researchers have not contributed valuable and compelling analyses of many of the political phenomena associated with dynastic systems. Those prior studies that have directly focused on dynastic institutions and political processes – including many of the works cited in this sub-section and elsewhere in this dissertation – have generated thought-provoking insights into how dynasticism operates in a wide variety of different circumstances and political systems. More generally, dynastic networks are often noted in the context of subjects that have been studied more thoroughly in political science – politically salient family ties are regularly discussed in the context of studies on patrimonialism, economic development, political mobilization, demographic trends, social networks, and similar phenomena. But the majority of prior research among political scientists still tends to only peripherally acknowledge dynasties and the political involvement of kin networks, without necessarily delving deeply into the kinship dimension of these phenomena.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Though it is all but certain that Yemen’s deposed President Saleh intended originally to pass down power to his son Ahmed – a transition that is still a credible possible outcome for Yemen’s ongoing civil war. See Chapter 6 of this dissertation for further discussion.

<sup>56</sup> Alley 2010.

<sup>57</sup> A process comparable to regulatory capture or elite capture of institutions (Dasgupta and Beard 2007).

<sup>58</sup> Along with the exception discussed below, another notable manner in which analysis of kin relationships tends to emerge is in cases where these relationships can be conceptualized in the context of broader demographic terms.

Dynasticism, of course, has deep roots in political systems across the ancient world, with the concentration of political power along familial lines serving as a natural extension of individuals' tendency to try and pass along wealth and advantages to their offspring.<sup>59</sup> But political commentators have long had a countervailing tendency to grapple with the ethics of a political system that so clearly elevated some individuals and families in positions of power over others. Plato, living in a democratic city-state, was an early critic of traditional monarchy and oligarchy and portrayed kings as divisive rulers who tended over time to prioritize their interests and those of their family over the interest of those they ruled.<sup>60</sup> The Roman Republic similarly exhibited a pronounced anti-monarchist ideology for most of its early history, and witnessed violent clashes between monarchist and anti-monarchist factions during its transition into an empire.<sup>61</sup> While these early critiques tended to be heavily circumscribed – so that even anti-monarchists tended to praise other forms of aristocracy or birth-based hierarchies – they nonetheless reflected a recurring skepticism about the merit of assigning leadership solely based on a parent or family member's achievements.

Over time, as monarchies became increasingly formalized and systematized, there arose increasingly complex legitimizing ideologies built around encouraging popular and elite support for a strong social hierarchy with a single family at the top. Concepts like the mandate of heaven in China, Rome's imperial cult, or the divine right of kings in Europe used religious justifications to explain why a select few individuals merited political power solely by virtue of their birth.<sup>62</sup> As modern political philosophy emerged during the Renaissance and Enlightenment, many reformist political philosophers sought to work out logical arguments to justify the continuance of dynastic governments in some form. Montesquieu argued that dynastic succession provided a critical element of certainty within a political system, allowing for a predictable and reliable transfer of authority that disincentivized chaotic power disputes.<sup>63</sup> Thomas Hobbes argued that self-centered human beings governed most effectively when the general good of a nation and the personal incentives of a ruler were as closely matched as possible. It was thus generally preferable to allow a monarch to designate his own child as his successor, since this would help incline the sovereign to plan for the long-term wealth and strength of the nation he intended to pass on to his heir.<sup>64</sup> Rousseau saw a strong, unified dynasty as a potential component of a just social order, based on his assumption that overly democratic governments were too slow and ponderous to effectively protect the social contract in large states.<sup>65</sup> As revolutionary movements spread across the West, these qualified endorsements of monarchy generally became conflated with more explicitly anti-monarchist philosophies such as those of John Locke and Thomas Paine. In the following centuries, the rise of alternative ideologies continued to sideline monarchism over time, so that in the present-day monarchism in most countries has become a

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Marriage, for example, is often analyzed for its broader impact on political participation or political preferences (Stoker & Jennings 1995).

<sup>59</sup> Whether such commitment to one's heirs emerged out of altruistic parental feelings or rational self-interest remains a matter of debate; see Logan & Spitz 1995 and Cigno 1993.

<sup>60</sup> Barker 2012, p. 193.

<sup>61</sup> Toynbee 1944.

<sup>62</sup> Unsurprisingly, the most complex and thorough justifications for these doctrines tended to emerge in response to increasingly credible challenges from non-monarchist reformers – as, for example, in the writings of Bishop Bossuet as republican ideas spread across Europe. (Riley 1990).

<sup>63</sup> Cox 2001.

<sup>64</sup> Mitchell 1993.

<sup>65</sup> Garrard 2003.

largely spent force, with only the most conservative factions advocating for the investment of any substantial power in a formal inherited monarchy.<sup>66</sup>

The modern discipline of political science arose significantly after monarchy's decline during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and unsurprisingly politics based on explicitly genealogical succession has thus received relatively little attention compared to more contemporary regimes.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps the closest phenomenon to receive substantial attention among political scientists has been the tendency of some authoritarian regimes to slip into pseudo-monarchical patterns of dynastic succession.<sup>68</sup> Examples of this trend are sporadic but widespread, spanning the globe from the Kim dynasty of North Korea and the Assad's of Syria, to the Duvalier's of Haiti and Castro's of Cuba, and the Eyadéma dynasty of Togo. Analysis of this phenomenon fits within a wider literature on the "successorship problem" in authoritarian systems and research into how dictatorships attempt to resolve the intense strategic competition that emerges when a position of unfettered authority becomes available at the top of the regime.<sup>69</sup> Because future dictators have potentially unconstrained power once in office, dictatorial regimes are potentially subject to severe commitment problems and "shadow of the future" effects that can hamper a dictator's ability to govern long before their death. For example, economic development in dictatorships can be hampered by a perception that a dictator has short time horizons and is consequently willing to seize property and assets in the present regardless of the long-time cost of such a decision.<sup>70</sup> Resolving these dilemmas typically involves either empowering an heir, or at least designating a mechanism for successorship – but doing so risks constraining the current dictator and generates the possibility of severe principal-agent problems as the heir seeks to develop their own power base.<sup>71</sup> Designation of an heir as successor conveniently mitigates many of these risks: close family members are likely to share many of the same interests and social ties as the current dictator, the relationship between the two may be defined by ties of filial affection (or, if not, at least a long-time familiarity that makes misperception less likely), and younger family members may be more willing to demonstrate patience rather than rushing to replace an incumbent they expect to outlive.<sup>72</sup> For elites outside of the family of the dictator, such an arrangement may seem sub-optimal compared to the possibility of seizing power for oneself. But a clear mechanism for succession – even one as seemingly arbitrary as dynasticism – may be preferable for many regime elites to a drawn-out fight that undermines the system as a whole. Hereditary succession has been observed to be particularly prevalent in regimes that lack more formal and widely accepted methods for handing

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<sup>66</sup> The major regional exception to this trend has been in the Middle East, particularly among the Gulf countries. While the region has witnessed spectacular exceptions – most notably the Iranian revolution – monarchies are still more prevalent here than in other political regions. Herb 1999 argues that this is largely due to the particular type of monarchy that has developed in the region, which distributes power across a wide range of collateral heirs who effectively form an elite class at the top of the patronage network. The most prominent example of this approach is the House of Saud, with its thousands of princes.

<sup>67</sup> Though to be sure historical analyses extending back into this period have always existed. In recent years, compelling new research agendas devoted to more systematically examining monarchical successions has also begun to emerge – see Abramson & Rivera 2016 and Kokkonen & Sundell 2014.

<sup>68</sup> Egorov and Sonin 2015 offer one recent work touching on these authoritarian dynastic successions.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Herz 1952 and Kendall-Taylor 2016.

<sup>70</sup> Olsen 1993, Knutsen & Fjelde 2013.

<sup>71</sup> Egorov & Sonin 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Note that in some cases this doesn't entirely preclude disloyalty. Sultan Qaboos of Oman, for example, participated in a British-backed coup against his father.

over power,<sup>73</sup> and instituting a clear dynastic plan of succession appears to disincentivize coups and assassination attempts.<sup>74</sup> Having a clear successor who has been groomed for office and shares many of the previous dictator's preferences may also minimize the observed tendency of enemies of a regime – both internal and external – to renew hostilities after a succession and test the new leader's resolve.<sup>75</sup> As a result of these mechanisms, even the most self-interested elites and detached of dictators may find it rational to rely on dynasticism as a means of entrenching their authoritarian rule.

But dynasticism in contemporary politics is in no way confined solely to dictatorial regimes plagued by weak mechanisms for resolving succession. Modern democratic systems also have a long history of developing dynastic tendencies – while the French revolution may have devolved into an explicitly dictatorial and dynastic system with the rise of Napoleon, it was only a decade after the fall of Bonapartism that the democratic United States elected its first dynastic president in the form of John Quincy Adams. Study of this phenomenon remains limited, but has begun to increase in the last decade, at least partly in response to an influential 2009 study by Dal Bó et al. Dynasticism in democracies often provides a decisive advantage both at the voter level, where candidates related to established dynasties tend to outperform their rivals, and within party structures themselves as dynastic politicians rise more rapidly into leadership positions.<sup>76</sup> But this tendency is not universal across democracies – some countries, regions, and parties appear much more prone to rewarding dynasties than are others. This may suggest that dynasticism may emerge in response to certain institutional incentives, such as weak party organization or decentralized selection of nominees.<sup>77</sup> The most benign explanation for dynasties' prevalence in democracies is that it reflects a general family socialization toward heavy political activism – and is thus comparable to similar family effects that have been observed in partisan orientation and level of engagement.<sup>78</sup> Others have argued that dynastic candidates' advantage is primarily a result of higher name recognition and a tendency to carry over prior family members' incumbency advantages.<sup>79</sup> But many observers suggest that the primary contributor to political dynasties is a nepotistic tendency to accumulate influence over time, so that funding and political opportunities are disproportionately bestowed on family members. Dal Bó et al. argue in favor of this claim based on their finding that the longer a politician remains in office, the more likely they are to spawn a political dynasty.<sup>80</sup> From this perspective, dynasties are an extension of the types of political rents that often accrue to politicians' families over time as government funds are redirected to their interests and private businesses seek to win favors through family ties.<sup>81</sup> Even in strong, well-functioning

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<sup>73</sup> Brownlee 2007.

<sup>74</sup> Kurrild-Klitgaard 2000 and Frantz & Stein 2017.

<sup>75</sup> Wolford 2018, Iqbal and Zorn 2008.

<sup>76</sup> For a recent overview on the topic, see Geys & Smith 2017. Smith & Martin 2016 and Amundsen 2016 discuss the tendency of dynasts to rise within political parties rapidly, while Scoppa 2009 notes that dynasticism also impacts hiring within the civil service bureaucracies of democracies.

<sup>77</sup> Chhibber 2013 and Chandra 2016. Jensenius 2013 suggests that characteristics of the voting polity itself may also factor into dynastic preferences. Interestingly Dal Bó et al. 2009 report that in the United States, regional variation used to be quite high, with dynasties concentrated in the South, but these variations have largely standardized across the country in more recent times.

<sup>78</sup> Beck & Jennings 1991, McDevitt & Chaffee 2002, Lawless 2012. Alford et al. 2005 even suggest that there may be a genetically inherited component to these shared political preferences.

<sup>79</sup> Laband & Lentz 1985, Feinstein 2010.

<sup>80</sup> Dal Bó et al. 2009.

<sup>81</sup> Amore & Bennedsen 2013, Folke et al. 2017.

democracies, kin relationships appear to regularly shape the flow of wealth and political power along kinship-based lines in both overt and covert ways.

And indeed, while explicit dynastic tendencies emerge regularly in both democratic and autocratic political systems, it is almost certainly in the sphere of surreptitious political connections and informal patronage networks where kinship ties have their strongest impact on political outcomes. In his study of African patrimonial politics, Le Vine notes that patrimonial relationships tend to emulate the logic of kinship, using social capital, wealth and political favors “to replicate – at least in so far as trust, obligation, and affect are concerned – the ties of the patriarchal bond.”<sup>82</sup> The trust and loyalty between kin members, and the social ties that raise the penalties for cheating one another, make family bonds a strong foundation for informal favor-trading and mutual support.<sup>83</sup> This is perhaps most evident in the strong familial language and family-based recruitment patterns exhibited by many criminal organizations.<sup>84</sup> But it can also be seen in a wide variety of political systems across the world, where the use of political authority to enrich family members and their allies may not only be endemic, but often seen as socially laudatory.<sup>85</sup> Patronage networks in these contexts can be understood as informal institutions<sup>86</sup> that entrench and extend the bonds of kinship (both real and fictive) out into broader political influence and participation.<sup>87</sup> The presence of these large-scale patronage links can have a perverse but unpredictable impact on formal political institutions – in general, they signal state weakness and undermine or subvert the capacity of formal institutions to operate as intended,<sup>88</sup> but in many cases it may be more accurate to say that the informal and formal institutions operate as a hybrid state, each influencing the behavior of the other in a complex balance of interests.<sup>89</sup> Because much of their influence operates outside the formal authority of the state and through obfuscated bonds of patronage, political scientists potentially underestimate the significant influence that family networks and kinship groups often exert on political processes and outcomes.<sup>90</sup>

As this overview suggests, the political influence of family dynasties has unquestionably transformed from the peak of monarchical influence, but the phenomenon’s impact is far from exhausted. Dynasties continue to influence the politics, economics, and societies of countries across the world, from autocracies to democracies, and from the most developed countries to the least. While political science investigations into the nature and impact of dynasticism remain relatively tentative, those researchers who have analyzed the phenomenon in detail have offered clear evidence of its potential pervasive influence. The prevalence of dynasticism today, particularly in states with relatively weak institutions designed to check their influence, raises important questions for researchers who study the types of civil war violence and security issues

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<sup>82</sup> Le Vine 1980; Le Vine’s quote builds off concepts presented in Weber’s discussion on gerontocracy and patrimonialism in Weber 2009A.

<sup>83</sup> As noted in Levitsky and Way 2012, hierarchies that are founded on bonds of common identity are expected to outperform purely instrumental patronage networks, since they are able to better maintain cohesion in times of hardship.

<sup>84</sup> Anderson 1965, Bicalho et al. 1999, Blok 2002.

<sup>85</sup> Robertson-Snape 1999, Smith 2001.

<sup>86</sup> Helmke & Levitsky 2004.

<sup>87</sup> As, for example, Singerman 1995’s account of family networks as an avenue for political influence in Egyptian politics.

<sup>88</sup> Collins 2011.

<sup>89</sup> Charrad 2011. McGlinchey 2011 offers a detailed example by demonstrating how the Soviet Union / Russia leveraged patrimonial networks to maintain its influence in Central Asia.

<sup>90</sup> For a similar call for researchers to take kin actors more seriously as political actors, see Schatz 2006.

that often plague such states. In states where dynasties are powerful, does their presence impact the internal security dynamics and their susceptibility to civil war and similar mass violence? And if so, how should researchers go about studying, researching, and understanding the dynastic dimensions of the conflicts they observe?

### **Section III** **Dependent Variable: Civil War Violence**

Dynasticism's transformation from being the primary source of political legitimacy in prior centuries to an increasingly informal and ad-hoc form of political influence today – particularly among the modern great power states – means that dynastic violence has generally waned as a motivator for interstate wars. Gone are the days when most of the world's great powers formally determined political leadership through inheritance and kinship ties. As a result, international conflict between powerful states over issues of succession and other dynastic issues have largely disappeared from the world stage.<sup>91</sup> But as demonstrated by the previous section, dynasticism remains a potent force in the more informal and heterogeneous environment of domestic politics. This dynastic element in politics is likely to be particularly pronounced in states where development and political centralization have been relatively recent, and thus where traditionally dynastic forms of authority and identity have been rapidly integrated into new state bureaucracies and political offices.<sup>92</sup> Countries such as these, with weak formal institutions and poor state penetration, are also especially prone to insurgencies and civil wars,<sup>93</sup> and it is thus in such intrastate conflicts where dynasticism's impact on political violence remains most pronounced.<sup>94</sup> Major powers that today would never contemplate going to war with one another over the personal family inheritance disputes of their leaders nonetheless devote substantial resources to propping up monarchies of client states and to supporting and enriching friendly tribal leaders or allied elite families in the context of an ongoing insurgency or civil war. To understand the impact of dynasticism and kinship on modern political security issues, it is thus

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<sup>91</sup> To the best of my knowledge, the last international war in which a dynastic dispute played a significant role was the Franco-Prussian War, which was at least partially sparked by tensions that emerged out of a possible Hohenzollern succession to the Spanish throne. There were, of course, subsequently several internationalized internal conflicts and crises during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in which a foreign power intervened in a revolutionary fight or succession conflict. Notable examples include the Russo-British intervention in Iran that replaced Reza Shah with his son Mohammed Reza Shah, the Egyptian and Saudi interventions in the North Yemen Civil War, foreign involvement in the Ethiopian Civil War, and arguably the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan's Saur Revolution (in which Mohammed Khan, though styling himself Prime Minister, attempted to keep hold of power that had originally passed to him in part based on his royal lineage.

<sup>92</sup> For an example, see Lund 2006's analysis of "twilight institutions."

<sup>93</sup> Hironaka 2009.

<sup>94</sup> This dissertation focuses on political violence, and I thus attempt to avoid discussions of the widespread privatized violence associated with kinship – except insofar as perpetual and widespread privatized violence such as family feuding tends to become politicized as it draws the state into the conflict. This means that that I largely ignore forms of kin-based violence that remain more firmly confined to the private sphere – most notably, domestic violence (Jewkes 2002 and True 2012). This dissertation also does not provide adequate space to more deeply explore the deep intersections that can emerge between kinship and particular forms of violence. It is likely that certain strategies, like battlefield rape (Baaz & Stern 2009) and the widespread use of child soldiers (Blattman & Annan 2010), have further complex interrelationships with kin relationships that deserve further investigation. Investigations into the impact of these strategies on kin-based dynastic societies, and the ways in which countries are impacted or adapt to these issues, would be a valuable contribution to further our understanding of dynastic violence.



violence operating at the sub-state level that is of paramount interest – violence that manifests at its most extreme in the eruption of full-scale civil wars.<sup>95</sup>

Since the 1990's, civil wars have become an increasing topic of interest and study among both academics and policymakers.<sup>96</sup> The end of the Cold War and the decline in the perceived threats associated with large-scale international conflict resulted in a gradual realignment of international focus toward the more persistent problem of intrastate conflict. The September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and the United States' subsequent commitment to a wide-ranging War on Terror has only amplified this focus, as major powers increasingly view intractable civil war conflicts in a globalized world as having the potential to create security concerns that could spill over well beyond the state's immediate borders.<sup>97</sup> The study of civil war violence, and the factors that cause or exacerbate such violence, has thus become a direct concern on the international stage for even the most powerful of states. Coinciding with this increased attention from policymakers, this same period has also witnessed the growth of a robust academic literature devoted to understanding which factors appear to contribute to higher susceptibility to civil war violence. While in-depth and influential case studies of civil war violence in particular countries have long been a consistent part of this literature,<sup>98</sup> recent literature on the subject has tended to be heavily influenced by the statistical and cross-national methodologies presented in influential works such as Sambanis 2001, Fearon & Laitin 2003, and Collier & Hoeffler 2004. While the civil war studies' current reliance on statistical analysis is not without its detractors,<sup>99</sup> the contemporary focus on cross-national comparisons has generated a vibrant literature debating the general causes of civil war and attempting to isolate which factors help explain why some states succumb to political violence while others prove much more successful at resisting bloodshed.<sup>100</sup>

Extensive debates persist regarding what specific causes and contributors impact the likelihood of civil war violence – but perhaps the most important overarching conclusion to be drawn from the last few decades of research on the topic is that civil war violence is not a unitary phenomenon with a single, clear-cut cause.<sup>101</sup> As Kalyvas 2003 argues at length, individual acts of violence tend to be motivated by prosaic agendas and personal circumstances, even when they take place in the context of large-scale civil wars. Indeed, one of the primary characteristics of civil wars is their capacity to aggregate largely personal disputes into a broader political crisis

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<sup>95</sup> Definitions of civil war tend to rely on that provided by Small and Singer 1982. Throughout this dissertation, estimates of civil war violence rely primarily on the data provided by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) (Gleditsch et al. 2002a). These works conceptualize civil war as violence over a political incompatibility – typically control of the government or administration of a territory – between two actors, one of which is a state. This definition typically omits the potentially important violence that sometimes takes place between two non-state actors, but this omission minimizes the risk that purely private disputes will be incorporated into observations. For more on the definition of civil war, see Sambanis 2004A.

<sup>96</sup> For reviews of influential literature on Civil Wars to date, see Sambanis 2002 and Blattman & Miguel 2010.

<sup>97</sup> Checkel 2013; Rotberg 2002.

<sup>98</sup> For a review of some prominent examples, see Sambanis 2004.

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, Ward et al. 2010.

<sup>100</sup> Hegre & Sambanis 2006 investigate the robustness of some prominent findings, while Dixon 2009 compiles a review of tests examining the related issue of civil war termination.

<sup>101</sup> This conclusion is reflected in the literature as a whole, which has largely moved beyond an early debate focusing on the artificial distinction between “greed” vs. “grievance” as the possible ultimate cause of civil wars. More recent literature has moved onto a more nuanced, viability-based view in which it is theorized that a host of factors and characteristics tend to accumulate to either incentivize rebellion or diminish a state's capacity to suppress it (Collier and Hoeffler 2009).

and context.<sup>102</sup> As a result, when political stability begins to collapse and cycles of grievance develop, widespread incidents of violence often emerge and become entwined with civil wars in spite of possessing origins largely unrelated to the putative ultimate cause of the conflict. The classic example of this dynamic comes in the form of opportunistic and profit-seeking rebels – individuals or groups who are primarily motivated by a need for employment or by a desire for conflict spoils, and who therefore are more motivated by the economic circumstances of their country than by any ideological or political inspiration.<sup>103</sup> But even beyond these economic motivations, a host of demographic, legal, and social factors can potentially motivate individuals to participate in violence against objects of resentment once order in a society begins to break down.<sup>104</sup> For scholars of civil wars, it has thus become increasingly clear that understanding civil wars often necessitates disaggregating and dissecting these conflicts, so that persistent disputes and patterns of resentment at the most local level can be studied just as intensely as the agendas and decision-making of organized groups operating at the broadest national level of the conflict.<sup>105</sup>

Extant quantitative research on the causes of civil war – when the myriad variety of apparent contributors are taken together as a whole – offers a superb illustration of the multicausal origins of civil war violence.<sup>106</sup> Among the variables most often analyzed for influence on civil war onset, economic variables have long been of particular interest to many social scientists. Collier and Hoeffler 2004 argue that reduced economic opportunity reduces the relative cost of pursuing rebellion as compared to seeking other types of employment. Fearon and Laitin 2003, by contrast, note that high wealth and GDP may simply serve as a proxy for overall state power, and that states that are strong enough to have a robust functional economy tend to also be relatively adept at suppressing rebellion. Fjelde and De Soysa 2009 offer a further complication by noting that a high GDP gives states better access to both carrots and sticks, which may suggest that spending on social programs that co-opt rebellious populations may have the most stabilizing effect. Beyond the debate over national wealth as a whole, a narrower discussion has emerged regarding the influence of specific economic sectors, most notably regarding the role of natural resource wealth. A well-known argument posits that states rich in natural resources suffer from a “resource curse” that inhibits the governing and security capacity of many developing states, though the precise mechanism through which this operates remains a matter of debate.<sup>107</sup> Other economic characteristics remain more subject to debate – for example, debate persists regarding the degree to which economic inequality may or may not be a contributor to civil war violence.<sup>108</sup>

Political regime type is also often discussed as a potential explanation for variation in states’ apparent vulnerability to civil wars. Democratic institutions are often proposed by policy makers as a tool for mitigating violence by allowing greater representation and responsiveness within political institutions. But statistical analysis may instead suggest that political freedom has a primarily curvilinear relationship with civil war violence: both highly democratic and highly authoritarian states seem to be relatively resistant to rebellion, whereas the “anocracies” with

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<sup>102</sup> Kalyvas 2003.

<sup>103</sup> Weinstein 2006.

<sup>104</sup> As has been shown for conflicts in the Congo (Autesserre 2010) and in Rwanda (Fujii 2009), for example.

<sup>105</sup> Cederman & Gleditsch 2009.

<sup>106</sup> To say nothing of other characteristics of civil wars, such as recurrence (Walter 2004) and duration (de Rouen & Sobek 2004), which may be influenced by different factors than initial onset.

<sup>107</sup> Ross 2015.

<sup>108</sup> Cederman et al. 2011.

intermediate levels of political freedom appear to be the most vulnerable to civil war onset.<sup>109</sup> The precise impact of ethnic divisions, a topic I will explore in greater depth in the following chapter, is the subject of significant debate. Many theorists speculate that ethno-linguistic diversity is likely to contribute to higher vulnerability to civil war,<sup>110</sup> but significant time has been devoted to discovering the precise nature of this relationship. Montalvo & Reynal-Querol 2004, for example, argue that analysis should focus on the level of parity between the two largest ethnic groups vying for control of a country, rather than overall diversity. Finally, geographic issues – including both a state’s international region and characteristics of the terrain within the country – have also been regularly investigated as possible contributors to civil war vulnerability.<sup>111</sup>

This prior literature on the precise impact of different variables illustrates two important points regarding our current understanding of civil wars. First, as noted above, the breadth of apparent contributing factors that have been observed to correlate with civil war violence illustrates the multifaceted origins of this violence. Civil wars, even those that are apparently fought over a specific well-defined issue, seem to emerge from the confluence of several factors and vulnerabilities. Their origins reside at least as much in deep structural and institutional characteristics of the state as they do in any singular inciting incident or schism. Second, despite the extent of research that has been conducted to date, it is also clear that a tremendous amount of the variation in civil war onset remains unexplained. Civil war remains a deeply complicated subject, with a host of local and international factors contributing to its unpredictability and increasing the difficulty of preventing and resolving the violence it generates. It is thus incumbent on researchers to examine the many different forces that potentially incentivize political conflict and violence and explore the role that such forces might play in contributing to a society’s vulnerability to the types of escalating patterns of conflict that contribute to widespread civil war.

### ***The Impact of Kinship and Political Dynasties on Civil War Violence***

With the diverse variety of factors that have been shown to contribute to a state’s vulnerability to civil war violence, it is worthwhile to question whether the presence of dynastic actors and political patterns might also serve as a consistent contributor to increased civil war violence. Family relationships generate fierce emotions and loyalties and are intimately associated with many political actors’ wealth and social relationships. It is thus reasonable to posit that increased politicization of these relationships may have an impact on political violence. To address this question, it is first worth considering whether politically powerful kinship networks tend to promote violence and instability at all, or whether their impact is primarily to incentivize stable cooperation. Much of the literature on kinship, after all, focuses on the cooperative dimensions of the phenomenon – kin altruism and close associations along familial lines are widely observed among human beings, and strong family ties are often viewed as a

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<sup>109</sup> For a more thorough analysis of this topic, see Hegre 2001 and Vreeland 2008.

<sup>110</sup> The empirical evidence for such claims remains subject to debate. Fearon & Laitin 2003, for example, found no evidence that ethnic diversity correlates with civil war once other control variables were included. Blimes 2006 offers a compelling rebuttal, arguing that there is no evidence of a direct impact from ethnic heterogeneity on the likelihood of civil war, but that ethnic diversity may have a secondary effect by indirectly creating conditions more conducive to civil war.

<sup>111</sup> For further discussion of the geographic contributors to civil war, see Buhaug & Gates 2002 and Kathman 2010.

collaborative support network and a stabilizing force for a community.<sup>112</sup> Supporters of traditional institutions can accurately point out that kinship-based traditions often play a critical role in conflict management and local administration in many developing states.<sup>113</sup> In Yemen, tribal negotiations are a ubiquitous element in conflict resolution and policy implementation,<sup>114</sup> while in the *rido* conflicts of the Philippines mediation is very often a specialized role adopted by female kin including mothers, sisters, aunts, and wives.<sup>115</sup> Internationally, perceived bonds of kinship at the highest tiers of the aristocracy arguably helped solidify Europe's Concert of Europe following the expulsion of the *Ancien Régime*'s most successful challenger, Napoleon, and his effort to systematically replace established monarchs with his own Bonapartist dynasties.<sup>116</sup>

There is good reason to be skeptical, however, of dynasticism's capacity to function as a force for peace and stability in a society.<sup>117</sup> While dynasties and kin networks can certainly provide a structure and hierarchy that lends stability to a society, that structure tends to coincide with heavy levels of repressive violence and an "honor culture" mentality dedicated to maintaining kin loyalties through reciprocal violence between kin networks.<sup>118</sup> This is perhaps most apparent in the widespread tradition of *vendettas* in societies where kinship ties are relied on to maintain order.<sup>119</sup> Cultures with strong vendetta and blood revenge traditions rely heavily on family networks to keep the peace, but this peace is typically enforced with brutal retaliatory violence and aggressive norms of reciprocal justice that can often force families into cycles of retribution and escalating threats.<sup>120</sup> Precisely why cultures that entrench kin networks tend to break out into these patterns of violence – and whether the ultimate cause of that pattern rests in evolutionary instincts, self-interested strategy, or cultural norms of behavior – is a matter of debate that I will explore in much greater depth in the next chapter. But at present it suffices to note that any political order imposed by strong kinship hierarchies tends to be vulnerable to two inherent instabilities which are likely to introduce uncertainty and contestation into the political system. Those instabilities manifest as exclusivity and unpredictability, respectively. First, kin

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<sup>112</sup> For example, studies often focus on the social and economic value of cooperation along kin lines, such as among immigrant communities (Boyd 1989) and in family-owned businesses (Casson 1999).

<sup>113</sup> Scott 1998; Collins 2003 provides a detailed analysis of this dynamic in the context of Central Asia.

<sup>114</sup> Weir 2007.

<sup>115</sup> Female roles in the hyper-masculine feuding culture of the southern Philippines operate according to complex gender mechanics. Female relatives are regularly sent as mediators both to avoid having a peace delegation misperceived as a violent raid, and also because attacking women is often seen as cowardly and dishonorable. Wives and mothers are also perceived as exercising a powerful role in determining household expenditure, and as being less constrained by the rules of kinship to unerringly support their husband's kin, and thus in many cases their commitments are perceived as more credible and desirable than those of the male head of the household (Doro 2014 p. 186).

<sup>116</sup> Haas 2005 p. 75.

<sup>117</sup> A skepticism that will be further supported by the empirical evidence provided in the following chapters.

<sup>118</sup> Nisbett & Cohen 1996.

<sup>119</sup> The term "vendetta" originates from Corsican and Sicilian societies, referencing the tradition of blood feuds among families (Wilson 2003). Similar traditions reportedly have deep roots in historical Italian culture, as described in Dean 1997. Among other European countries, the Balkan states also receive significant attention for the region's historic traditions of blood revenge (Boehm 1984). Otterbein & Otterbein 1965 and Ericksen & Horton 1992 provide further cross-cultural analyses of similar cultural traditions in other parts of the world.

<sup>120</sup> Indeed, enforcement isn't merely directed externally at other groups, but is also heavily imposed within the kin network. In the stereotypical feuding society, this enforcement manifests as constant social pressure on men to avoid any acts of submissiveness or dishonor, but it also comes in more direct forms of violence – particularly against female kin (Chesler 2010).

networks are inherently exclusionary, to a degree even more pronounced than similar phenomena such as ethnicity and religion. Kin networks function by distinguishing a relatively small population of members from a broader population of non-members, and by compelling members to pursue goals that benefit this exclusive membership. As a result, even in cases where different kin networks reliably interact with and negotiate with one another, strong kin-based institutions are likely to be highly competitive and focused on demonstrating the strength and commitment of members to rivals. Second, kinship-based hierarchies are – over the long term – highly unreliable and subject to radical changes in strength, quality, and composition of membership due to uncertainties inherent in human fertility, mortality, sex ratios, and biological inheritance. Uncertainties inherent in predicting how many children a group of kin will have, what sex they will be, and whether they will reliably show the same capabilities and motivations as their parents, mean that any effort to manage kin-based authority through strategic marriages or power-sharing alliances are highly vulnerable to unexpected complications. Perversely, the primary tool available to control for unforeseen events – producing higher numbers of children when possible – is itself likely to lead to stronger internal rivalries and fracturing of alliances as siblings and cousins compete for finite heritable resources and the family as a whole suffers from a crisis of “too many heirs, too little land.”<sup>121</sup> Unpredictability means that power balances and political alliances in a kinship-based system have to be relitigated regularly, and exclusivity means that this litigation is likely to be heavily contested when it occurs. Combined together, these two characteristics of dynastic systems are likely to feed on one another and create cyclical patterns of violence among competing kin groups.

But if dynastic and intensely kinship-based societies are prone to violent parochial contestations, does this necessarily mean that this violence will incentivize large-scale civil war? To Western audiences, accustomed as we are to attribute civil wars to widespread ethnic, ideological, or factional conflicts, the connection between these two levels of violence may at first appear implausible. Few civil wars, after all, are explicitly fought over dynastic succession or an elite family’s inherited claim to authority.<sup>122</sup> But as I have suggested earlier, civil wars are complex conflicts and typically emerge from a confluence of factors. And while individual small-scale conflicts are unlikely to impact war at the national level, a persistent and pervasive pattern of small-scale violence can conceivably impact the likelihood of larger conflicts in a large variety of ways. This proposed role of dynasticism and kin-based conflict as an inciter and exacerbator of civil wars is not without precedence in prior literature. Kalyvas’ analysis of the Greek Civil War, in particular, focuses heavily on the role played by feuding kin networks as major drivers of conflict.<sup>123</sup> In Kalyvas’ account, large belligerent organizations in a civil war are dependent on local civilians for information so that they can target collaborators supporting the other side. As a result, states and rebel groups in civil wars are in a constant strategic struggle to avoid being misled into supporting the personal animosities and preexisting enmities of local actors – an outcome that these organizations never entirely succeed in avoiding.<sup>124</sup> Along with inter-family vendettas, marriage markets have also been examined as a source of political

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<sup>121</sup> Williams 1970.

<sup>122</sup> Even uprisings devoted to unseating a sovereign who inherited their position – such as the Iranian Revolution or the ongoing Syrian revolt against Bashar al-Assad – are typically understood in revolutionary terms, rather than within the context of dynastic disputes between competing families or members of the same family.

<sup>123</sup> Kalyvas 2006.

<sup>124</sup> Another largely compatible account of the role that tribal feuds have played in directing violence in Chechnya can be found in Souleimanov & Aliyev 2015.

violence – generally showing that overly restrictive marriage markets can produce a large number of disaffected and socially marginalized young men, who in turn may be more amenable to recruit into violent organizations to achieve a sense of purpose or for income to afford a marriage match.<sup>125</sup> These studies in turn can be compared to the broader literature on demographic contributors to civil war, where it has been suggested that other factors such as a rapidly growing youthful population<sup>126</sup> or a sex imbalance between males and females<sup>127</sup> may also drive increases in political violence. Taken together, these avenues of research support the hypothesis that civil wars are heavily shaped by preexisting social networks, including those built around kinship.<sup>128</sup> Though kin networks may not serve as the most obvious cause of belligerence, they nonetheless heavily shape the behavior of actors and the likelihood of civil war onset or recurrence.

The vendettas and feuds among dynastic kin networks can potentially escalate into a contributor of broader civil war violence through several mechanisms.<sup>129</sup> First and foremost, low-level kin-based conflict, particularly dynastic violence among elites, can degrade the authority of the state and weaken its claim to possessing a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence.<sup>130</sup> This degradation of the state’s authority can be a result of both material and sociological consequences ensuing from intra-elite feuding. Materially, regular privatized violence can impede the ability of a state to function in an area – even when the violence isn’t intentionally directed against the state – simply by preventing state forces such as police, military, or aid workers from traveling in a territory. More psychologically, the existence of competing traditional norms surrounding rules of inheritance, justice, or property can contribute to the creation of a “hybrid state” relying on both formal and informal governance rules – which, in turn, can undermine the perceived reliability and legitimacy of the formal legal system by which a state administers local affairs.<sup>131</sup> The weakening of state authority in situations of persistent inter-dynastic feuding can in turn encourage the rise of clientelistic behavior, as less powerful families and individuals choose to align themselves with a powerful local faction rather than the relatively constrained and powerless state.

Dynasties also naturally lend themselves toward patrimonial dynamics, as noted in the previous section. The perceived loyalty and shared interests among relatives often allows kin groups to cooperate and distribute resources more effectively than many other networks. Over time, patrimonial networks built up from local dynasties and kin networks can even extend into influencing or controlling operatives of state authority themselves – such as local police and military forces – and thus undermine the autonomy of the state and its credibility as the final

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<sup>125</sup> Kanazawa 2009, Thyne & Schroeder 2012 and Hudson & Matfess 2017.

<sup>126</sup> Goldstone 2002 and Urdal 2006.

<sup>127</sup> Hudson & Den Boer 2004, Caprioli 2005, and Hesketh & Xing 2006.

<sup>128</sup> Further discussion on various social networks in civil war, and their role in shaping recruitment and participation, is included in Wood 2008, Kilavuz 2009, and Parkinson 2013.

<sup>129</sup> At their core, these various mechanisms all reflect ways in which dynasties and kin-based policies tend to strengthen and perpetuate the “conflict trap,” of failing institutions and perverse incentives that state’s at risk of civil war are susceptible to (Collier 2003).

<sup>130</sup> Weber notes that the monopoly on violence represents one of the most critical sources of a state’s continued legitimacy and sustainability. States that fail to maintain such a monopoly risk being undermined by domestic factions and alternate institutions capable of challenging the state (Weber 2009B).

<sup>131</sup> Contested legitimacy or inheritance claims can exacerbate the uncertainty surrounding two-tiered legal systems, where both formal and customary traditions hold contested authority within the same territory. For more on the complex issues that can arise from these tensions and other dilemmas surrounding land ownership, see Peters 2004 and Chimhowu & Woodhouse 2006.

political authority in a territory. If the state lacks popular support, this subversion by local patrimonial networks may even be initially popular.<sup>132</sup> But the entrenchment of dynastic networks through the construction of patrimonial relationships is ultimately destabilizing because it exacerbates the instabilities inherent in kin relationships. A group of kin cooperating together can often prove remarkably effective at outperforming rival factions and taking control of business opportunities or political offices. But after an extended period in office, and with the infusion of resources and power that comes with success, the alliances that propel kin networks to victory are prone to fracture into intense rivalries – if not at first, then almost certainly within a few generations as relationships realign unpredictably. When fragmentation within a kin network appears, it can introduce significant uncertainty and strife – effective dynastic hierarchies tend to put close kin at the center of political authority to maximize effective cooperation, but this shared authority and comparable dynastic legitimacy means close kin can become dangerous political threats when disputes arise. For example, dictators that place their kin in a powerful position have in the past found themselves easily unseated by these kinsmen, who share many of the same social connections and dynastic patronage relationships. Representative incidents include Obiang Mbasogo’s overthrow of his uncle Macías Nguema in Equatorial Guinea<sup>133</sup> or Jean-Bédél Bokassa’s ouster of his cousin David Dacko in the Central African Republic.<sup>134</sup>

When violence becomes widespread in a country, the continued presence and influence of belligerent dynastic elites can also significantly impair the ability of the state and counter-rebel forces to properly perceive and predict the actions of rebel forces. As exemplified in the incidents described at the beginning of Section II of this chapter, the presence of both feuding families and more directly political antagonists can contribute to significant confusion and strategic miscalculations. Because dynastic elites possess their own parochial incentives that are only peripherally related to the stated political goals of the different sides in a civil war, elites represent an unpredictable factor in conflicts. Attempts to either predict the actions of enemies, or to negotiate an end to hostilities, can be seriously undermined if a significant amount of violence is misattributed to the wrong actor or if different groups’ goals are confused and conflated.<sup>135</sup> And since local dynastic networks will often exert an influence on different sides in a conflict – such as by sending family members to join one side or the other, or influencing how different sides can operate in a territory – these dynasties’ agendas can often impact the ultimate behavior of rebel groups or state forces directly.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, in the most severe cases, dynastic elites focused on their families’ influence and political position may have an incentive to use their influence to prolong a conflict even when an opportunity to achieve peace becomes available.<sup>137</sup>

Finally, even in scenarios where a rebellion fails or has been successfully resolved, the persistence and recurrence of dynastic and inheritance disputes across generations makes feuding families particularly susceptible to functioning as spoilers likely to re-litigate and reopen

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<sup>132</sup> Manzetti & Wilson 2007.

<sup>133</sup> Baynham 1986.

<sup>134</sup> Titley 1997.

<sup>135</sup> See Cunningham 2013 for a description of a similar dynamic, though not one specifically involving dynastic actors.

<sup>136</sup> Once again, Kalyvas 2006 presents perhaps the most thorough extant analysis of this dynamic between local families and state-level belligerents, though Kalyvas conceptualizes families’ role as primarily informers rather than as co-belligerents.

<sup>137</sup> Keen 2000.

previously dormant conflicts.<sup>138</sup> Because dynastic legitimacy relies on appeals to history and the honor bestowed by ancestral figures, elites whose power relies either wholly or in part on ancestral claims to power, territory, or wealth are unlikely to easily relinquish long-standing disputes rooted in family honor. Family vendettas of this sort can be extremely resilient, reinforced through both increasingly internalized narratives vilifying rivals and by the sacrifices of family members who have suffered in previous conflicts. As a result, dynastic disputes can persist for generations, reemerging repeatedly to upset carefully negotiated peace agreements. The constant threat of a new round of inter-familial fighting injects uncertainty and fear into local peace agreements and makes it more likely that all sides will respond aggressively when a new period of feuding appears likely to emerge.

In summary, there is ample reason to hypothesize that highly dynastic and kin-based political institutions may be prone to the types of violence and instability that can ultimately contribute to a state's increased vulnerability to civil war outbreaks. Such a dynamic is consistent with both my original fieldwork observations and subsequent research. If this posited relationship is accurate, it helps shed new light on both the nature of dynasticism and civil wars. In the case of dynasticism, this observed relationship illustrates the continued salience and prevalence of dynasticism as a political phenomenon and showcases why it is crucial for political science to better understand dynastic politics. In the case of civil wars, dynasticism's role as a driver of conflict reinforces the importance of the phenomenon's origins in localized conflicts and prosaic motivations, which only gradually escalate and accumulate into a cascading large-scale war.

#### **Section IV** **Methodology and Plan for Dissertation**

In this introductory chapter, I have argued that both dynastic politics and political violence represent influential phenomena in contemporary politics. I have subsequently speculated that the two may have a previously understudied relationship with one another. In the following chapters, I will expand on these insights and present a series of interconnected studies dedicated to proving my thesis: that dynasticism plays a measurable role in increasing the likelihood of contemporary civil war violence. In the following two chapters, I will first present several possible theoretical mechanisms for why this might be the case and second will use evidence drawn from detailed records of European royal dynasties to conclude that dynasticism promotes political violence primarily as a result of the socially constructed nature of kin relationships. Specifically, I will propose that dynasticism tends to encourage large-scale political violence primarily because dynastic societies invest significant legitimacy in highly contestable forms of identity and authority – resulting not only in violence between non-kin, but also ironically in substantial violent contestation among competing families within the same kin network. Having identified this mechanism, the subsequent two chapters will show statistical evidence – both in an illustrative case study of the Philippines and in a broader global cross-national analysis – supporting my hypothesis that dynasticism has indeed correlated with higher rates of civil war violence in recent decades. In my concluding chapter, I will summarize these findings and offer a brief examination of how these insights can help us better understand

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<sup>138</sup> For more on the broader problem of spoilers in civil wars, see Stedman 1997 and Cunningham 2006.



political conflicts – using the ongoing Yemeni Civil War as a further illustrative case – before concluding with a discussion on the research and policy implications of my argument.

Throughout the dissertation, I seek to use a nested model design<sup>139</sup> to both test the plausibility of my hypotheses and to maximize the generalizability of my conclusions. As I have described earlier in this chapter, my initial research relied heavily on qualitative evaluation of influential cases to aid in theory building and to initially identify my variables of interest.<sup>140</sup> Much of my subsequent dissertation work is thus devoted to quantitatively testing data at different levels of analysis to better understand the mechanisms through which dynasticism operates and to provide stronger empirical evidence that the observed impact of dynasticism isn't merely epiphenomenal or a byproduct of other social forces. My priority in expanding on my initial intuitions was to systematically examine how well my initial intuitions about dynasticism systematically fit with security issues in Yemen and the Philippines, what the mechanisms were that caused dynasticism to impact broader civil war violence, and how well conclusions drawn from my initial cases could be generalized to a broader international dynamic.<sup>141</sup> This multi-level design allows this dissertation to offer a broad theoretical discussion about the nature of dynastic political violence, but also leaves ample room for further research using alternative designs or testing alternate cases. In particular, analysis of further cases and the use of alternative possible variables as indicators for dynasticism and its effects would represent valuable additions to the broad research project presented in this dissertation and would address many of the questions that remain regarding the understudied role of dynasticism in contemporary global security.

One important caveat is worth noting at the outset, since it represents a likely-inevitable methodological issue surrounding any study focused on the politics of kinship. This methodological problem surrounds the question of endogeneity – specifically in the case of this dissertation, the recurring uncertainty whether the kin and dynastic relationships I study are promoting violence, or whether instead they emerge and persist in reaction to ongoing and foreseen potential violence. In this dissertation, I tend to present this causal arrow in one direction – with dynasticism generating conflict – largely because traditional marriage patterns tend to respond to long-term societal pressures, while violence tends to be more immediately reactive. But marriage is a highly non-random phenomenon, and it's almost certainly true that causation also runs in the opposite direction.<sup>142</sup> It is very reasonable to speculate that violent societies may limit individuals' social mobility and marriage options in ways that force individuals to reinforce their existing kin relationships and build up dynastic patronage loyalties,<sup>143</sup> or that families specifically make marriage alliances based on their expectations regarding which other families are more likely to attack them in the future. When possible, I have attempted to highlight any potential endogeneity issues and to use measures (such as long-term marriage rates) to minimize the probability that any observed correlation is a result of overly rapid reaction to recent increases in violence. But rather than dwell overly long on this endogeneity problem, I caution readers here that it is often more helpful to conceptualize the relationship between dynasticism and violence as a self-reinforcing cycle – a feedback loop of

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<sup>139</sup> Lieberman 2005.

<sup>140</sup> Further discussion on the value of case study research can be found in Ragin & Becker 1992, Gomm et al. 2000, George & Bennett 2005, and Gerring 2006.

<sup>141</sup> On the perils of relying too heavily on a small selection of cases, see Geddes 1990.

<sup>142</sup> Besteman 1996, for example, argues that particular actors used violence to weaken independent institutions and centralize authority along clan lines so that “the clan basis of recent warfare was the result—not the cause—of contemporary conflicts and competition.” (p. 129).

<sup>143</sup> For more on violence and crime's impact on economic mobility, see Sharkey & Torrats-Espinosa 2017.

mutually reinforcing patterns of violent attacks and marriage choices that together generate the type of dynamics I describe in the following chapters.

As this chapter has suggested, both dynasticism and civil war violence remain endemic to modern politics, and there is ample empirical evidence to suggest that some type of relationship exists between these two phenomena. The following chapters will be devoted to building on this observation and proving a coherent theory about this relationship. In subsequent chapters, I will demonstrate that dynasticism is a reliable driver of civil war conflicts, and that the primary mechanism of this causal relationship lies in the socially constructed nature of kinship relationships themselves – as complex social relationships subject to constant negotiation and contestation, kin ties generate ample opportunities for violent conflicts to emerge in spite of the supposedly inflexible nature of kinship loyalties.

The remainder of this dissertation will support this argument as follows. In my second chapter, I will delve more deeply into the theoretical foundations of my argument and the mechanisms through which dynasticism might generate political conflicts. I will begin with a review of the ethnic conflict literature in political science – in many ways the most comparable literature to my own study of dynastic violence. Next, I will build on that analysis through a review examining how several other social science disciplines have studied the issue of kinship. Combining these two literatures together, I will proceed to show how the three main approaches to studying ethnic conflict – essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism – might all be applied to the narrower subject of violence both between kin networks and within the same kin network. I will demonstrate that all three approaches have value as possible explanatory frameworks for understanding why dynasticism might promote violent outcomes. I will then conclude with a brief discussion about some of the theoretical implications of these approaches.

In the third chapter, I will test the three explanatory frameworks using the most detailed case available for researchers of dynastic violence – Europe's early modern period. This time-period, in many ways the height of monarchy and aristocracy, is one in which we possess detailed records of the genealogical relationships between different monarchs. Moreover, insofar as international relations were heavily shaped by dynastic relationships, the interstate wars in this period also represent uniquely formal and well-documented examples of dynastic feuding. By viewing historical Europe as a uniquely well-documented test case, we are thus able to test different theoretical predictions in detail and determine which approach best describes the mechanisms through which dynasticism influenced violence. I take advantage of these records by assembling detailed genealogical records of all great power heads of state in Europe from 1495 to 1791 and use animal breeding software to calculate the dyadic relatedness between each ruler. In my analysis, I proceed to make falsifiable predictions based on the essentialist, instrumentalist, and constructivist approaches, respectively, and compare these predictions to the results of a statistical dyadic analysis of European dynastic relationships. This analysis shows that the predominant vectors of conflict are most consistent with constructivist predictions: warfare in the time period appears not to have been guided primarily by evolutionary imperatives or the most rational instrumental calculus, but rather was based primarily on socially-emphasized distinctions such as the difference between patrilineal kin versus all other relatives. Indeed, in instances where close kin possessed a culturally ambiguous relationship with one another, violence from competing inheritance claims and uncertain loyalties was significantly increased. I thus conclude, in the absence of similarly detailed evidence in later cases, that the most likely mechanism for dynastic conflict is a constructivist dynamic – one in which the prioritization of

familial relationships combines with the ambiguity of kinship ties to create a persistent vulnerability in dynastic systems for conflict, contestation, and competing legitimacy claims.

In my fourth chapter, I move to the present day to examine one of my two inspirational cases and demonstrate how dynasticism can potentially impact contemporary political violence. In the Philippines, dynasticism is endemic to the political system, and anecdotal reports suggest that rivalries between families often erupt into political violence. This dynamic is particularly prominent in southwestern Mindanao, where these tensions combine with a culturally entrenched tradition of *rido* clan feuds to defend family honor, and where powerful families have a history of intertwining their personal feuds with the broader ethnic separatist insurgency. To test how well these anecdotal accounts reflect an empirically testable reality, I compare the level of dynasticism in province-level offices – governors and elected representatives – to province-level data on civil war attacks gathered from the UCDP/PRIO civil war dataset. I rely on traditional Philippine naming conventions – namely, the relative rarity of overlapping family names among unrelated individuals, and the Philippine tradition of using the mother’s maiden name as a child’s middle name – to estimate which political officials are related to prior officials with a higher degree of precision than is possible in cultures where only a father’s patronym is passed down to offspring. Building up a province-year list of observations, I find that civil war violence is significantly correlated to the polarization of political offices across dynasties. In other words, both provinces with no dynasties in power or those with only a single hegemonic dynasty in power are relatively less likely to experience new incidents of civil war violence, while provinces that have two relatively evenly matched dynasties competing for political offices are the most likely to experience civil war violence. I conclude that these results support my hypothesis that civil war in the Philippines is partially driven and exacerbated by violence committed by rival political dynasties.

In the fifth chapter, I test the generalizability of my conclusions by examining whether or not kinship structures associated with dynasticism correlate to higher rates of civil war violence across the world. Because the previous methods for estimating dynastic relationships in early modern Europe and the contemporary Philippines weren’t feasible for a global analysis, I instead rely on a proxy for high levels of dynasticism and powerful kinship ties in a society: rates of consanguineous marriage in a given state. Consanguineous marriages are those marriages between people with preexisting kinship ties. They are generally associated with the types of strong family networks also characteristic of dynastic societies. Moreover, because of the health risks associated with breeding too often within related populations, a relatively extensive cross-national medical literature exists documenting the practice in different states. I build on the premiere dataset of consanguinity rates to assemble a new and more extensive cross-national estimate for 88 countries and compare those estimates to UCDP/PRIO data on civil war onset. I find that consanguineous marriage is indeed correlated with higher rates of civil war violence across the contemporary world and show that this relationship is unlikely to be the result of alternate explanations such as economic development, urbanization, or religious composition of the population.

In my sixth and final chapter, I summarize the results of my prior chapters, and discuss the potential implications and future possibilities presented by this dissertation. I first review how my chapters fit together to present a consistent narrative of dynasticism’s important and understudied role as a driver of political violence. I next demonstrate how these conclusions can help lead to a new perspective on ongoing conflicts by applying my results to a qualitative

historical analysis of Yemen and its ongoing civil war.<sup>144</sup> Through the lens of dynastic violence, I demonstrate that the primary driver of this struggle has been the result of inter- and intra-tribal disputes over dynastic access to patronage networks, and question the more common tendency in the policy community to view the Yemeni conflict as a result of religious differences or as a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Indeed, through my argument, I show how the consistent inability of foreign intervenors to address the dynastic tensions at the heart of the conflict has helped exacerbate and extend the Yemeni civil war. Building on this specific case, I conclude this chapter and the dissertation by examining some broad policy implications of this research project, and then discussing possible future research paths that might continue to help expand our understanding of dynasticism's role in modern political security issues.

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<sup>144</sup> For the sake of brevity, I have opted not to devote an entire chapter to Yemen's case. Instead, I will present it among my concluding thoughts as an illustrative example of how future case work can synthesize the insights presented in this dissertation to analyze other conflicts in new, dynasty-focused ways.

## Chapter 2

### Kinship and Conflict:

### Theoretical Background on the Relationship

### Between Dynasticism and Political Violence

*“Not to take revenge for the father is not to behave like a son.”*

*Zi Shenzi, the Gongyangzhuan<sup>1</sup>*

*“The strength of a family, like the strength of an army, is in its loyalty to each other.”*

*Mario Puzo, The Family*

**Abstract:** In this chapter, I present the theoretical foundations for subsequent case studies and analysis. I devote the first half of this chapter to reviewing two social science literatures with clear parallels to the issue of dynasticism and dynastic violence. First, I discuss the political science literature concerning ethnic conflict, with a primary focus on the three prevalent theoretical approaches to the subject – essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism. Next, I review the extensive history of analysis into kinship and family relationships in other social scientific fields such as sociology, economics, and anthropology. In the second half of this chapter, I combine insights from these two literatures to present my own framework for understanding dynastic violence and the possible mechanisms through which it might come about. I borrow the three theoretical approaches associated with ethnic violence and discuss their applicability for understanding two observed variants of dynastic violence – inter-kin violence taking place between two or more distinct kin groups, and intra-kin violence taking place within a given kinship network. I examine the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and discuss their respective theoretical predictions. At the end of the chapter, I complete my theoretical analysis by proposing falsifiable predictions that I will use to test and confirm dynasticism’s influence as a driver of broader political conflicts in subsequent chapters.

### Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I presented a broad hypothesis that dynasticism and kin-based conflicts increase the likelihood of civil war violence. In that chapter, I offered a general analysis based on anecdotal evidence suggesting that small-scale conflicts based on kinship might escalate into broader political instability. According to my hypothesis, dynasticism is comparable to other social phenomena such as ethnicity and religion,<sup>2</sup> in shaping and incentivizing some varieties of contemporary political violence. In countries where dynasticism and kin-based institutions – particularly when combined with weak and easily penetrated formal institutions – I predict that the antagonisms associated with dynasticism will generally lead to a higher likelihood of civil war occurrence. But before testing this hypothesis empirically, it is first

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<sup>1</sup> A collection of Confucian commentaries, as quoted in Roetz 1993, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> I discuss ethnicity’s impact on political violence in Section I of this chapter. Space does not permit a similar overview of analyses of the religious dimensions of political violence. Works specifically dealing with religion and civil war include Toft 2007 and Kim & Choi 2017. Most studies on religious violence focus instead on terrorism rather than larger-scale civil wars – insightful works on this topic are abundant and include Rapoport 2006 and Berman 2011.

worthwhile to refine this initial speculative proposition through a deeper theoretical exploration of the assumptions on which my analysis rests. While it may be initially thought-provoking to present dynasticism as a driver of modern civil war violence, this hypothesis raises further issues that need to be resolved in order to truly understand any observed relationship. Why does kinship drive violence? How do kin relationships influence the decision-making of individual actors, and what specific actions are those relationships likely to compel? Where, when, and between whom is violence likely to manifest? These questions are of paramount importance, since they will guide subsequent research in deciding what types of relationships are most important to observe and which forms of violence either confirm or refute predictions. Kinship and dynasticism are broad, multifaceted phenomena to which we are likely to attach a variety of unexamined assumptions – as a result, those researching this topic should think carefully about the specific mechanisms through which it is expected to influence outcomes such as political violence.

This chapter is devoted to achieving this deeper understanding by examining different theoretical frameworks that researchers can use to understand how and why kin relationships might impact political processes. Because dynastic politics remains an undertheorized phenomenon in the political science literature, it is worth devoting particular consideration to the theoretical foundations and microfoundations<sup>3</sup> on which any analysis relies and to consider alternative approaches to thinking about dynastic phenomena. Different theoretical approaches can have a significant impact on what conclusions are drawn from observed data, which in turn can influence how subsequent results are interpreted. And all but the most cursory of investigations into patterns of dynastic violence soon reveal complexities that demand such theoretical precision. Feuds and vendettas, for example, don't merely occur between rival families and kin networks, but also manifest regularly among and between relatives, as in cases of intra-kin conflicts over status or inheritance.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, dynastic and kin-based violence can often appear sporadic and protean when observed, manifesting at times in intensive fighting but also punctuated by long periods of quiescence, cooperation, or intermarriage. Different theoretical approaches can offer different predictions regarding when and where such violence is likely to manifest, and how such violence can be resolved. Thus, for both academics and policymakers, the first step in understanding dynastic violence is to first explore the different theoretical lenses through which we might understand this phenomenon. Examining and evaluating these different approaches and thinking through their implications is a necessary step to ensure that we avoid approaching subsequent empirical results with the wrong assumptions and, in the words of Green and Shapiro 1996, “study the right phenomena in the wrong ways.”<sup>5</sup>

To accomplish this goal, this chapter proceeds as follows. In the first half of the paper, I examine two prior social scientific literatures which offer valuable insights and prior analysis on which to build possible theoretical approaches for understanding dynastic violence. In the first section, I begin my analysis by discussing the political science and security studies literature that offers perhaps the closest parallel to the focus of this dissertation: the sub-field of ethnic violence. Once a neglected field of enquiry, the ethnic conflict sub-field has expanded significantly in recent decades to become an extensively analyzed topic of research. Prior authors' works examining how and why ethnic-level identities and differences can potentially

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<sup>3</sup> For further discussion on the microfoundations of social science, see Little 1998 and Blyth 2003.

<sup>4</sup> In early modern Europe, for example, uncles were infamously unreliable allies for kings and princes, to the point that such internecine conflict became a dramatic trope. At least two of Shakespeare's plays – Hamlet and Richard III – dramatized historical accounts of uncles betraying their nephews to seize a throne.

<sup>5</sup> Page 3.

generate or influence political violence offers a strong theoretical template for how we might understand why family-level networks might similarly influence violent political disputes. My review of this literature will focus on describing the three major approaches associated with the subfield of ethnic conflict – essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism – and explaining how each of these different theoretical lenses offer distinct insights into aspects of ethnic conflict.

As I noted in the previous chapter, prior political scientists have often explored the influence of family networks and identities on political processes, but these prior studies have generally avoided deep analysis into the nature of kinship itself. To correct for this omission, Section II of this chapter will branch out from the field of political science to examine how related social sciences have conceptualized the nature and impact of kinship and family. In this section, I will briefly touch on several major fields of enquiry, including evolutionary psychology, the study of kin networks in sociology, and economics, and the anthropological sub-field of kinship studies. This literature review will focus on presenting a general overview of some of the major concepts in these approaches, and on highlighting some of the distinctions and differing assumptions associated with particular approaches to the study of kinship. Of particular note are the major transformations that have taken place over time within anthropology's kinship studies literature – changes that reflect that field's expanding appreciation for the tremendous variation and complexity inherent in human kin identities. While space limitations preclude me from offering more than the briefest overview of these disparate approaches, this broad literature review will nonetheless contribute important concepts that help illustrate how kinship networks tend to function and influence social behavior.

In Section III of this chapter, I will attempt to synthesize insights drawn from the ethnic conflict and kinship literatures to present an analytic framework for understanding the nature of kin- and dynasty-based conflict. First, I will argue that the three primary theoretical approaches prevalent in the ethnic conflict literature can be applied effectively to the study of kin-based violence. Next, I will disaggregate the concept of kin-based violence itself into two distinct sub-categories – violence that is enacted between unrelated kin groups, and violence that occurs between members of the same kin network. For both of these types of violence, inter-kin and intra-kin, I will apply the three theoretical approaches of essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism to illustrate how each approach might explain each type of violence. After this discussion, I will compare these explanatory frameworks and discuss some of the conceptual implications of this analysis. While all three approaches are likely to contribute valuable insights and may be appropriate in some analytic circumstances, I will tentatively conclude that each of them offers potentially distinct predictions which can be used to empirically test how well each approach models real-world outcomes. I will finish the chapter with a brief discussion of several falsifiable predictions that are shared across all three approaches, and which will allow for future testing into whether or not dynastic violence truly serves as a continuing source for political conflict as I predict.

### ***Section I*** ***Approaches to the Study of Ethnic Conflict***

The influence of family and kinship on political violence has not been a prominent subject of enquiry in political science at present. While some valuable research efforts – including many of the works discussed in the previous chapter – have shed crucial light on

kinship's role in conflict and other political issues, research and discourse on the topic remains largely undertheorized. Different scholars bring with them a wide variety of assumptions about why political actors incorporate their families into their decision-making processes and political alliances, and these varying assumptions can both bias conclusions and hamper the collective accumulation of knowledge across researchers. It is thus important for those exploring this topic to think carefully about how and why kinship links may influence manifestations of political violence. And conveniently, while kinship-based political violence is a markedly understudied problem, the topic lies conceptually adjacent to – and overlaps with – a much more thoroughly studied and debated phenomenon: ethnic violence. As dynastic conflict is now, ethnic violence was once a relatively peripheral field of study in the social sciences.<sup>6</sup> Prior to the 1980's, ethnic conflict and violence were generally undertheorized, with most research that touched on the topic focusing primarily on this violence as a side-effect of administrative failure or institutional transitions, rather than deeply investigating the dynamics of these conflicts themselves.<sup>7</sup> Sustained discussion and analysis surrounding ethnic conflicts themselves largely emerged in response to the 1985 publication of Horowitz's *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, a work that reviewed many of the diffuse strands of research from prior authors and sparked an academic debate over the precise processes and causes of ethnic politics. This growing interest in the dynamics of ethnic conflict eventually grew intertwined with research projects focusing more heavily on civil war violence in the post-Cold War era,<sup>8</sup> resulting in a robust and conceptually diverse literature examining the issue of ethnic violence from a wide variety of different perspectives.

This existing literature on ethnic conflicts represents a rich template for those seeking to examine how dynastic conflict might similarly impact political processes. Ethnicity itself is deeply intertwined with the concepts of family and kin – as Horowitz notes, “The language of ethnicity is the language of kinship,” and ethnicity itself can be thought of as “a form of greatly extended kinship.”<sup>9</sup> The conceptual interlinkage between these two issues allows many of the

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<sup>6</sup> Ethnic conflict was colorfully described in Horowitz 1985 as “a backwater of the social sciences,” (p. 13).

<sup>7</sup> Works in this earlier period tended to present ethnic conflicts as an epiphenomenal symptom of governance failure in “plural societies (Rabushka & Shepsle 1971, Lijphart 1977), or discussed them in the context of a broader “modernization” process of development (Deutsch 1966, Bates 1974).

<sup>8</sup> Snow 1996, Kalyvas 2001, Sambanis 2001, and Newman 2004

<sup>9</sup> Horowitz 1985 p. 57; This of course raises the question of where “kinship” ends and “ethnicity” begins, and whether there is even merit in developing a concept of kinship-based dynastic contestation distinct from ethnic conflict. In a very real sense, any distinction developed to separate the two concepts must necessarily be artificial – kinship at its boundaries fades into fictive ties and increasingly ephemeral ancestral links, until it becomes difficult to separate from the pseudo-kinship claimed between co-ethnics. Kin groups – particularly if we use an expansive definition that encompasses larger clan and tribal organizations – cannot always trace all of their members back to a single historically verified ancestor. And kinship, like ethnicity, also often becomes bound up in secondary identities – including those rooted in historical narratives and specific claims to territoriality – which further confuses any distinctions. But this artificiality does not negate the value of exploring such distinctions – and as Fearon 2003 (pp. 197-200) notes, all discussion of ethnic politics necessarily involves artificial categorization, since the precise boundaries that define different ethnic populations vary across societies, political contexts, and time periods. Reynal-Querol 2002 notes that three particular characteristics tend to be most common in segmenting populations into distinct ethnicities – language, religion, and color (p. 32; we might broaden the third of these to encompass “physical markers” more generally). But kin groups typically do not differ from their neighbors in any of these respects, defining their kin in narrower terms within this broad ethnic identity – Yemeni tribesmen, for example, feel a purportedly genealogy-based kinship to one another despite sharing with neighboring tribes the same ethnic Arab and national Yemeni identities, the same religion, and the same language. Kinship can thus be seen as a narrower identity than ethnicity – kinship is a shared identity based on claimed descent, just as ethnicity is, but lacks the type



theories and approaches developed for the study of ethnic conflict to be readily adapted and applied to the issue of dynasticism – as I will demonstrate in Section III of this chapter. Among researchers of ethnic conflicts, the preponderance of studies and analyses can be divided among three broad theoretical approaches: essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism.<sup>10</sup> This three-part division emerges primarily out of different researchers' theoretical assumptions regarding how ethnic cleavages emerge, what drives ethnicity's political salience, and why individual actors allow ethnicity to impact their behavior. This threefold distinction cannot necessarily be cleanly applied to all research on ethnic violence – with some works straddling the divide between approaches, and others presenting more fundamental critiques of current approaches to the study of ethnic violence.<sup>11</sup> But dividing the literature in this fashion highlights some of the most fundamental debates among scholars regarding how and why ethnicity can drive violence and which aspects of ethnic divisions can be argued to be most salient in explaining ethnicity's widespread political impact.

Among essentialist authors, the inertia and inescapability of ethnic hostilities is emphasized. Essentialist arguments treat ethnic identities and tensions across ethnic lines as effectively fixed and immutable characteristics of a population. As a result, ethnic groups in essentialist analyses are treated as separate and distinct polities with an inherent tendency to cooperate among themselves and against other ethnic groups. Different essentialists have presented alternative viewpoints regarding the precise origin of ethnic divisions and why they are predicted to be so strictly determinative. Classically, essentialist views on ethnicity have relied on primordialism – the view that ethnic identities emerge from generations of shared history and

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of expansive inclusiveness toward a large population sharing the same language or physical traits that also characterizes ethnicity.

Kinship is thus distinct from ethnicity both in the relatively smaller size of the associated group, but also in the generally more defined relationships and hierarchies connecting individuals to one another. Typically, ethno-linguistic groups are conceptualized as large-scale, horizontal constituency, with most members joined together in a homogenizing shared identity, perhaps with a small elite of notable intellectuals and elites operating in a leadership role. Relationships between co-ethnics are typically mediated by a broad conception of a singular ethnic identity of which they are both a part – members of the same ethnicity are typically portrayed as members of a shared fraternity and a common culture that unites them. By contrast, kin relationships are stereotypically characterized by much more defined, hierarchical relationships, wherein different generations and different forms of relatedness will often heavily inform how two individuals in a kin group are expected to relate to one another. Relationships between kin are not mediated solely by a general shared “family” identity, but also by a specific relational identity – fathers and sons are not expected to treat one another in a reciprocal fashion, nor will their relationship be interchangeable with the relationship between brothers. Even in the case of tribal extended kin organizations, where not all tribesmen can be expected to know one another and to have a clearly individualized relationship, tribal structures will still typically involve fairly strong hierarchies, with some families possessing a position of authority, and other families operating as clients beneath them. These defined hierarchies and smaller population sizes mean that kin networks are likely to be much more heavily defined by network effects. These kin networks will also regularly experience transformations to a degree that ethnic groups are rarely subject to, as old members at the top of a hierarchy die and new members are born. It is thus often important when studying kinship-based violence to examine the specific relationships and linkages that characterize a particular kin network at a particular time in ways that can be more easily abstracted when studying violence perpetrated by a large population of co-ethnics. Dynastic violence, while clearly related to ethnic violence, thus possesses its own unique dynamics and patterns, which deserve special attention and theories to properly analyze.

<sup>10</sup> Literature reviews that discuss versions of this divide include Tilley 1997, Brubaker & Laitin 1998 Kaufmann 2005, and Varshney 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Hale 2004, for example, argues for an approach more rooted in individual psychology, while Gilley 2004 and Chandra 2006 offer even more fundamental critiques of the entire concept of ethnic violence.

culture which cannot be easily overturned or circumvented through normal political processes.<sup>12</sup> This essentialist approach has grown less influential in recent years, due both to increased historical awareness of the often-amorphous nature of ethnic identities and to a better appreciation for the long-term cooperative nature of the vast majority of inter-ethnic community relations.<sup>13</sup> As a result, the essentialist arguments that remain most influential today tend to rely on more circumstantial variations of the approach – usually by arguing that ethnic divisions do not necessarily represent entrenched and permanent historical divisions, but that these ethnic identities nonetheless tend to become deeply hardened and entrenched in societies once populations begin to spiral into ethnic conflict. This more limited version of essentialism can itself be further divided among researchers that propose different mechanisms for this hardening of ethnic cleavages – including those that hypothesize that biological instincts may encourage co-ethnic cooperation in periods of stress,<sup>14</sup> or those that point to less tangible psychological and social processes to explain the solidification of ethnic cleavages in divided societies.<sup>15</sup>

Regardless of the precise mechanisms involved, essentialist arguments are characterized by their focus on the deep and entrenched divisions between ethnic groups in a conflict, and by their profound skepticism regarding the possibility that material incentives or cultural norms can contribute meaningfully to the breakdown of ethnic divisions in a reasonable timeframe. While an essentialist analysis does not necessarily predict ethnic conflict to be a ubiquitous problem, such an approach does suggest that ethnic divisions create natural constituencies that are likely to coalesce quickly in mutual support during periods of violence or uncertainty, and which often prove extremely difficult to reintegrate once ethnic violence has begun. Different ethnic communities living in close proximity to one another are thus predicted to be highly susceptible to security dilemmas that cause each of these communities to fear their neighbors' violent capability – resulting in turn in the building up of ethnic militias and support networks that only further alienate ethnic groups from one another and exacerbate their mutual alienation.<sup>16</sup> As in international politics, fears of the future can cause security-conscious ethnic communities to feel compelled to fight other ethnic groups even when each side sincerely desires peace – and these fears are expected to become particularly heightened when changing conditions, such as demographic transformations, create an incentive for ethnic groups to fight in the present rather than lose influence over time.<sup>17</sup> But whereas more instrumentalist and constructivist approaches can conceptualize possible – though often difficult – steps that might be taken to preempt these escalating hostilities, essentialist analysis tends to suggest that the only peaceful solution available to ethnic communities in conflict is to partition out ethnic groups and divide contested space into distinct territories that can be governed securely by each ethnicity.<sup>18</sup> It is only after this process of partition and homogenization – whether violent or non-violent – that ethnic groups can then begin to develop the types of robust political institutions that ultimately lead to secure and stable states and polities.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Examples of this approach include Shils 1957, Geertz 1963, and Huntington 1997.

<sup>13</sup> As discussed in Fearon & Laitin 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Van den Berghe 1987, Salter 2002, and Rushton 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Petersen 2002.

<sup>16</sup> For a general overview of the concept of a security dilemma, see Jervis 1978, Snyder 1984, and Glaser 1997. For its applicability to intrastate and ethnic violence, see Posen 1993 and Roe 1999.

<sup>17</sup> As, for example, in classic “sons of the soil” nativist resistance to new immigrant groups (Weiner 2015).

<sup>18</sup> Kaufmann 1996; a critique of this recommendation can be found in Sambanis 2000.

<sup>19</sup> In other words, once the process of division across ethnic lines has become entrenched, the only option that remains is either non-violent partition or continued rebellion (King 2001).

Whereas the essentialist approach accepts ethnic divisions as the foundational cause of subsequent violence, the other two major theories of ethnic conflict view ethnicity's role more critically. In the instrumentalist approach, emphasis is placed on how individuals utilize their ethnicity in rational, instrumental ways – as social ties that individuals and groups can either promote or attempt to ignore to enhance their material well-being. As such, instrumentalist analysis focuses on examining the strategic calculations that can potentially lead self-interested actors to become embroiled in ethnic violence. In some cases, the strategic logic of ethnic violence may lie primarily in the avoidance of potentially worse outcomes – as in the type of security dilemmas described above, or in cases where private information and the shadow of the future make trust between members of different ethnic groups unreliable.<sup>20</sup> But many instrumentalist arguments go further and examine why rational actors might actively pursue and promote ethnic conflict as a means of achieving material gains.<sup>21</sup> Arguments along these lines can differ regarding precisely why rational actors seem to so often choose to ally themselves along ethnic lines, rather than choosing more voluntary associational links. Some theorists posit that ethnicity merely serves as an unreliable but extremely low-cost tool for strategic coordination and signaling of preferences: for communities with low access to information and weak institutions, shared ethnicity can often be the most accessible signal available to individuals for determining whether elites or groups share common interests and goals.<sup>22</sup> Other analysts argue that ethnicity doesn't merely facilitate coordination, but also directly alters cost/benefit calculations through resolving collective action problems.<sup>23</sup> Because ethnic differences are often relatively visible and difficult to falsify – whether because of physiological appearance, different languages or names, or geographic location – both rebels and states in divided or weakly institutionalized societies often rely on ethnicity as a proxy for a loyalty to a regime. Patronage by elites in power is thus often distributed along ethnic lines, with those in power seeking to maintain critical ethnic groups' loyalty through regular enticements.<sup>24</sup> For the same reason, ethnic groups that are perceived as disloyal can often be systematically excluded from patronage and political influence by those with power – a dynamic that may be reinforced by rebel groups using these same ethnic signals to focus their recruitment on excluded ethnicities.<sup>25</sup>

Instrumentalist arguments thus posit that much of what appears to be ethnically motivated hatred may instead represent rational strategic behavior aimed at distributing costs and benefits in a manner that counteracts individuals' incentives to free ride. Each side in a conflict is likely to experience difficulty recruiting in periods of weakness – when the likelihood of victory appears too low to compensate for the risks of combat – and to witness a flood of fair-weather supporters joining near the time of victory. Basing recruitment on ethnicity, which cannot easily

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<sup>20</sup> For a general analysis of how private information and lack of reliable signaling can lead to war, see Wagner 2000. For a description of similar dynamics in ethnic conflicts, see Lake and Rothchild 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Key to such arguments is the premise that conflict isn't merely a breakdown in negotiations that both sides seek to avoid – instead, war is presented as a potentially lucrative and profitable activity or as a desirable means to achieve belligerents' preferred ends. Keen 2000 and 2005 both offer detailed descriptions of the many economic incentives that may incentivize violence.

<sup>22</sup> Hardin 1997, Birnir 2006.

<sup>23</sup> For a general overview of collective action problems, see Olson 2009; for the applicability of the concept to ethnic politics, see Hechter et al. 1982 and Habvarimana et al. 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Alesina et al. 1999 and Eifert et al. 2010; Chandra 2007 argues that this dynamic does not necessarily result in ethnic competition and instability, provided that democratic competition is robust and ethnic divisions are flexible enough to allow parties to transform their ethnic coalitions over time.

<sup>25</sup> Cedermen et al. 2010 and Denny & Walter 2014.

be changed as political fortunes wax and wane, potentially allows groups to resolve this problem.<sup>26</sup> The strategic importance of developing a cohesive ethnic base of support may explain the tendency of ethnic militias and rebel groups to devote significant resources to punishing abstainers and disloyal elements among their co-ethnics, thus imposing a cost for not supporting an ethnic rebellion.<sup>27</sup> By contrast, ethnic rebellions that are victorious can similarly limit their payoffs to only co-ethnics, thus preventing a general rush to join a rebellion near the conclusion of fighting and dilute the spoils of victory. In many cases, these strategies are manipulated by elite political actors empowered by this violence – conflict entrepreneurs – who in turn use their influence to maintain patronage networks and official policies that continue to exacerbate ethnic tensions and further entrench these elites' positions.<sup>28</sup> Through these transactional patterns of reciprocal favoritism, groups motivated only by pragmatic logic and strategic behavior can nonetheless fall into equilibria of sustained ethnic antagonism and violence.

Because instrumentalist arguments portray ethnicity in transactional terms, authors relying on this approach also often argue that changing the salience and payoffs surrounding ethnic conflict can heavily alter the likelihood of future violence. One of the primary functions of institutions is to alter the strategic incentives of actors by lowering the costs of some actions and imposing costs on others, allowing participating groups to credibly commit to actions that otherwise would go against their self-interest.<sup>29</sup> In particular, domestic and international institutions can resolve many of the information asymmetries and commitment problems that impede the creation of peaceful alternatives to civil war confrontations.<sup>30</sup> Papers such as Easterly 2001 also argue that strong political institutions can promote power sharing and ensure equitable distribution of resources across ethnic groups, thereby eliminating the temptation for a tragedy of the commons scenario in which rival ethnic groups each set out to seize as many resources as possible before other ethnicities seize them instead. If new or reformed institutions successfully incentivize ethnic cooperation for both an ethnic group as a whole and for major stakeholders within the ethnic group, then ethnic groups themselves can often be relied on to work to promote this cooperation: just as ethnic militias punish co-ethnic defectors in times of war, so too are ethnic groups likely to self-police their own community and punish violent offenders if the benefits of cooperative peace outweigh conflict.<sup>31</sup> By incentivizing cooperation and increasing interdependence across ethnic lines, well-designed institutions and political systems can reduce the strategic advantages available to ethnic militias and rebel groups, and thus reduce the incentives to engage in ethnic violence.

The last of the three major approaches for the study of ethnic violence, constructivism, encompasses those studies that delve deeply into the nature of ethnicity as a social concept – examining the ways in which the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic violence, along with the symbols and boundaries surrounding ethnic identities, are constructed or change over time

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<sup>26</sup> Caselli & Coleman 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Kalyvas & Kocher 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Mueller 2000, Wilkinson 2006; Banton 2014 explains why self-interested voters and lower classes tend to go along with these elite agendas by demonstrating that these empowered elites maintain loyalty by redistributing resources through ethnic patronage.

<sup>29</sup> March & Olsen 1983 and Hartzell & Hoddie 2003.

<sup>30</sup> For a thorough review of common impediments to peaceful resolution, see Walter 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Fearon & Laitin 1996.

through social processes.<sup>32</sup> Borrowing heavily from sociology, historical analysis, and related disciplines, constructivism departs from instrumentalism primarily in terms of how each approach addresses motivations and ideas beyond self-interest: whereas instrumentalism generally treats beliefs and identities as fixed but used selectively in pursuit of rational strategic goals, constructivism treats these social forces as phenomena that influence behavior in ways independent of their instrumental value.<sup>33</sup> Group attributes such as ethnicity, from a constructivist perspective, represent mutually constitutive identities that are psychologically internalized by individuals.<sup>34</sup> These identities can change gradually over time as a culture's ideas and beliefs transform, but also possess their own socially imposed inertia stemming from the collective beliefs already present in that culture. Constructivist analyses of ethnicity can be compared to historical accounts focusing on the rise of nationalism, wherein preexisting linguistic and ethnic identities were transformed through state institutions into new national loyalties.<sup>35</sup> In a similar way, constructivist studies often analyze how and why particular ethnic identities, symbols, or boundaries developed historically, and how contemporary individuals relate to or utilize these historically derived identities in their political interactions. Their emphasis on the social dimension of ethnicity means that constructivist reports on ethnic violence tend to focus on the ways in which identities and beliefs are leveraged to promote violence. Often, this is accomplished by showcasing how violent incidents failed to arise in response to close proximity between ethnic groups or even in circumstances where such violence was in the material self-interest of participants, and instead only occurred after successful social campaigns succeeded in mobilizing historical narratives and grievances and transforming them into collective antipathy toward a rival ethnicity.<sup>36</sup> As with instrumentalism, this political process is often heavily influenced by elite manipulation – ethnic and political elites often benefit from their perceived status and influence over media, which allows them to manipulate discourse in ways that promote ethno-centrist narratives.<sup>37</sup> As narratives of ethnic hostility and cross-ethnic alienation take hold within a society, those living in each ethnic community begin to internalize this fear and antagonism and use it to justify increasingly hostile behavior toward other ethnicities.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, the same social processes that lead to the outbreak of ethnic violence also potentially offer hope that violent animosities between ethnic groups can also be transformed over time into more peaceful relationships.<sup>39</sup> Resolving ethnic conflicts in this way

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<sup>32</sup> Nagel 1994 and Fearon & Laitin 2000 offer a review of early constructivist literature on ethnicity, while Katzenstein 1996 presents a highly influential collection of works on constructivist theory in the context of international conflict.

<sup>33</sup> Further comparisons between constructivism and rationalist/instrumentalist approaches can be found in Fearon & Wendt 2002.

<sup>34</sup> In other words, political identity formation is a collective enterprise shaped by both the individual actors themselves, and the collective interaction between these individuals; see Wendt 1994.

<sup>35</sup> Influential works in this vein include Weber 1976, Anderson 1983, Anderson 2006, and Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Oberschall 2000 and Aspinall 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Gagnon 1994, Brass 1997, and Saideman & Ayres 2012.

<sup>38</sup> Green & Seher 2003 describe the prejudice and stereotyping play in ethnic conflicts. Over time, these portrayals can increase the likelihood that both sides will misperceive the behavior and goals of the other side, potentially resulting in an increased likelihood of conflict as described in Jervis 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Ross 2007 describes how conflicts often center around particularly charged symbolic issues, but also argues that these same social processes allow particularly symbolic resolutions to have an outsized effect in facilitating resolution and sparking new, more cooperative narratives.

and promoting more cooperative identities and associations is rarely portrayed as a simple process in constructivist works – mutual distrust and reciprocal grievances possess a powerful social inertia that often causes hostile groups to fall into a “symbolic politics trap,” that can persist long past the point where continued fighting benefits either side.<sup>40</sup> Promoting peaceful interactions goes well beyond simply advocating for a new perspective or shared identity. At a minimum, ending ethnic tensions typically requires the sustained promotion of norms of cooperation by influential individuals and organizations who are willing to leverage their credibility and reputations toward the cause.<sup>41</sup> But peace often also necessitates restoring civic linkages that connect members of different ethnic groups together – linkages whose absence often helps cement mutual alienation between these groups.<sup>42</sup> Ideological obstacles to conflict transformation that operate on a personal level include ethnic groups’ stereotyping of their enemies and grow to encompass other dimensions of a conflict such as through the entrenchment of mutually exclusive territorial claims.<sup>43</sup> As a result, resolving conflict through social forces often necessitates going beyond the promotion of mutual understanding – participants’ fundamental conception of the stakes and causes of a conflict must often also be changed for conflict to cease. Despite these significant obstacles, the historical waning of many old ethnic disputes over time demonstrates that such ideational processes do occur and can serve as a means of eventually resolving particular ethnic hostilities. Past conflicts and peace efforts thus offer a wealth of information regarding the relative level of success that has emerged from different efforts to change societal beliefs surrounding violence and ethnicity, and the roles that have been played by entities such as schools and foreign third parties in promoting norms of inter-ethnic cooperation and cementing taboos against further inter-ethnic violence.<sup>44</sup>

Each of the three approaches to the study of ethnic conflict – essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism – offers unique strengths and weaknesses for the effort to study and understand ethnic violence. While they can at times offer radically different predictions regarding the likelihood of violence and the steps needed to resolve a conflict, they nonetheless often operate as complementary approaches, with each theory highlighting certain important aspects of ethnic politics and abstracting and deemphasizing other dimensions. By comparing and contrasting the different assumptions and predictions of each theoretical approach and applying each to observed evidence, studies of ethnic violence can more easily identify which forces appear to be most influential in the context of a given conflict: social ideas, material interests, or immediate divisions.

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<sup>40</sup> Kaufman 2006; much of the difficulty of escaping a cycle of symbolic violence is a result of the relationship between trauma and belief – painful ordeals appear to have a particular power to reshape identities, making it difficult for peace efforts to overcome the effect of conflict (Alexander et al. 2004).

<sup>41</sup> Conceptually, this peace activism can be described as a systematic effort to transform actors’ beliefs about the acceptable range of possible resolutions to a conflict, so that both sides in a conflict eventually reach a point where a mutually agreeable endpoint is possible (see Coakley 1992 for more discussion about types of conflict resolutions). Descriptions of such efforts can be found in Gidron et al. 2002 and Orjuela 2003, while Kelley 2010 describes how major institutions like the European Union use both social norms and material incentives to influence relations between ethnic groups.

<sup>42</sup> Varshney 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Toft 2005, for example, describes how beliefs about the indivisibility of particular territorial claims can become tightly intertwined with ethnic violence.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Bar-Tal 2009. Other influential constructivist works analyze the development and promotion of international norms, including Price 1998 and Finnemore 2004.

**Section II**  
**Social Scientific Approaches to the Study of Kinship**

The ethnic violence literature discussed above offers a clear template for thinking about the ways in which identities based on descent and relatedness might shape and direct political violence. But to expand on these insights and apply these broad approaches to the more defined and constrained relationships associated with families, kin groups, and political dynasties, it is first necessary to address our understanding of kinship itself. While kinship and ethnicity are deeply interconnected concepts, to the point of overlapping at their peripheries, the core personalistic relationships at the heart of kinship nonetheless arguably operate by distinctly different dynamics from the more communal relationships that characterize ethnic groups. Kin relationships tend to involve fewer individuals, and tend to operate according to more defined hierarchies and coherent social networks – whereas ethnic relationships are stereotypically viewed as a large “horizontal” fraternity binding a large number of unfamiliar individuals to a common perceived heritage, the stereotypical kin network is one that encompasses a comparatively small number of individuals who are often intimately familiar with one another and have clearly defined roles based on their ages and their genealogical and affinal ties to other members of the network. Political science as a discipline has dedicated relatively few resources to understanding these kinship dynamics and systematically applying them to political and security issues. There is thus not yet a strong intellectual tradition within the discipline on which to build a firm theoretical foundation for studying dynastic violence in a way comparable to researchers’ studies of ethnic violence. Fortunately, however, other social sciences have historically generated much more extensive studies on how kin and families operate. While space precludes offering more than the most peripheral reviews of these literatures, these prior studies from fields such as psychology, anthropology, economics, and sociology offer invaluable insights and background for political scientists who intend to understand the politics of dynasticism. Through a review of some of the key debates and theoretical approaches that have been applied to kinship across these disciplines, I will illustrate the variety of different lenses social scientists have utilized to understand kin relationships, introduce key concepts from these approaches, and demonstrate how the complexity of human kinship necessitates that researchers think carefully about the assumptions they apply to their thinking about kin relationships.

Perhaps the most straightforward approach to the study of kinship is that provided through biological and evolutionary explanations of observed behaviors. A large selection of social science articles, exemplified most clearly in the subfield of evolutionary psychology, has been devoted to understanding how observed human kinship behavior may relate to similar practices across the animal kingdom. For such researchers, kin relationships are primarily shaped by the principle of inclusive fitness, which stipulates that the competitive process of natural selection can nonetheless select for highly altruistic behavior if such behavior tends to benefit close genetic relatives of the individual that incurs costs.<sup>45</sup> This rule is a product of genetics’ influence on organisms’ behavior and instincts – because genes impact behavior, a gene that has an overall negative effect on an individual’s reproductive success will generally be bred out of a species. The exception is in circumstances wherein that costly behavior sufficiently benefits the reproductive success of relatives carrying the same gene, such that the gene still has a positive

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<sup>45</sup> This principle is also often referred to as kin altruism; see Burnstein et al. 1994 and Dawkins 2016.

probability of spreading into the next generation.<sup>46</sup> This concept is most classically exhibited in heavy parental investment in offspring, where parents sacrifice their ability to reproduce as often as possible to instead invest heavily in fewer children and increase those offspring's chances of subsequent reproduction. Based on this principle, humans are expected to instinctually treat kin differently from the rest of the population in ways that generally follow the principle of inclusive fitness – primarily by demonstrating generally more altruistic and self-sacrificing behavior to kin based on that individual's level of genetic proximity and general prospects for future reproductive success. Social scientists have applied the principle of inclusive fitness to a wide variety of important human behaviors, including warfare,<sup>47</sup> marriage traditions,<sup>48</sup> religious beliefs,<sup>49</sup> and ethnic nepotism.<sup>50</sup> Further arguments seek to demonstrate that reproductive strategies potentially adapt to changing social circumstances, as in cases where social status potentially influences differential investment in sons vs. daughters,<sup>51</sup> or when changing economic circumstances result in the widespread transformation of fertility preferences. Such analyses can be extremely compelling, offering a clear rationale for a given behavior and a convincing explanation for differential treatment of kin and non-kin.<sup>52</sup>

But caution should also be used in applying evolutionary explanations too readily to explain kin behavior. Biological relatedness and socialized kinship heavily overlap and can be difficult to disentangle from one another, while reproductive success on an evolutionary scale is often difficult to estimate reliably. These issues can easily lead researchers to draw problematic or potentially inaccurate conclusions when seeking an evolutionary explanation for a given behavior. While human interactions are undoubtedly heavily influenced by biological instincts, this influence is heavily mediated by human tendencies to generate complex societal relationships which may not have as clear an evolutionary advantage.<sup>53</sup> An illustrative example of this dynamic can be seen in the “Westermarck effect,” a hypothesis developed to explain the mechanisms for humans' general aversion to incest.<sup>54</sup> Incest avoidance has a clear evolutionary rationale insofar as incestuous relationships tend to produce deleterious medical problems,<sup>55</sup> and it is thus reasonable to assume that humans may be instinctually disinclined to mate with close genetic relatives. But Edvard Westermarck theorized that this instinct does not operate directly

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<sup>46</sup> This relationship between relatedness and the incentive for greater altruism is referred to in biology as Hamilton's rule (Hamilton 1964). Evolutionary psychology also proposes a broader explanation for altruism among both kin and non-kin: reciprocal altruism. This strategic behavior – memorably referred to as the “tit for tat” strategy in Axelrod 2006 – allows for self-centered, reproduction-minded organisms to nonetheless cooperate with anyone regardless of their level of relatedness so long as participants are able to identify and exclude free riders. For further discussion on evolutionary theories surrounding altruistic behavior, see Nowak 2006 and Bowles & Gintis 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Durham 1976.

<sup>48</sup> Fortunato & Archetti 2010.

<sup>49</sup> Crespi & Summers 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Vanhanen 1999.

<sup>51</sup> Hopcroft 2005.

<sup>52</sup> Kaplan 1994.

<sup>53</sup> And the evolutionary process itself can also take counterintuitive paths, in large part because biological adaptations are so heavily constrained by prior adaptations (Gilbert 1998). Several authors have presented compelling critiques of different aspects of evolutionary psychology, and in particular the tendency to seek out clear-cut biological rationales for particular observed behaviors – see De Waal 2002, Richerson & Boyd 2005, and Confer et al. 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Westermarck 1921.

<sup>55</sup> Bittles et al. 1991 and Modell & Darr 2002; as I will discuss at length in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, the prevalence of an incest taboo is largely limited to immediate kin; mildly extended kin marriage such as between 1<sup>st</sup> cousins or between an uncle and a niece are relatively common in a notable number of cultures.



through an aversion to genetically similar mates, but rather indirectly through a tendency among children that grew up in the same household to avoid mating with one another. Shepher 1971 appeared to corroborate this hypothesis through his study of kibbutzim in Israel, where unrelated children are raised communally, found that children raised together showed abnormally low levels of later marriage despite sharing no significant genetic ties.<sup>56</sup> His findings suggested that incest avoidance in humans may have evolved to take advantage of typical human development patterns and is thus mediated through social processes – people may be disinclined to mate with those they knew at an early development age, an instinct that generally leads to incest avoidance, but which can also lead to a variety of secondary consequences in different cultures with varying residence and child-rearing traditions.<sup>57</sup> A comparable debate has arisen concerning differential parental investment in biological children vs. adopted or step-children. Some research suggests that evolution leads to parents generally investing less in their non-biologically related children than in the biological children with whom they share genetic ties. But other researchers provide counter-evidence that suggests that parental behavior is equivalently generous toward non-biological children – implying that while parental behavior has clearly evolved to maximize reproductive success, the instincts and behavior associated with parenting may be sufficiently flexible in humans that they can be readily transferred to fictive kin relationships.<sup>58</sup> These examples illustrate why researchers should be skeptical of our ability to readily explain all human kin behavior through evolutionary principles. Socialization heavily impacts people at all stages of their life and cognitive development, and these social forces are likely to shape and guide behavior toward kin just as surely as inborn instincts can.

In regard to these social dimensions of kinship, much of social science’s foundational literature investigating these familial relationships emerged out of anthropology’s sub-field of kinship studies.<sup>59</sup> The early origins of this sub-field can be traced back to Lewis Henry Morgan and his cross-cultural linguistic analysis of the terms surrounding kinship.<sup>60</sup> Morgan noted that different cultures used different systems of terminology for relatives, ranging in spectrum from highly “classificatory” systems that lumped together large varieties of kin with the same basic familial terms (for example, using the same term to describe one’s father, one’s paternal uncle, and one’s maternal uncle), to “descriptive” systems that had a wide variety of precise terms denoting specific relationships (as in languages that have unique, distinct words for a father, a paternal uncle, and a maternal uncle). Morgan drew on these linguistic observations to illustrate how language influences different groups’ understanding of kin relationships and can result in markedly distinct conceptualizations of kin relationships and their social patterns. Morgan’s writings sparked responses from authors such as John McLennan and Henry Maine, resulting in a growing literature examining the language and ideas surrounding kinship in myriad cultures – much of it focused on attempting to trace a historical trajectory from hunter-gatherer societies to more complex civilizations. By the 1930’s, kinship studies had already grown complex and

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<sup>56</sup> See also Fessler & Navarrete 2004, and Shor & Simchai 2009’s critique of the theory.

<sup>57</sup> A corollary phenomenon, dubbed Genetic Sexual Attraction, has been observed to arise between close relatives who did not spend formative development years together – such as those separated at birth. In this case, strong similarities in appearance and personality can lead to (typically unwanted and unexpected) feelings of attraction arising between close family members that first meet as adults. See Greenberg 1993 and Bevc & Silverman 2000.

<sup>58</sup> The most notable proponents of the idea that a “Cinderella effect” leads to poorer treatment of non-biological children are Daly & Wilson 1998; Hamilton et al. 2007 and Gibson 2009 present arguments challenging this theory.

<sup>59</sup> Perhaps the most accessible review of this literature and its transformations over time – at least in the decades prior to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – is presented in Peletz 1995. An extended review can also be found in Holy 1996.

<sup>60</sup> Morgan 1871. For his impact on the sub-discipline, see Fortes 2013.

exhaustive enough that influential scholars in the discipline were condemning much of the field of enquiry for its “bastard algebra of kinship,” and the resultant “piling of hypothesis upon hypothesis,” as anthropologists sought to analyze the innumerable variations observed across kinship systems and sort them into a narrative of advancement from primitive to advanced societies.<sup>61</sup> Among researchers of the period, efforts were made to redirect investigations into more fruitful approaches – much of it centered around understanding the social function of descent as a mechanism for generating cohesive group loyalties and distributing property among members of a shared lineage. This emerging functionalist school of thought analyzing different societies based on how ancestry was used to determine group affiliation would come to be known as *descent theory*.<sup>62</sup>

But it was arguably only after Claude Lévi-Strauss and his *Elementary Structures of Kinship* that kinship studies reached the heights of its influence. Lévi-Strauss’ structuralist approach reenvisioned kin relationships from being a static force that divided societies into atomistic lineages, and instead focused on the continuous interactions between lineages that are necessary for continued reproduction.<sup>63</sup> All human societies, in Lévi-Strauss’ conceptualization, emerged originally out of the fundamental structure of human kin relationships and the incest taboo, which together necessitated that individuals born in one family must seek out and negotiate with descendants of other families in order to find mates and reproduce. Of particular interest was the difference between *elementary structures of kinship*, wherein mate selection was governed by positive norms compelling specific lineages to always take mates from a defined set of other families,<sup>64</sup> and its eventual replacement in larger societies with a *complex structure of kinship* in which mate selection is relatively open and governed only by negative social rules delineating those who cannot be married (as in Western societies’ rules concerning incest and age of consent). Lévi-Strauss sought to demonstrate that a society’s marriage rules reflected and shaped the deepest structures of thought in members of that society – best epitomized in the strong bonds of intimacy that emerged in elementary kinship societies between those lineages that repeatedly interbred across generations. Broader social processes expanded from these foundational structures, so that the core alliances between interbreeding family lineages formed the nucleus for further social interactions outside the immediate family, and the expectation of gift-giving at the time of marriage served as the impetus for more extensive trade and property negotiations.<sup>65</sup> His structuralist *alliance theory* proved highly popular among anthropologists, presenting kinship as not just an inert set of social divisions based only on lineage, but instead as a continuing and active social process that played as much of a role in governing the interactions between kin groups as it did in shaping identities within a given lineage group. Moreover, it placed a society’s rules for kin networks in a central position, using variation in marriage rules as a means of explaining how the universal drive to reproduce, when mediated through different norms and taboos, potentially led to widely divergent societies. For students and disciples of this approach, Lévi-Strauss’ theory offered a compelling theoretical lens to guide comparative studies and provided these researchers with a means of linking easily observed variations in marriage

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<sup>61</sup> Malinowski 1930.

<sup>62</sup> For more on the development of descent theory (also known as lineage theory), see Kuper 1982.

<sup>63</sup> Dumont 2006 offers a detailed comparison between lineage and alliance theories of kinship.

<sup>64</sup> In Lévi-Strauss’ archetypal example of generalized – or indirect – elementary exchange, each patrilineal lineage has a specific other family designated to be the source of their wives, as well as a third family that is expected to receive the lineage’s daughters as its own wives. Each male is thus expected to marry their mother’s brother’s daughter, and each family is connected to two other families in a web of wife-giving and wife-receiving.

<sup>65</sup> Lévi-Strauss 1971.

rules and customs to much larger social variations in the organization and operation of different societies.<sup>66</sup>

Lévi-Strauss' alliance theory was also met with notable resistance – not only from proponents of more lineage-focused schools of thought, but also from authors who were influenced by his approach but who nonetheless voiced skepticism regarding how accurately Lévi-Strauss' theory of smoothly functioning cycles of alliances matched empirical reality. A particularly ambitious critique in this latter category, and influential in its own right, was that presented in Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.<sup>67</sup> Bourdieu's approach to kinship followed the broad contours developed by Lévi-Strauss in examining cultural marriage patterns – in Bourdieu's case, the marriage patterns of Berber tribes and other middle eastern societies. But unlike Lévi-Strauss, Bourdieu also compared the idealized conception of marriage reported by his sources to the empirical reality of marriage patterns that actually operated in society. What he found was a clear cultural preference for a specific type of marriage – to one's patrilineal parallel cousin, that is marriage of a man to his father's brother's daughter – that was nonetheless relatively rare in practice. Bourdieu argued that this discrepancy between social ideals and pragmatic practice was bound up in the web of power and status that operated within a society. Cultural ideals surrounding marriage signaled which relationships were prioritized by a given society, such as a father's kin bestowing more status than a mother's. Moreover, the ability of high-status families to more easily participate in such marriages, instead of being forced like low-status families to make more pragmatic marriage decisions, represented a key source of symbolic and social capital largely denied to families who could not afford the “proper” marriage matches and who lacked idealized kin connections. Bourdieu likened this discrepancy to the broader distinction between “official” and “practical” kin as defined by different legal codes – for example, in the distinction between formal and common-law marriages, or between legitimate and illegitimate offspring.<sup>68</sup> In short, Bourdieu's “practice theory” focused above all on the interchange between social ideals and social realities to analyze how specific kin relationships were used in a given society to generate and distribute social capital.<sup>69</sup>

Despite these debates within kinship studies, at their core these different approaches shared a common conceptualization of kinship as a socially defined network of relationships based broadly on genealogical ties but constrained by regularized cultural rules and patterns of association. At the broadest level, the most salient distinction between approaches lay in their primary focus: the earlier functionalist school emphasized fixed ties of lineage and descent, Lévi-

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<sup>66</sup> Authors who were influenced by Lévi-Strauss' shift in focus to marriage alliances included Leach (1951), Dumont (1953), and Needham (1958). Chapais 2009 represents a relatively recent attempt to adapt alliance theory to a more evolutionary framework. Lindholm 1986 presents an intriguing extension of alliance theory of particular interest to political scientists for its effort to link differing marriage practices in Central Asia and the Middle East to historical political patterns in each region.

<sup>67</sup> Bourdieu 1977.

<sup>68</sup> We can compare these insights to contemporary issues related to family and status in the contemporary United States. Black communities, for example, are often noted for “broken” family dynamics in which economic hardship and unequal policing undermine the ability of black families to live in the type of nuclear families idealized by mainstream culture – instead, black communities rely heavily on extended families, neighbors, and friends who lack the type of status and privilege bestowed on more “traditional” family structures (Stack 1975). Gay couples have historically experienced similar social ostracism, as social prejudice often denied them the type of networking opportunities that straight couples often take advantage of to build up connections and social links (Kimmel and Sang 1995).

<sup>69</sup> Further works similarly focused on power dynamics in kin relationships and influenced by Bourdieu have included Collier 1993 and Lareau 2011.

Strauss' structuralist alliance theory stressed ongoing transactional networks built through regularized marriage strategies, and Bourdieu's practice theory focused on the role that culturally reinforced kin hierarchies played in generating and distributing social and symbolic capital. The overarching social network approach that served as a foundation for all three theories of kinship has become the preeminent paradigm through which kinship tends to be analyzed in the fields of economics and sociology.<sup>70</sup> In these disciplines' cotemporary research on kinship, extensive attention is paid to the role that family networks play in generating social ties that influence members' behavior in other social spheres. Like other political and social institutions, kin networks have the power to redirect individuals' preferences, beliefs, and incentives – making some types of actions more difficult while also facilitating other types of behavior.<sup>71</sup> From this perspective, robust kin institutions have been observed to be associated with a wide variety of social and economic benefits and opportunities. Children who are raised in a stable 2-parent household tend to demonstrate markedly better educational, economic, and social outcomes than other peers.<sup>72</sup> Social ties built up through kin and friendships often play a critical role in securing new employment.<sup>73</sup> Networks of kin also heavily influence individuals' decisions to emigrate to new countries, and the quality of life they experience in these new communities.<sup>74</sup> And like other economic institutions, family networks can reshape incentives by reducing economic transaction costs,<sup>75</sup> or by leveraging familial trust and reputation to overcome information and commitment barriers.<sup>76</sup> These deep interconnections between superficially private family ties and the broader public sphere are perhaps best exemplified in the widespread success of family firms – businesses owned and operated by a particular family.<sup>77</sup>

As with Lévi-Strauss, significant attention in network analyses of kinship tends to be paid to patterns of exchange and alliance mediated through family ties.<sup>78</sup> But following Bourdieu, this process is primarily conceptualized via family networks' ability to generate social capital, which

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<sup>70</sup> For general overviews of network theory in the social sciences, see Lin 1999 and Borgatti et al. 2009. Examples of works specifically describing the role of network effects among kin include Foster & Seidman 1992, Schweizer & White 1998 and Cox & Fafchamps 2007. Other works focus less explicitly on network effects but remain heavily focused on social hierarchies and relationships (such as Finch & Mason 2003). Sociology in particular has a historical tradition of its own “sociology of the family,” rooted primarily in dynamics within the household, such as gender roles and child-rearing behavior. This literature, however, is less relevant to the broader kin interactions that I focus on in this dissertation. For a review of some of this literature and related economic concepts, see Berk & Berk 1983.

<sup>71</sup> For institutions as a general concept, see March and Olsen 1983. Peng 2004 explicitly ties this institutionalist literature to his study of kin networks in China's transitioning economy.

<sup>72</sup> McLanahan & Sandefur 1994.

<sup>73</sup> Grieco 1987, Granovetter 1995 and O'Regan & Quigley 1993.

<sup>74</sup> Boyd 1989, Hagan et al. 1996, Sanders & Nee 1996, Wilson 1998, Palloni et al. 2001 and Kao 2004.

<sup>75</sup> Pollak 1985 and Gedajlovic & Carney 2010.

<sup>76</sup> Compare, for example, Grief 1989 and Hoffman et al. 2006.

<sup>77</sup> Study of the dynamics of family firms represents an extensive sub-field of enquiry in economics and among business journals. See Burkart et al. 2003, Sharma 2004, Bertrand & Schoar 2006, Salvato & Meling 2008, and Gedajlovic et al. 2012. The issue of economic succession in particular, and potential parallels between this process and political succession in dynasties potentially represents a fruitful future field of enquiry. See Chua et al. 2003.

<sup>78</sup> The connection between interpersonal exchanges and broader social interactions is explicitly noted in Kranton 1995. In other works, echoes of Lévi-Strauss are subtler: Bunkanwanicha et al. 2013, for example, describe the importance of marriages for family owned businesses to extend their influence and reinforce social alliances, while Waite & Lehrer 2003 offer an overview of the consensus view that widespread marriage and strong family bonds tend to strengthen and stabilize society as a whole.

can be leveraged into material wealth and status through processes such as directly borrowing from family members or indirectly relying on one's family reputation and social connections for greater access to opportunities.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, for most individuals, kin networks will typically serve as the first and most consistent generator and distributor of social capital throughout their lives.<sup>80</sup> The power of kin networks to shape and direct individuals' ties to broader society also makes them one of the most effective social vectors for spreading taboos and norms of behavior – such that the specific types and density of kin connections an individual possesses will often have a determinative influence on how effective different cultures and sub-cultures are at policing and influencing that individual's behavior.<sup>81</sup> To be sure, a strong case can be made that these effects have diminished from prior centuries, and that a broad privatization of family ties has occurred in the Western world. As Francis Fukuyama – perhaps the most prominent recounter of this deep historical trend – has observed, the development of more complex economic and political institutions that operate independently of kinship does appear to signify a gradual decline in the “tyranny of the cousins,” in favor of individuals' increasing autonomy from family ties.<sup>82</sup> But this historical trend is often less clear-cut than popularly imagined, and the degree to which kinship's importance and role in the public sphere have truly transformed in recent centuries remains surprisingly contentious.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, for some observers, the growing salience of assortative mating patterns – in which marriages tend to self-sort along homogamous lines of education, status, and wealth – may signal a renewed entrenchment of kinship ties as the most critical factor for future success.<sup>84</sup> The wide-ranging debates concerning kinship's impact on contemporary society and economic interactions illustrate the degree to which kin networks remain a pervasive and powerful force shaping both individual actors and broader institutions.

Ironically, even as network analyses of kinship have grown more popular in economics and sociology, anthropology's study of kinship underwent a radical transformation that has largely moved away from prior efforts to conceptualize families as coherent networks of actors with coherent hierarchies. This transformation partially emerged out of long-running debates regarding the nature of kinship, but its more proximate cause was the 1984 publication of David Schneider's *Critique of Kinship*. In this work, Schneider – already a noted author in the field of kinship studies – systematically dissected the concept of kinship as a system of symbols and

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<sup>79</sup> Astone et al. 1999, Ebaugh & Curry 2000, Bubolz 2001, Furstenberg 2005, and Tierney & Venegas 2006. For a broader discussion of social capital, see Portes 1998; for further discussion about the concept's salience to political science, see Putnam 1995 and Jackman & Miller 1998.

<sup>80</sup> Coleman 1987. It should also be noted that the specific role and salience of family ties are likely to vary by country, time period, and economic sector. Detailed analysis of particular cases is thus often extremely valuable for observing the nature of social relationships in a given context.

<sup>81</sup> Bott 1957 argued that families with more extensive family networks tended to conform more heavily to traditional gender roles and similar expectations, while Zhou & Bankston 1998 recount the role of the community “microscope” in policing behavior among tight-knit immigrant populations.

<sup>82</sup> Fukuyama 2011, particularly pp. 49-63. North 1981 presents a similar narrative of evolving economic institutions that gradually outgrew the family-based economic and political institutions of earlier centuries.

<sup>83</sup> Ruggles 1994 recounts the contentious debate among historians regarding American kinship, for example, and whether or not it has undergone a transformation from larger extended networks to smaller associations based primarily on the nuclear family. Indeed, others have argued that recent trends have been moving in the alternate directions, with extended families becoming increasingly important in American and global family bonds (Bengtson 2001).

<sup>84</sup> I discuss an extreme form of assortative mating and homogamy, in the form of consanguineous marriage, at much greater length in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. The extensive literature studying the nature and impact of assortative mating includes Blossfeld & Timm 2003 and Schwartz & Mare 2005.

concluded that any effort to identify the universal structures underlying these symbols was necessarily flawed. In different societies, concepts of descent, paternity, inheritance, and so on differed so radically from one another and were so malleable within each individual culture that any effort to attach these phenomena to “objective” genealogical categories and structures would inevitably reflect the bias of the theorist more than any underlying reality for the subject.<sup>85</sup> This work had a profound effect on the subfield – even among scholars who rejected Schneider’s most fundamental critiques of kinship as a concept, the ensuing debates still led to a transition away from attempting to analyze underlying patterns of kin hierarchies across societies, and instead toward focusing on the cultural meanings attached to kinship in particular cultures and subcultures.<sup>86</sup> Works written as part of the sub-discipline in more recent times regularly reference this fundamental shift, with a proliferation of titles such as *After Kinship*, *New Directions in Anthropological Kinship*, and *Alternative Kinship*.<sup>87</sup> The majority of these more recent works have focused on how different groups contest, redefine, and transform preexisting symbols associated with kin relationships and appropriate them to fit new cultural contexts. Themes that have been explored in this research include the role played by gender roles in shaping and transforming kin relationships,<sup>88</sup> and the ways in which homosexual and queer communities have reinterpreted kin concepts to create new forms of familial communities.<sup>89</sup> Other important works have examined how new surrogacy and fertility technologies, and the increasingly complex global institutions built around adoption have similarly impacted the meaning of kinship.<sup>90</sup> Some works have also examined more obscure subcultures, such as Marcus and Hall 1992’s study of the complex kin relationships among the scions of elite and wealthy dynasties. Through this wide variety of studies, recent works in the anthropology of kinship have generally sought to demonstrate that despite the concept’s putative biological origins, many of the most important attributes we attach to kinship are fundamentally social phenomena, and are as subject to change, contestation, and reinterpretation as any other idea, identity, or norm.

As with ethnicity, the variety of different approaches developed to understand kinship and its role in society serve to emphasize that the complexity of kin relationships cannot be easily captured by any one theoretical approach. Kinship has a clear biological dimension arising out of reproductive processes and the evolutionary instincts associated with them, but it also functions as a social network tying individuals together through a variety of social and economic incentives, and as a set of symbolic roles that shape how individuals understand the world around them. The intellectual history of the social scientific research into kinship illustrates the depth and breadth of insights that can be drawn from studying this most fundamental aspect of human existence, and the value of maintaining an open mind when seeking to integrate the study of kinship into a political analysis of dynasticism. Rather than assuming from the outset that a single dynamic or explanation is most likely to serve as the driving impetus between dynastic politics and dynastic violence, it is thus incumbent on researchers into dynasticism to seriously

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<sup>85</sup> Anthropological kinship’s tendency to implicitly contrast different cultures on a relative scale from primitivism to modernity was further challenged by the in-depth historical research presented in Goody 1983 and 1990, which highlighted the dangers of stereotyping and oversimplifying the practices of different cultures.

<sup>86</sup> See also Read 2007 and Sahlins 2013.

<sup>87</sup> Carsten 2004, Stone 2002, and Levine 2008.

<sup>88</sup> Collier & Yanagisako 1987.

<sup>89</sup> Weston 2005.

<sup>90</sup> Strathern 1992, Howell 2006.

consider the spectrum of possible ways in which kinship and kin relationships might best be understood in the context of political science and political security.

### *Section III* *Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Dynastic Conflict*

The previous two sections of this chapter introduced a wealth of important concepts that prior researchers have used to inform and clarify our understanding of both ethnic conflict and kinship. But how well does this previous literature help us understand the less-often discussed topic of dynastic violence and its relationship to political conflicts? In this section, I will attempt to syncretize the concepts described above and discuss the range of possible theoretical approaches that can plausibly be applied to the question of dynastic violence.<sup>91</sup> As I briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, it is possible to conceptualize the broad causal relationship between dynasticism and political violence in reasonably straightforward terms. Kinship as an identity and institution is both relatively exclusive and relatively unpredictable, and any system that relies heavily on kinship for the transfer of political authority – either explicitly or through indirect mechanisms – is consequently likely to experience conflicts over authority on a regular basis. Kinship is exclusive in the sense that any given kin network tends to contain a relatively small portion of the population, and entry into this kin network tends in most cases to be delimited at birth – with only a limited number of avenues such as marriage or adult adoption and patronage allowing for a change in these circumstances.<sup>92</sup> Kinship is unpredictable because,

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<sup>91</sup> The remainder of the discussion in this chapter is largely concerned with theoretical analysis and hypothetical predictions based on alternative theoretical lenses. For a concrete example of how different theories of dynastic violence can be applied to concrete real-world examples, see Chapter 3, where I use the genealogical records and political interactions of European monarchs to test which theories best predict observed dynastic relationships.

<sup>92</sup> Exclusion of credible alternative leaders also raises an alternative explanation for violence in dynastic societies that I will be placing relatively little weight on – the possibility that this violence is simply a result of incompetent leadership from officials whose main qualification comes from their family ties. This critique of dynasticism has a long pedigree, dating at least as far back as Ibn Khaldun and his concept of generational cycles that progress from an original conqueror to increasingly privileged and sheltered heirs (Ibn Khaldun 1969). It remains a prevalent issue in many sectors outside of politics, where nepotism is often perceived as a persistent problem that selects for family ties above competence or general loyalty (Vinton 1998 and Arasli & Tumer 2008). From this point of view, violence would be seen as a general symptom of mismanagement of a territory – less competent leaders may lead to worse economic performance, more antipathy toward the government, and less effective policing and suppression of violent groups. Even if we assume that dynastic heirs are at least as competent as their progenitors, the mere fact that they were not forced to put in the same level of effort to achieve influence may mean that they come to power lacking critical experience and the hard-won reputations and alliances that are often critical for governance.

My reluctance to address this explanation does not stem from an outright rejection of this hypothesis – to the contrary, I find this explanation quite credible. My skepticism comes instead from uncertainty regarding how confident we should be in assuming that dynastic successors are markedly less competent than the alternative possible leaders that typically gain influence in the authoritarian regimes and weak democracies where dynasticism is at its most influential. And, as discussed in Chapter 1, there is a credible counterargument suggesting that dynasticism can at times be part of a stable selection process. Indeed, Besley & Reynal-Querol 2017 find that dynastic inheritance actually coincides with stronger economic performance in some circumstances.

In cross-country comparisons, such as that performed in Chapter 5, general variation in states' ability to select strong leaders can be controlled for through general measures of democracy such as a polity score. If, after controlling for these effects, it is still the case that dynastic leaders are markedly less competent than non-dynasts, and this lack of competence leads to increased violence, then this possibility would impact some – but not all – of the conclusions drawn in this dissertation. The “incompetent dynast” hypothesis would explain general increased levels of violence, such as those observed in Chapter 5, but it would not explain further evidence suggesting that this

over the long term, authority based on human reproduction tends to suffer a crisis of underproduction of direct heirs, as well as an overproduction of indirect heirs with complex and overlapping genealogical claims to inheritance.<sup>93</sup> While passing power and wealth through family lineage is likely to be more stabilizing than a total absence of mechanisms for succession, the substantial risk that an heir will die or prove infertile represents a perennial weakness in the system. Among the great powers of early modern Europe, which I will discuss at length in Chapter 3, only around 40% of political successions were from a parent to a son – the type of transfer least likely to spark succession crises. In a handful of cases, these were the result of political coups that took place even though an heir was available, as in the English Civil War or the Glorious Revolution, but more often a failure of direct succession was simply the result of infertility or inconveniently early deaths. Typically, the natural response to this problem in dynastic environments is to create an abundance of extra heirs whenever possible.<sup>94</sup> But ironically, this strategy is likely to heighten tensions within powerful families, as increasing numbers of heirs compete for a limited amount of power and resources – and that competition is likely to become even more heated once a succession failure does occur, and multiple heirs are presented with the opportunity to challenge one another’s claims to leadership. Because of these dynamics, the unpredictability of human reproduction is likely to contribute greatly over time to increasing uncertainty within a dynastic political environment.

The above explanations broadly describe the instability inherent in dynastic politics, but they fail to deeply interrogate the mechanisms and social processes that underlie the phenomenon. What motivates individuals to invest loyalty and risk their lives on behalf of a dynastic political hierarchy? What explains why exclusion and unpredictability sometimes result in violence, but at other times result in peaceful transitions of power? And when violence does erupt, where and between which individuals is it likely to be directed? Answering these questions requires a more theoretically rigorous approach to the topic of dynastic conflict, and a willingness to challenge our assumptions about what kinship represents. Fortunately, the theoretical approaches associated with ethnic conflict already provide a clear template for how we might delineate different paradigms for the nature of dynastic violence. *Essentialist* explanations for dynastic violence would encompass those hypotheses that treat kin relationships as intrinsic and exogenous to a theoretical analysis. Such an approach is most compatible with the wide selection of evolutionary psychology literature relating to human kin relations, which posit that human behavior is highly instinctual and should broadly follow evolutionary pressures to maximize reproductive fitness. In essentialism, dynastic violence is a natural byproduct of the competitive pressure to help those with the closest genetic relationship to ego and is thus predicted to emerge in situations where evolutionary payoffs reward violence above cooperation and compromise. *Instrumentalist* theories, instead, would seek explanations in the rational self-interest of individual actors and would attempt to identify the ways in which kin structures

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violence tends to be directed along dynastic lines – evidence which I find in Chapters 3, 4, and my discussion of Yemen in Chapter 6. It is thus perhaps best to characterize the possibility of poor leadership selection as a secondary issue – one that potentially exacerbates some aspects of dynastic violence but is unlikely to explain the phenomenon entirely.

<sup>93</sup> See, for example, Boone 1986 p. 868.

<sup>94</sup> Attached to this are a variety of further incentives that tend to accrue to successful heir-producers in dynastic societies, such as the ability to marry off extra children or use them to extend patronage networks, and significant levels of social prestige. Pinaud 2014 reports that soldiers interviewed in South Sudan mainly explained their involvement in the conflict as being motivated by a desire to earn enough money to have multiple wives and many children.



influence and impact the personal incentives for violence or non-violence. This approach is likely to make heavy use of concepts derived from economic studies of kinship and the more materialist branches of network theories and their role in generating social capital. Because kin networks involve long-term interactions, wherein relatively small numbers of individuals can easily be identified, and reciprocal periods of heavy dependence such as youth and old age, it is reasonable to expect that these networks can radically influence the behavior of self-interested actors even absent any hypothesized biological instincts toward cooperation or competition. From such a perspective, dynastic violence emerges because individuals are rational, self-motivated actors and are thus motivated to defend or influence kin relationships, which are among the most crucial institutions influencing their economic and material well-being. Finally, a *constructivist* approach would view kinship as a primarily socially constructed phenomenon, which exerts influence on the identities and perceived goals of individuals through the various norms, taboos, and ideas surrounding kinship in a given society. Such analyses are likely to borrow from various parts of the more anthropological and sociological studies of kinship, including the more norm- and identity-focused variations of network theories and aspects of the recent symbolic turn in the anthropology of kinship. A constructivist approach is likely to interrogate the social roles surrounding kinship in a given culture and context. Dynastic violence, from this perspective, is likely to emerge when violence, hostility, contestation, or ambiguity are embedded in particular kin identities and social roles. It may thus persist even when such violence isn't in the personal or evolutionary self-interest of participants.

In applying these ethnic conflict concepts to the more constrained and personalistic phenomenon of dynastic conflict, it quickly becomes apparent that the smaller populations and more defined hierarchies among kin often demand a higher level of precision. Most notable is the issue of how and where violence is directed. In the stereotypical ethnic conflict, the majority of violent incidents tend to be conceptualized as external – committed by one ethnic group against another.<sup>95</sup> But in dynastic and kin-based conflicts, the tendency of violence to be directed not only externally, but also internally among members of the same kin network, is much clearer and difficult to ignore. Dynastic societies aren't only prone to feuding across distinct family lineages, but also to fratricidal and intra-kin violence explicitly fought among relatives competing to control dynastic institutions and avenge perceived slights between different branches of a family. Any explanations for dynastic violence should be particularly concerned with being able to explain circumstances when violence occurs between unrelated kin groups, but also situations wherein dynastic pressures lead to violence between individuals within the same kin group. As such, I divide my analysis here into two sub-sections – first examining how each of the three theoretical approaches to ethnic conflict can potentially explain inter-kin violence between separate kin networks, and then reviewing how each theory fares in explaining intra-kin violence within the same kin network as well.

### ***Explanations for Inter-Kin Conflict***

When conceptualizing dynastic and kinship-based conflict, inter-kin conflict is often the dynamic that most easily comes to mind – a conflict in which distinct kin groups, unrelated to one another, fight against each other based at least in part on kinship-derived motivations.<sup>96</sup> Such

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<sup>95</sup> Whether this stereotype is generally reflective of reality, or represents a source of systemic bias in ethnic violence research to date, remains a matter of debate. See Bush 2003, Staniland 2012, and Warren & Troy 2015.

<sup>96</sup> All human beings, of course, are related to one another at some distant level of ancestry, but in practice individuals typically lose track of specific ancestral lines after only a few generations. Ethnic identities often purport

conflicts may be symmetrically kinship-based, in which case all sides of the conflict represent distinct kin networks feuding against one another, or alternatively may be asymmetrically kinship-based when one side of a conflict is organized heavily along kinship lines, while their opponents on the other side are organized along a non-kinship-based system. Examples of such asymmetrical conflicts are particularly widespread and varied, ranging from a formal army fighting against a tribe-based insurrection, to a monarchical government attempting to suppress a popular rebellion that spans across family lines. In all these variations, for at least one side in the conflict, kin-based relationships and alliances play a crucial role in shaping actors' loyalties, interests, and ultimate goals. The core commonality that characterizes inter-kin violence is that kin alliances generally remain robust and unfragmented, such that different sides in a conflict are unlikely to share kinship ties.

These conflict dynamics – wherein family members cooperate together against an outside foe – are often easier to conceptualize, more amenable to measurement, and more clearly identifiable as political violence than are the intra-kin conflicts I discuss further below. As a result, inter-kin conflicts are likely to receive the largest share of attention by observers of these conflicts. Stathis Kalyvas has suggested that these types of localized inter-kin conflicts often become intertwined with broader civil wars via principal-agent problems, most thoroughly through his in-depth analysis of local family rivalries that helped fuel violence during the Greek Civil War, but also in his more cursory studies of kin-based organizations operating in civil wars in Spain, Nicaragua, and China.<sup>97</sup> Marten 2012 describes similar dynamics in post-Soviet Georgia, where warlords and separatist leaders design patronage networks around kin and clans to build up their base of support.<sup>98</sup> In Afghanistan and Pakistan, groups such as the Taliban rely on culturally ingrained traditions of *badal* (blood feuds) to recruit from families that have suffered deaths from past fighting or from attacks by Americans or their local allies.<sup>99</sup> Similar dynamics have been observed in Balkan cultures, where an “ethic of blood revenge, binding individual members of extended families,” was re-appropriated and “successfully grafted onto ethnic nationalism,” to stoke conflict.<sup>100</sup> In the early years of the Provisional Irish Republican Army, too, family connections were one of the primary means through which recruitment and organization developed.<sup>101</sup>

### *Essentialism*

The most straightforward explanation for this behavior lies in the essentialist view that alliances based on kinship arise from innate instincts and an evolution-derived psychological urge toward cooperation with kin at the expense of non-kin. For essentialists, socialized kin relationships are assumed to match biological relatedness closely enough to make evolutionary psychology an effective predictor for large-scale political interactions among kin groups. From such a perspective, the tendency for closely-related family networks to ally together and oppose unrelated rivals is a natural consequence of individuals' inherent instincts to favor their closest

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to represent ancient links of kinship, but it's unclear how often ethnic divisions in a given society actually reflect real ancestral variations. What matters for researchers is whether subjects themselves and the society in which they operate view one another as kin or not.

<sup>97</sup> Kalyvas 2006.

<sup>98</sup> Marten 2012 p. 65.

<sup>99</sup> Johnson & Mason 2008 p. 63.

<sup>100</sup> Hagen 1999 p. 62; for a similar description of blood feuds in Kosovo, and an account of efforts to end the tradition, see Clark 2000 p. 60.

<sup>101</sup> Bosi 2012.

genetic relatives.<sup>102</sup> Based on the principle of inclusive fitness, essentialists would predict that human beings are willing to accept substantial risks to their own lives if these risks materially benefit their close relatives and increase those relatives' prospects for a long life and ample reproductive opportunities.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, families have an incentive to not only intervene to stop immediate threats to relatives, but also to exact future costs on those who harm members in the present – by signaling that they are willing to engage in costly vendettas to avenge relatives, kin groups can disincentivize future threats to the family.<sup>104</sup> Similar evolution-based arguments have been used to explain other facets of human social behavior, including participation in warfare and homicide in general,<sup>105</sup> individuals' tendency to build certain types of political hierarchies and to value specific traits among leaders,<sup>106</sup> and even the ubiquity of gossiping behavior across human societies.<sup>107</sup> If kin-based violence is rooted in evolutionary imperatives, then the impulse to fight on behalf of kin cannot be stripped away – it can only be managed through the construction of institutions and secure political environments that allow individuals to feel confident their kin aren't in danger.

The essentialist approach to kin-based violence offers an intriguing explanation for many instances of dynastic violence, but researchers should be cautious in immediately assuming that such violence must have a clear-cut evolutionary rationale. The complexity of human social behavior lends itself to a wide range of interpretations and possible rationalizations from an evolutionary perspective.<sup>108</sup> On the one hand, it's credible to assume that kin groups are prone to violent opposition against non-kin, especially since these relatively small, disparate networks can be prone to fear emerging from security dilemmas.<sup>109</sup> But on the other hand, evolutionary arguments are also often regularly advanced to explain the ubiquity of non-kin altruism among human individuals that possess little in the way of genetic similarity.<sup>110</sup> The fact that we can easily identify evolutionary explanations for individuals to either cooperate with non-kin, or to fight them so as to maximize the benefits to their own kin, necessarily complicates essentialists' initially simple explanations of kin-based violence. Identifying when an individual is likely to prefer generally altruistic actions, and when they will instead choose nepotistic kin-support, necessitates making a wide range of assumptions – particularly in situations where kin groups encompass more than the immediate family. While individuals may be expected to strongly

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<sup>102</sup> Curry et al. 2013 report that there is empirical evidence suggesting that human psychology does tend to favor close kin even over the strongest friendships – what they call “the kinship premium.”

<sup>103</sup> Such warfare against non-kin may not even need to be defensive in nature, if aggressively fighting non-kin increases the overall prospective fertility of ego and their close kin. In some societies, for example, a man's success on the battlefield tends to be rewarded with a greater number of wives and resources, incentivizing inter-kin aggression (Chagnon 1988). An evolutionary psychology that instinctually encourages altruism toward kin but also aggressiveness toward non-kin – parochial altruism – also lowers the risk that non-kin will, like the cuckoo bird, develop strategies to exploit and free ride off an individual's self-sacrificing instinct to help close relatives (Choi & Bowles 2007).

<sup>104</sup> Figueredo et al. 2004 and Shackelford 2005.

<sup>105</sup> Gat 2009 and Liddle et al. 2012; as noted in Section I, some essentialist research into ethnic violence has also suggested that inclusive fitness may explain ethnic violence, as in Shaw & Wong 1987.

<sup>106</sup> Van Vugt 2006.

<sup>107</sup> Barkow 1995.

<sup>108</sup> For further discussion on the perils of overly reductivist explanations rooted in evolutionary theory, see Laland & Brown 2011.

<sup>109</sup> Kuhn 2011. Boyle 2009 offers a concrete example of this dynamic in his description of the security dilemmas and persistent fears that plagued Iraq as stability deteriorated and different armed tribes increasingly took up arms against perceived outside threats.

<sup>110</sup> Krebs 2008.

support their closest kin, who will generally be substantially more closely related to them than the general population, the evolutionary tradeoff to preferring more distant kin over neighbors and acquaintances depends on a host of factors. These include general strategic factors, such as whether regular violence against non-kin in a given context may prove costlier in the long run than more benign behavior, as well as biological factors such as whether or not prior inbreeding within a family has further reinforced their relatedness to one another and how genetically interrelated the overall population of a given area is. These conditions can change rapidly in a period of heavy migration or demographic transformation, whereas evolutionary processes are extremely gradual and imprecise. An essentialist, evolution-based approach to studying conflict thus often necessitates making substantial assumptions about both the current population and their ancestors' societal conditions. While these issues certainly do not invalidate the essentialist approach, they do reflect the value of caution in assuming that all kin-based behavior should be assumed to be rooted in biology and instinct.

### *Instrumentalism*

An instrumentalist approach to the study of inter-kin violence would disregard any assumption of biological instincts and the long-term reproductive benefits of a given behavior, and instead focus on the incentives that might compel a rational, self-interested actor to nonetheless risk engaging in risky and potentially costly violence in support of their kin. This utilitarian view of kinship may at first appear to fit awkwardly with the powerful passions and strong loyalties typically associated with familial relationships, but a focus on the rational calculations and tradeoffs associated with kin loyalties can often illustrate the very real transactional behaviors that underlie many family decisions. For most people, kin relationships will often involve cost-benefit decisions, the dynamics of which have previously been studied in the context of both general economics of the family and child-rearing,<sup>111</sup> as well as more particular economic puzzles surrounding specific traditions such as dowries and bride prices.<sup>112</sup> In exchange for potentially enormous investments in raising and supporting vulnerable kin and building up positive kin relationships, individuals can stand to reap substantial rewards from their family and extended kin network – both in the form of potential social capital derived from these networks, and in the reciprocal obligation of kin to support one another in periods of vulnerability. Indeed, the nature of human development, which tends to generate periods of dependency at both the beginning (childhood) and end (old age) of a human lifespan, naturally orients kin networks toward a focus on long-term social interaction – which in turn further incentivizes cooperative and altruistic behavior among kin.<sup>113</sup> In this sense, many of the behaviors that we typically attribute to inborn instinct and affection can reasonably be understood in the context of rational calculations, and researchers can in turn rely on many of the same concepts and tools developed to understand other political and economic institutions in order to analyze the behavior of kin networks.

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<sup>111</sup> Browning et al. 2014. We are accustomed to thinking of family ties and parenting as being primarily a byproduct of altruism, but in many environments a family is viewed as an asset that either brings direct rewards, or at the least contributes to income in a way that helps alleviate the potential costs associated with child-rearing. This is epitomized in the extensive literature on child labor, both historically and in underdeveloped contemporary countries. See Fapohunda & Todaro 1988, Parsons & Goldin 1989, Grootaert & Kanbur 1995, and Edmonds 2007.

<sup>112</sup> Botticini & Siow 2003 and Anderson 2007.

<sup>113</sup> Cigno 1993 and Logan & Spitze 1995.

From this perspective, the incentives for kin networks to cooperate internally and engage in costly organized conflict against non-kin lie chiefly in the capacity of kin networks to outperform larger but less organized groups in conflict environments. By taking full advantage of their close ties, aggressive families stand to benefit substantially by operating as a cohesive group taking land, wealth, and other spoils and distributing them across the kin network. Even more so than co-ethnics, members of a shared kin network are readily identifiable to one another and can be monitored for their participation in collaborative cost-sharing activities, making such networks highly effective at distributing benefits to loyal kinsmen and isolating non-cooperative “black sheep” relatives.<sup>114</sup> This close familiarity allows kin networks to readily resolve collective action problems that can vex larger groups and hamper their ability to fight effectively.<sup>115</sup> In an account of violence among New Guinean populations, for example, Roscoe 2012 notes that while defensive actions can easily mobilize an entire village to protect their property, aggressive actions such as raids on other villagers can typically only be done by smaller but more cohesive actors such as individual clans or sub-clans.<sup>116</sup> And in their account of the Chechen insurgency, Findley & Edwards 2007 describe how Russian-supported actors were surprised and unprepared at the effectiveness of local Chechen clans who – despite their history of becoming embroiled in internecine disputes against one another – proved highly effective in mobilizing and negotiating cooperative alliances when the incentives for coordination were strong. Through cooperation within a kin network and against rival groups, groups of relatives can outcompete less effective alliances and distribute the spoils of victory among a relatively small group of compatriots.<sup>117</sup> In some cases, elevated status and material rewards may tend to accrue to those who are particularly willing to take costly actions on behalf of the group, thereby incentivizing an individual’s willingness to take risks on behalf of their family, clan, or tribe.<sup>118</sup> Ironically, these strong bonds of loyalty and cooperation among kin may also ultimately disincentivize less violent forms of individual economic output. In societies where resources are expected to be shared among family members, a tragedy of the commons scenario may disincentivize heavy individual investment in long-term economic investment and instead encourage participation in risky but socially valorized violence against a clan’s enemies.<sup>119</sup>

If inter-kin violence follows an instrumental logic, then reducing such violence necessitates finding a method to lower the material incentives that encourage violence against non-members. Such efforts are likely to follow two general paths – either the extension of the benefits of kin networks to encompass a wider range of individuals or the promotion of non-kin-based institutions that undermine the incentives to disproportionately cooperate with kin over other members of society. The first strategy complements the logic of complex

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<sup>114</sup> Fitness 2005. A notable example of this dynamic can be observed in polygamous sects, where adult males have a strong incentive to exile substantial numbers of disobedient young males who would otherwise be competitors for a limited pool of potential brides (Bramham 2009).

<sup>115</sup> Wood 2003.

<sup>116</sup> p. 63. Diamond 2008 provides further details regarding New Guinea feuding cultures, including the logistical complexity involved in coordinating vendettas that grow large enough to require hiring men from other clans – a process that involves finding payment for them as well as investigating these clans’ histories to ensure these agents aren’t likely to betray their employer to satisfy vendettas of their own.

<sup>117</sup> Distributing the spoils of victory along kin-based lines allows rebels to avoid opportunistic joiners who flock to a movement as it nears victory (for which, see Weinstein 2005).

<sup>118</sup> Willer 2009.

<sup>119</sup> Di Falco & Bulte 2013.

interdependence<sup>120</sup> and is exemplified in the complex web of marriage alliances and the clientelistic patronage of weaker families that can be observed in highly dynastic societies such as Europe in earlier centuries. Kin networks that can successfully distribute payoffs to a wide enough selection of political actors through these ties can conceivably transform from competitive, violence-prone actors to ones that foster cooperation along sprawling webs of kinship. The second approach instead is reflected in state efforts to weaken the power of kin networks, whether through targeted policies such as anti-nepotism laws or through more sweeping transformations such as radical land reform and direct military suppression of powerful tribal militias. Over the long term, these efforts can gradually allow formal and transparent institutions to take up many of the social and economic roles performed by kin networks, as arguably has already occurred in most Western countries with the gradual privatization and marginalization of family networks.

### *Constructivism*

The third lens through which political scientists might understand inter-kin violence is via a constructivist approach – focusing on violence’s origins in ideas, identities, and societal rules of engagement rather than on evolutionary payoffs or rational individual self-interest. This approach follows most closely from the main body of literature produced by the anthropological study of kinship. From this literature, it is apparent that much of the influence exerted by kinship on individual behavior derives from the societally constructed roles surrounding these relationships – that is, the power of kin relationship lies neither in blood ties nor in the calculated self-interest of an individual, but instead in an individual’s socially-reinforced perception that their ties to family and relatives carry with them special duties and moral responsibilities.<sup>121</sup> Politics and political violence, as well, are heavily invested in symbolic relationships, and it thus stands to reason that when family and politics become conflated through dynastic succession, issues, agendas, and identities originating from one sphere become interlinked with the other.<sup>122</sup> Kinship in all societies is heavily involved in the manufacture of identities (including one’s role as a child, parent, or relative), norms (positive responsibilities and duties toward family), and taboos (negative responsibilities surrounding which actions are reprehensible, including taboo acts directed toward family, and broader taboo actions that bring shame on a family).<sup>123</sup> The social power of kinship likely derives primarily from its role in human development. Because people’s early identities derive so strongly from their social interactions with parents and other family members, kinship ties tend to be internalized extremely early. But these relationships are also continuously reinforced in an adult’s subsequent adult life through a wide variety of rules and social customs that continue to emphasize the importance of family relationships. The cultural pressure to maintain loyalty to one’s kin has both a contemporaneous dimension – especially in the form of powerful in-group / out-group dynamics that shore up loyalty to family while promoting skepticism of non-kin<sup>124</sup> – and a temporal dimension reflected in how people

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<sup>120</sup> Keohane & Nye 1987.

<sup>121</sup> A common refrain in anthropological kinship studies, originally coined by Meyer Fortes, asserts that kinship is “sharing without reckoning” – a form of social relationship uniquely free from humans’ typical expectations of mutually equitable returns (Bloch 1973).

<sup>122</sup> For the symbolic dimension of politics, see Brown 1994. Perhaps the most explicit example of such identity conflation can be seen in the prevalence of family members who end up acting as political heirs to elected officials who have died in office – a pattern regularly repeated in a variety of electoral systems and cultures.

<sup>123</sup> For the interrelationship between these three social concepts, see Bémanou & Tirole 2011.

<sup>124</sup> Halevy et al. 2012 discuss in-group and out-group biases in greater detail.

view their family ties as part of a continuity that involves both honoring one's ancestors and setting an example for one's descendants.<sup>125</sup> To some extent, it is impossible for any researcher to adequately capture how this web of meaning-making manifests in the individually unique relationships in any given kin-group. But because kin identities are mutually constitutive and heavily informed by cultural norms, it is highly likely that specific cultures and sub-cultures in a given time and place will tend to generate observable patterns in kin relationships.

The task for constructivist researchers, then, is to examine how particular identities, norms, and taboos surrounding kinship either promote or disincentivize inter-kin violence and how they shape any violence that does emerge. Such analysis might involve relatively blunt characterizations of an entire society and its general level of individualism and autonomy from kin groups,<sup>126</sup> or might focus more on specific cultural practices and traditions. Of particular note are the codes of family honor that define family ties in many societies, along with traditions of vendettas and feuding that are used to enforce these codes of conduct.<sup>127</sup> Such honor codes often have a strong socially imposed coercive dimension, with a particular focus on regulating the interactions between kin and non-kin and ensuring that family honor is upheld in these interactions.<sup>128</sup> In societies where these codes of honor operate, any perceived act that dishonors or harms a kin member can set off chain reactions and feedback loops of attacks and counter-attacks, as families each feel a sense of aggrieved honor that demands retaliation. Other traditional practices can further inflame tensions and increase the likelihood of violence. For example, strong links between territory and kinship (as in the case of lands traditionally held by a specific clan or tribe) can generate issue linkage where encroachments on territory are also perceived as impinging on family honor. Similar dynamics can arise with other kin-based privileges, including political status and authority.<sup>129</sup> In any of these conflicts, the social tendency to demonize outsiders can create a self-reinforcing pattern of animosities, where fear of being targeted and a psychological dependence on the protection of family contributes to increasingly negative interactions with those outside one's kin group. Reports from those living in the midst of blood feuds recount the huge psychological toll that is taken from constant distrust of outsiders, the weight of accumulated past grievances, and the crushing sense of a conflict's intractability – sentiments that are likely to contribute to families' insularity in such societies.<sup>130</sup>

Even more so than in an instrumentalist approach, a constructivist interpretation of inter-kin violence suggests that policy-makers face a difficult dilemma regarding how best to resolve such conflicts. Socially-motivated conflicts have the potential to be remarkably tenacious, as the drive to redress perceived grievances can lead to violence even when it is in the material self-interest (whether defined genetically or individually) of actors to seek out a non-violent

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<sup>125</sup> The line of ancestors and possible descendants can give rise to a sense that an individual is “only a link in a growing chain,” (Adams 2005a p. 76).

<sup>126</sup> As in Greif 1994's relatively sweeping distinction between “collectivist” vs. “individualist” societies, or in the past supposition of a general system of “Asian values” that permeated many East Asian societies (Thompson 2001).

<sup>127</sup> Waldman 2001 notes that the psychological and cultural processes surrounding revenge tend to be overlooked by the security studies and international security literature in favor of more rationalist explanations for conflict.

<sup>128</sup> Among men in a family, this policing comes in the form of strict social stigmas and shaming of those who do not defend their family's honor and resources, while among women it manifests primarily in shaming or violence against those seen as dishonoring their family through perceived or rumored sexual indiscretions (Schneider 1971).

<sup>129</sup> See my description of the Maguindanao massacre in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, wherein the decision to run a political campaign in a province dominated by a different dynasty sparked an unusually brutal response.

<sup>130</sup> Littlewood 2002.

resolution. Resolution is thus highly desirable and can again generally take two broad paths. In the first case, authorities and third parties can resolve a conflict within the context of a given culture's traditions – typically by relying on restorative justice and “blood money” practices that have typically evolved in a feuding society to signal an end to hostilities.<sup>131</sup> This approach can lead to temporary resolutions, but can also help further entrench a system of behavior likely to produce more feuding in the future.<sup>132</sup> A much more costly and uncertain strategy occurs when states or civil society pursue a policy of systematically delegitimizing feuding behavior in general – a process that has largely been successful in most of the developed world.<sup>133</sup> Any such attempt to suppress feuding culture, especially in societies with powerful institutions such as major clans or tribes who use such vendettas to exert influence, risks triggering a backlash and entrenching opposition to reforms.<sup>134</sup> But if these fundamental cultural transformations never take place and powerful norms of family honor and vendettas persist in a society, then a constructivist lens suggests that these social pressures can continue to consistently generate further violence between feuding kin networks for as long as societies continue to valorize such conflicts.

### ***Explanations for Intra-Kin Conflict***

Violence between rival families and kin networks is relatively simple to conceptualize regardless of whether one takes an essentialist, instrumentalist, or constructivist view. And while all three approaches emphasize different drivers of conflict, their broad predictions are relatively complementary and are often difficult to distinguish empirically from one another. But violence in dynastic societies doesn't emerge solely among individuals from distinct kin networks. Perhaps counterintuitively, and despite the many incentives described in prior paragraphs encouraging heavy cooperation within kin networks, we nonetheless frequently see violent rifts emerge between relatively close kin within dynastic societies. In the constant feuding between tribes and lineages in Afghanistan – feuds which have become increasingly politicized as foreign actors from the USSR to al-Qaeda to the United States have flooded the country with weapons and offers of support – fights between cousins are so ubiquitous that the Pashtun word for “enmity” literally translates as “cousin-ness.”<sup>135</sup> Sometimes, intra-kin violence can be attributed to larger political disputes, as was likely the case in at least some historical wars of succession between kin, or in contemporary cases of families torn apart by conflicting ideologies.<sup>136</sup> But in other cases, killings and violence seem clearly rooted in tensions emerging out of kin relationships. During the Rwandan genocide, many Hutus reportedly identified their own kin who had Tutsi wives or sympathies – frequently because of personal resentments and old family antagonisms rather than out of any broader ethnic antipathies.<sup>137</sup> Violence within kin networks may be more difficult to observe due to selection or reporting bias, and might thus be significantly under-measured and under-conceptualized in accounts of societies with persistent

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<sup>131</sup> Braithwaite 2002.

<sup>132</sup> This dilemma is comparable to the broader issue of when states should or should not negotiate with terrorists or rebel groups (Thomas 2014).

<sup>133</sup> For example, in the gradual decline of dueling practices in Western societies, as recounted in Wells 2001.

<sup>134</sup> See, for example, accounts of the perilous efforts at detribalization undertaken by several Middle Eastern states such as Iraq and Iran in Khoury & Kostiner 1991.

<sup>135</sup> Martin 2014 p. 6.

<sup>136</sup> The Washington Post, for example, reports on the case of a Tunisian jihadist who stalked and ambushed his cousin when he learned the relative had joined the state security forces (Raghavan 2017).

<sup>137</sup> Fujii 2009 pp. 136-138 and 183.



feuding cultures. The archetypal American feud between the Hatfields and the McCoys, for example, was in fact an intra-kin conflict, as both families shared kin in common and at least one round of fighting was provoked by the courtship between a young couple originating from both sides in the conflict.<sup>138</sup> Such instances of intra-kin fighting complicate the concept of vendetta conflicts, and suggest that these persistent feuds may operate in patterns more complicated than simple antipathy between two clearly defined sides. As with inter-kin violence, how we understand this phenomenon depends heavily on our preferred theoretical approach.

### *Essentialism*

Of the three approaches, essentialism fares the worst at explaining widespread intra-kin conflict and would generally predict that such behavior is rare and only occurs under limited circumstances. Killing one's own relatives, after all, reduces an organism's overall fitness and leads to fewer copies of their genes passing down to another generation.<sup>139</sup> Individuals who have instincts leading them to regularly engage in conflict with kin rather than cooperate with them are thus expected over time to gradually be outcompeted by populations with more cooperative familial relationships. An essentialist interpretation of kinship would thus predict that instances of intra-kin violence generally represent outlier incidents or are responses to unusual circumstances. We do see some evidence to support the expectation that intra-kin violence is rare. Consistent kin-based cooperation has been observed in a variety of types of violence,<sup>140</sup> and an essentialist observer might reasonably expect this pattern to hold true for vendetta attacks as well. That having been said, intra-kin violence unquestionably does occur in some cases, and represents a compelling puzzle for evolutionary psychologists to explain.<sup>141</sup>

Several possible explanations might be proposed to explain the apparently uncompetitive practice of fighting against one's own kin. First, we might suspect that intra-kin violence is comparable to other forms of aggressive behavior, and that observed kinship ties merely serve to reduce, but not altogether eliminate, such incidents of violence. Without a systematic comparison of violence rates across kin and non-kin, we should be reticent to assume that anecdotal incidents of violence disprove any expectation that kin will generally cooperate more than non-kin do. Secondly, an essentialist analysis might propose that intra-kin violence is an evolutionary psychopathology,<sup>142</sup> a behavior that hinders fitness in some context but may be a byproduct of an overall competitive trait. This hypothesis largely matches with evolutionary interpretations of domestic violence, which typically propose that human aggression instincts are often advantageous, but can result in pathologies of abusive behavior.<sup>143</sup> A third explanation might suppose that a high prevalence of violence among kin might result from anachronistic instincts

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<sup>138</sup> Waller 2012.

<sup>139</sup> This does not, of course, apply to fictive kin relationships – an essentialist approach might reasonably predict that people may readily betray their step-children or clients that are supposedly accepted in bonds of fraternity and patrimonialism, even as they remain fiercely loyal to their blood relatives.

<sup>140</sup> Daly & Wilson 1982, for example, note that while homicides often involve intra-family violence, this pattern might reasonably be attributed to the fact that victims are drawn overwhelmingly from a killer's social circle. Indeed, they argue that patterns in double-homicides – where two relatives teaming together to kill an unrelated acquaintance is common, while non-relatives uniting to kill one of their family members is much rarer – are consistent with predictions that intra-kin violence is relatively uncommon.

<sup>141</sup> For similar puzzles in human behavior, and examples of how evolutionary theories attempt to reconcile these behaviors with the harsh mathematics of natural selection, see Smith 2013.

<sup>142</sup> Gilbert 1998.

<sup>143</sup> Buss & Shackelford 1997.

that evolved in the context of humans' early small-scale social groups, and which may not be well-adapted to the complex societies and divided loyalties characteristic of contemporary human social organization.<sup>144</sup> Finally, in many cases, the most compelling evolutionary explanation may reside in the observed trade-offs from supporting one sub-set of kin against another. Just as individuals are predicted to generally support kin over non-kin, so too is it generally preferable to support closer kin at the expense of more distant kin.<sup>145</sup> These incentives can result in the type of dynamics associated with segmentary kinship societies, wherein kin show multiple tiers of loyalty and expand their loyalties to progressively more peripheral kin when attacked by outsiders.<sup>146</sup> As these examples illustrate, an essentialist approach to kinship will generally assume that intra-kin violence is rare, but not impossible. Even in scenarios where such apparently maladaptive behavior is observed, this evolutionary approach nonetheless presents compelling new avenues for research inquiries that could potentially explain such behavior.

### *Instrumentalism*

Instrumentalism, with its focus on individual self-interest, provides a clearer rationale for why intra-kin violence might consistently emerge, albeit through mechanisms that potentially contradict the reasoning an instrumentalist would use to explain kin group cooperation in inter-kin violence. Instrumentalism suggests that individuals engage in violence against their kin in situations where the expected payoffs for such internecine violence outweigh the incentives for continued cooperation within the kin network.<sup>147</sup> Necessarily, this means that instrumentalist predictions can vary wildly regarding when and where intra-kin defection is likely to occur based on how a given researcher estimates the payoff structure influencing each actor.<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, certain patterns are likely to emerge regarding how and why rational actors within a cooperative network might come into conflict. Most notably, because each actor is predicted to behave as a self-motivated utility maximizer, an instrumentalist approach predicts that even among kin all actors are still continuously searching for opportunities to free-ride and maximize their personal benefits while minimizing their involvement in costly activity.<sup>149</sup> Therefore, conflicts in a kin network are likely to take two broad forms – either opportunistic actions taken by individuals who sense profit in defection in spite of valuable connections kin alliances offer, or acts of enforcement committed by a functioning family alliance to dissuade or punish such defectors.<sup>150</sup> The former category – opportunistic acts of rebellion or exploitation – may in fact be quite common in situations where kin members are able to surreptitiously advance their own interests at the expense of their kin. But overt violence directed at kin is difficult to perform

<sup>144</sup> For the relationship between complex modern human societies, and human instincts that largely evolved in the context of much narrower social ties, see Richerson & Boyd 1999.

<sup>145</sup> More detailed discussion of these tradeoffs can be found in Cox & Fafchamps 2007.

<sup>146</sup> Discussion regarding segmentary lineages systems can be found in Sahlins 1961 and Dunnigan 1982.

<sup>147</sup> Dowry ransoms, a persistent problem in India, serve as an illustrative set of cases for this type of mercenary calculation regarding the treatment of kin. In these blackmail scenarios, a husband takes advantage of his wife's distance and separation from family members by beating and threatening her, coupled with a demand that her birth family send him more money for her continued safety (Van Willigen & Channa 1991).

<sup>148</sup> Levi 1997 offers an insightful analysis of rationalist theories such as instrumentalism based on this dilemma.

<sup>149</sup> In development literature, this kin-based free rider problem is sometimes referred to as the "rotten kin" problem. See Di Falco & Bulte 2009, and Jakiela & Owen 2015.

<sup>150</sup> Such enforcement violence would itself also be predicted to emerge out of the rational self-interest of other members and may be far from altruistic. Indeed, in many cases the status quo being defended is likely to be highly exploitative against weaker members. See Bernheim & Stark 1988 and True 2012.

surreptitiously, and so cases of open and sustained feuding between mutually hostile kin members would be expected to occur primarily when the rational interests of different kin become so divergent that even superficial cooperation between them is no longer strategically beneficial.

When disputes within a family network escalate to the point of direct confrontation, instrumentalism can offer valuable insights into why rational actors might feel compelled to use violence rather than negotiating peaceful resolutions. In his study of rational explanations for warfare, Fearon 1995 suggests that certain conditions can force even actors that are amenable to bargaining into violent contestation – specifically under conditions of non-credible signaling, issue indivisibility, and commitment problems. Non-credible signaling corresponds closely with the central dilemma of instrumentalist family networks – each individual member has an incentive to surreptitiously freeride off family largesse when possible, which undermines family networks’ strategic incentives to cooperate when identification and punishment of such free riders isn’t feasible. Fearon’s second posited cause of conflict – indivisibility – can also be observed in kin networks, most notably as in disputes over non-partible inheritance and other indivisible benefits of a family network such as leadership positions in a family patronage or dynastic political office.<sup>151</sup> Finally, examples of family-specific commitment problems are particularly apparent in instances where individuals are cut off from the types of marriage access and child-rearing support that often serve as a reliable basis for long-term cooperation.<sup>152</sup> Instrumentalism thus provides a valuable framework for identifying and highlighting potential strategic flashpoints in which the close-knit cooperation within a kin network is not likely to be reliable and profitable enough to guarantee the continued collaboration of its members.

When violence does erupt between kin, instrumentalism also offers intriguing avenues of analysis regarding where violence is likely to be directed. On the one hand, instrumentalists might predict that defection and violence is least likely among the closest members of a family, given the level of sharing and continuous mutual support often observed among close relatives. But a strong counterpoint can be advanced to suggest that this type of ostentatious sharing and visible ongoing support within the immediate family is a necessary signaling strategy to mitigate the strong incentives rational individuals face to betray their closest relatives. Individuals’ immediate family, after all, are the most direct competitors for inheritance, status, and political titles, and close relatives’ overlapping family ties generally mean they hold relatively redundant positions in a social network.<sup>153</sup> Instrumentalists who focus on the effect of social capital and

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<sup>151</sup> This would suggest that in instrumentalist analyses, partible inheritance systems might be predicted to generate less hostility than unitary alternatives, since they give all family members a continuing stake in cooperating and offer a ready means of punishing defectors by cutting off their share of an inheritance. The rational incentives surrounding partible inheritance can, however, become more complicated in agricultural societies, where repeated subdivisions of land can make plots unsustainably small or generate conflicts among owners of adjacent territories. An extensive body of literature has arisen focusing on land tenure issues and their impact on security and sustainable economic well-being. A sample of discussions in this vein include Russett 1964 and Banerjee & Iyer 2005. Myers 1970 pp. 164-165 offers an illustrative example in discussing the strategic calculations concerning how land was split up among brothers in China and the problems that arose as families subdivided their land over multiple generations.

<sup>152</sup> I discuss the concept of marriage as a form of costly commitment between families in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>153</sup> In dynastic systems, close relatives share much of the same social and symbolic capital, making them relatively interchangeable for outsiders. The British, for example, forced both the Shah of Iran and the Sultan of Oman to relinquish power in favor of their sons. In Afghanistan, where inheritance is passed down primarily along patrilineal lines, disputes over inheritance are so pervasive and entrenched that agnatic kin are expected to be wary of one

“the strength of weak ties” in social networks might therefore predict that the incentives for violence are paradoxically strongest among close family members, while more attenuated relationships – such as those between cousins and even more distant kin – may provide the highest payoff in connections and social capital.<sup>154</sup> Once again, this spectrum of predictions illustrates the flexibility of the instrumentalist approach. Depending on a researcher’s assumption about a given individual’s strategic interests, instrumentalist logic might predict either heavy cooperation or ubiquitous competition between kin, and any tensions that do emerge might reasonably be expected to emerge either at the center or the periphery of a kin network. Instrumentalism’s flexibility can thus limit the approach’s value as a predictive approach, but nonetheless makes this theoretical lens a valuable approach for thinking about the incentives and interests faced by members of a kin network once they have been observed to behave in a given pattern.

### *Constructivism*

Of the three theoretical lenses described in this chapter, a constructivist approach provides perhaps the strongest continuity and conceptual linkage between instances of inter-kin and intra-kin violence. Because constructivists view kinship ties as socially constructed and subject to contestation and reinterpretation by a society and its constituent members, constructivists are likely to expect that the boundaries and meanings surrounding kinship ties will often be amorphous and fluid. Kin networks tend to be vast and complex, and the social meaning that individuals and societies attach to these networks are likely to map imperfectly to material interactions between members of a kin network.<sup>155</sup> As a result, while individuals may tend to demonstrate intense loyalty and commitment to those they view as their core family, their relationships with more peripheral and socially marginalized kin are likely to demonstrate heavy levels of social ambiguity, and with this ambiguity may come confusion, competing claims to legitimate inheritance, and resentments that can ultimately lead to violence.<sup>156</sup> In Figure 2.1, I

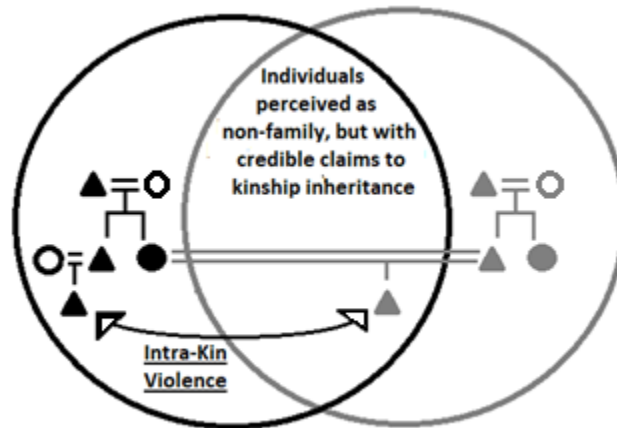
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another, and individuals are instead expected to develop social ties primarily among their mothers’ relatives (Monsutti 2004).

<sup>154</sup> Theories that focus on “the strength of weak ties” (Granovetter 1977) or the presence of “structural holes” in social networks (Burt 2009) propose that the majority of value in a social network occurs at its periphery, since extremely close friends or family are likely to overlap significantly in their social ties and demonstrate relatively homogenous characteristics. Among dynasties, for example, the close status and overlapping claims to inheritance shared by close family members mean there are relatively low barriers to betrayal for clients who abandon a man in favor of his son or brother (Seymour 2014). It should be noted that this theory is not universally accepted among social network theorists, where a countervailing “strength of strong ties” argument has also been proposed in response to this concept (Krackhardt 2003).

<sup>155</sup> We see this process of “mapping” social priorities onto real kin relationships in the process through which different families and societies conceptualize their kin networks and ancestors. For example, in societies where individuals only remember their patrilineal line of descent, or where embarrassing or socially marginalized sides of the family are gradually edited out of the social lives of more prestigious family lines. Carsten 1995 offers further reflections on this process.

<sup>156</sup> The logic here is generally comparable to that presented in Kalyvas 2008’s analysis of intra-ethnic violence: because kinship, like ethnicity, tends to be fluid and subject to identity shift, members of a group will at times switch loyalties in the midst of conflict. Kalyvas proposes an underlying rational motive influencing these identity shifts, with people tending to change their level of ethnic loyalty based on how successful a rebel group has been at seizing local territory. But the more defined hierarchies and identities associated with kin relationships allow a constructivist analysis of dynastic violence to go further and attempt to estimate where the maximum level of malleability and ambiguity is likely to emerge based on which relationships are most marginalized in a given society.

**Figure 2.1**

illustrate an example of an ambiguous relationship in the context of a society that heavily emphasizes patrilineal descent. In this figure, the scion of the Gray family is descended through his mother from the Black family – a social tie that may bring with it credible claims to inheritance of Black family lands, titles, or status, even as the Gray son himself has been socialized to prioritize his patrilineal family identity.<sup>157</sup> A constructivist analysis will generally predict that intra-kin violence and contestation is most likely to emerge along these types of cleavage lines, where a given society’s concept of a “family” begins to dissipate into uncertain loyalties and unclear commitments. In Rwanda and other African countries experiencing land scarcity, it is precisely those kin members who are most socially marginalized that tend to be to be the first groups to become isolated and alienated from kinship networks - returning migrant workers, the handicapped, orphans, and the wives and sons of divorced or deceased men.<sup>158</sup> Among interracial or transnational families, the confluence of different cultural rules and traditions create ample room for resentments and alternative claims to legitimacy to arise.<sup>159</sup> And in societies with strongly defined class structures, families may stigmatize and ostracize members that marry into the wrong families or who sire illegitimate offspring, even if these individuals continue to possess wealth or skills that could make them valuable allies.<sup>160</sup> In such instances of ambiguity, individuals who are linked through the same kin network can begin to experience alienation from one another and to view each other as illegitimate rivals that

<sup>157</sup> I frame this relationship in hypothetical terms here, but in the following chapter I use the detailed genealogical records of European monarchs to analyze the difference between patronym – a single socially prioritized mark of relatedness – versus the entirety of a ruler’s close kin relationships.

<sup>158</sup> André & Platteau 1998 and Izumi 2007.

<sup>159</sup> Mallampalli 2011 recounts the travails of an interracial family in 19<sup>th</sup> Century India, where competing Hindu and British legal codes and accusations of racial impurity generated significant acrimony within kin networks (see pp. 1-6 for illustrative overviews).

<sup>160</sup> Gould 2003 discusses the relationship between ambiguity in social status and human aggression in detail. On the other hand, the history of bastards among European nobility suggests that social norms still tend in many cases to bow to pragmatic interest and the agendas of powerful political actors over time. While European bastards were certainly stigmatized for their heritage, in many periods they also enjoyed a flexible status that made them valued links in kin alliances. This in turn often complicated the social norms surrounding illegitimacy, creating informal patterns of acceptance that belied official disapproval of bastards. See Kuehn 2002 and Gerber 2012.

undermine one another's family honor and rightfully inherited claims to social status and prestige.<sup>161</sup>

Within these zones of social ambiguity inside a kin network, the same social forces of family honor, ancestral birthrights, and filial duties that typically unite a kin group against outsiders can become redirected to stoke conflicts between relatives.<sup>162</sup> Family honor can drive two branches of a family into an intensive feud, and the sense of a shared history can generate aggrievement over the perception that rightful inheritances have been denied.<sup>163</sup> We can compare this breakdown in mutual trust and support within a kin network to the same types of social fragmentation that arise within a state spiraling into civil war. States, like kin networks, rely heavily on shared norms and identities to maintain their perceived legitimacy among their constituent members.<sup>164</sup> And in both cases, these norms and identities are not fixed, but instead experience continuous contestation and transformation even in the most well-functioning and cohesive groups.<sup>165</sup> For both states and families, violence breaks out when this contestation becomes too intense and intractable, creating a centripetal crisis where factions within the state or kin network prefer to violently oppose rivals rather than continue in a cooperative status quo.<sup>166</sup> Within states, crises of legitimacy typically form around the question of which individuals or groups hold legitimate authority over the government, or over the appropriate administration and level of sovereignty of a territory. In these intra-state conflicts, as with broader inter-state conflicts, war and political violence are intertwined with the drive by different actors to establish their point of view as the legitimate governing ideology.<sup>167</sup> Intra-kin violence, from a constructivist perspective, follows this same pattern: individuals in kin networks are heavily defined by and invested in the roles they play,<sup>168</sup> and are likely to feel deeply aggrieved in situations where disputes emerge over how authority, status, and wealth are invested within the network.<sup>169</sup> In well-functioning and cohesive kin networks these disputes are likely to be

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<sup>161</sup> This does not necessarily mean that violence will be unknown within core culturally prized family relationships. It does, however, suggest that violence among close family will tend to be shamed and privatized, rather than following a narrative of open vendetta as does violence with more peripheral kin. While some cultures do have ritualized scripts promoting violence against close kin in some circumstances – most notably in traditions of “honor killing” to symbolically restore a family's honor after a (typically female) member is perceived to have publicly shamed them – in the majority of cases, violence within the most culturally prized kin relationship would be expected to be hidden and obfuscated to maintain social expectations, and thus would have only marginal impact on broader political conflicts. For discussion regarding how social norms and shaming compound issues surrounding intra-familial violence, see Dutton et al. 1995 and Vandello & Cohen 2003.

<sup>162</sup> The prestige of a common ancestor can transform from a unifying sense of pride, for example, into a source of tensions between different branches of the family as they begin to contest who represents the ancestor's rightful successor and heir. This can be compared to the political disputes that mobilize around contested mythologies about shared historical experiences as described in Lowenthal 1998.

<sup>163</sup> This may suggest that a constructivist analysis, contrary to instrumentalist predictions, would point to unitary inheritance systems as a more stable arrangement than dividing property among multiple heirs. A cultural expectation that the vast majority of wealth will go to a single heir (the eldest son, in male-preference primogeniture) is inherently unfair, but leaves far less room for ambiguity and disagreements over the relative value of different assets. If norms shape individuals' behavior more than rational self-interest, this unfair but clear-cut cultural expectation lowers the risk that resentments will proliferate over the allocation of wealth (Herzfeld 1980).

<sup>164</sup> For further discussion of the concept of legitimacy and its impact on politics, see Hurd 1999 and Levi et al. 2009.

<sup>165</sup> See Kellermanns & Eddleston 2004 and Cantir & Kaarbo 2012.

<sup>166</sup> For examples of this process of legitimacy collapse, see Zartman 1995.

<sup>167</sup> Reus-Smit 2007, Widmaier et al. 2007, and Sanín & Wood 2014.

<sup>168</sup> Hamilton 1990 and Biddle 2013.

<sup>169</sup> In Saddam Hussein's Iraq, for example, tribesmen and relatives of the dictator were given an elevated status, but these privileges were associated with a heightened expectation of loyalty and deference. When an internal family

resolved amicably, but when social tensions are already severe, flashpoints can lead to the proliferation of threats, hostility, and violence between different factions in a kin network.

Thus, the constructivist assertion that norms and identities heavily inform actor behavior does not imply that norms – including the norm to cooperate with and support kin – will be universally accepted. To the contrary, the fact that these social phenomena have greater-than-instrumental value suggests that individuals will be heavily invested in ideals such as honor, status, and fairness, and will fight all the more intensely to defend these values as they perceive them.<sup>170</sup> In the short term, this may not lead to constructivist predictions that radically depart from instrumentalist expectations. Individuals, after all, tend to be biased toward accepting norms that benefit them, and a constructivist might thus expect that individuals will most passionately defend aggrieved honor or stand up for an alternative inheritance claim when they will be the beneficiaries.<sup>171</sup> But schisms and cleavages are likely to emerge in different parts of a kin network. Rather than conflicts manifesting between relatives with the most to gain from eliminating one another, conflicts can instead be predicted to break out primarily where social norms promoting family cooperation are at their most contradictory, conflicted, and ambiguous.<sup>172</sup> And as a conflict progresses, identities and ideological positions tend to become entrenched and internalized by actors and their social networks,<sup>173</sup> a process that in social networks can lead to the gradual alienation and splitting apart of their constituent members.<sup>174</sup> A constructivist approach would thus also diverge from instrumentalism by predicting that intra-kin feuds will possess a social inertia that leads individuals and groups to dwell on their grievances and fight perceived enemies beyond the point of strict material self-interest. Lindholm 1981, for example, recounts his experiences in Pashtunistan and reports that the most intense feud contemporaneous with his research began when one boy dishonored his cousin by refusing to allow him to play in a soccer game – a dispute that eventually escalated to the point that both families were forced to sell or abandon their lands in order to continue their vendetta.<sup>175</sup> These problems are likely to recur regularly as family networks grow and then splinter across generations, but may be particularly severe when social institutions promote uncertainty and alternative claims to legitimacy within a family network – as, for example, through the practice

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dispute caused two of Hussein's sons-in-law to fall out of favor, the men and their wives (Saddam's daughters) temporarily defected from Iraq. Hussein and his tribesmen eventually had the men killed soon after their return to Iraq and publicly discussed how their deaths were a necessary step in restoring the tribe's honor (Ibrahim 1996).

<sup>170</sup> Fiske & Rai 2014 argue that most violence and homicides occur between acquaintances precisely because individuals are predisposed to care much more passionately and aggressively about the behavior and beliefs of those close to them.

<sup>171</sup> Kangas 1997. Finnemore & Sikkink 1998 similarly note that self-interest often plays a critical role during the critical early stages of norm proliferation in international politics.

<sup>172</sup> Identifying where the tensions reside in a given society necessarily means studying that society and observing past patterns of conflict – which does mean that the constructivist approach, as with the instrumentalist approach, can be vulnerable to ex-post-facto rationalizations and ad-hoc reasoning. This problem is, however, somewhat less severe in the case of constructivism, thanks to the independent evidence of norms, identities, and values found in materials such as literature, public statements, or naming conventions. Methodologically, it is relatively easier to demonstrate that individuals' behavior does not conform to cultural ideals and expectations than it is to unambiguously show that individuals are acting against their own rational self-interest, though a sufficiently flexible interpretation of norms can limit the falsifiability of constructivist predictions in similar ways. Lupovici 2009 discusses falsifiability and other methodological concerns in the context of constructivism in much greater depth.

<sup>173</sup> Hassner 2009.

<sup>174</sup> Peters 2002 describes one such pattern in Malawi, where cultural identities often result in tensions and mutual alienation manifesting along matrilineal lines between two or more sisters, or between aunts and their nieces.

<sup>175</sup> p. 149.

of “legal pluralism” or “hybrid governance,” wherein both formal and customary claims to land ownership coexist and potentially promote rival claims to inheritance in a country.<sup>176</sup> At its core, the constructivist explanation for intra-kin conflict lies in the ambiguity of kin relationships and the legitimacy they bestow on political actors. As families grow, spread apart, and change over time, the core shared identity that initially generated unity among members begins to fracture and take on competing forms among socially estranged branches of the family, resulting in the most severe cases in sustained violence between feuding relatives unwilling to give up their own claims to legitimacy, authority, and inheritance.

#### **Section IV** **Discussion and Conclusion**

In most societies, family relationships at the broadest level tend to follow a similar dynamic – families and kin groups generally cooperate with one another in the face of opposition, but also regularly experience splits and divisions within the network. Different theoretical approaches offer different insights and predictions regarding how robust cooperation might be, where divisions might arise, and why external and internal tensions might escalate to the point of open violence. Essentialist, instrumentalist, and constructivist approaches each offer viable explanatory frameworks for observers to theorize what drives these dynamics and how we might best model them for further comparison and prediction. While these three approaches differ substantially in terms of the mechanisms through which they seek to explain conflicts and violence, they should still be seen as a continuity of perspectives rather than as mutually exclusive worldviews. Instrumentalism and constructivism can blend together both because material self-interest often informs individuals’ openness to new ideas and norms and because mutual adherence to shared norms and ideals can often have positive instrumental side-effects, such as signaling intentions and demonstrating group cohesion. Instrumentalism and essentialism also often share complementary conclusions, since individual self-interest and successful reproductive strategies often closely align. And essentialism can often be reconciled with constructivism due to the heavily socialized nature of human interactions. Even in cases where specific norms and cultural practices have deleterious effects on individuals’ reproductive fitness, this costly behavior may nonetheless be a worthwhile tradeoff for the powerful benefits human beings derive from sustained social alliances. Studying dynastic politics and violence through different theoretical approaches can help develop novel hypotheses and new insights, and it is thus often worthwhile to revisit the same behavior through different perspectives.<sup>177</sup>

Nonetheless, while these different approaches are often complementary, the distinct proposed mechanisms associated with each approach do result in varying predictions – variations which can be used to empirically test our assumptions and analyze which mechanisms may be primarily responsible for an observed conflict or interaction. I summarize the alternative approaches that I have described in this chapter in Table 2.1, disaggregating their general frameworks for understanding inter-kin and intra-kin conflict, respectively, then evaluating how consistently the approach covers both dynamics. As is apparent from this table, the predictions of the three approaches closely match one another regarding inter-kin conflict – and indeed, it can be extremely difficult to disaggregate these different proposed motivations to explain why two distinct kin networks may fight against one another. The distinction between each approach is

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<sup>176</sup> Merry 1988 and Meagher 2012.

<sup>177</sup> For more on the value of conceptual flexibility in the study of political security, see Allison 1969.



**Table 2.1**  
**Theoretical Explanations for Dynastic Violence**

<u>Outcome Explanation</u>	<u>Inter-Kin Conflict</u>	<u>Intra-Kin Conflict</u>	<u>Explanatory Power</u>
<u>Essentialist</u>	Innate genetic similarities and inborn loyalties explain cooperation with kin and violence against non-kin	Competing kinship ties can lead to ambiguous loyalties and support for some kin at the expense of others	Effective for inter-kin conflict, but generally weak for explaining intra-kin conflict
<u>Instrumentalist</u>	Self-interest encourages mutual cooperation among kin to maximize benefits at the expense of non-kin	Self-interest encourages competition among kin to maximize payoffs from the kin network	Effective for both types of conflict, but relies on potentially contradictory assumptions about most effective strategies
<u>Constructivist</u>	Deep acculturated loyalty to (some) kin, and potential demonization of non-kin lead to violence	The socially constructed nature of family vs. kin boundaries makes identity and loyalty vulnerable to contestation along culturally defined cleavage lines	Offers the most consistent framework for analyzing both types of conflict, though it is likely to falter in explaining violence within culturally prioritized kin relationships

thus often at its most apparent in the case of intra-kin conflict. If such violence between relatives is rare and tends to evaporate when faced with external threats from non-kin, then essentialism is likely to be the most parsimonious explanation. By contrast, if intra-kin violence is quite common – and in particular if it tends to fall along observable culturally imposed cleavage lines within a network – then a constructivist approach is likely to be the most parsimonious theoretical approach. Instrumentalism, as a relatively flexible approach amenable to a wide range of different conceptions of self-interest, can accommodate an extremely broad set of different observed scenarios, but this flexibility also makes instrumental theories extremely susceptible to ex-post-facto reasoning. The most credible evidence for instrumentalist results will thus often be found in scenarios where conflict doesn't appear to follow the predictions of the other two approaches – *i.e.* in circumstances where violence not only appears to have a basis in rational self-interest, but also in which it appears to contradict both the genetic incentives to aid close kin and societal taboos against harming culturally prioritized kin.

This fine degree of distinction between the predicted outcomes for each approach can be difficult to observe in conflict environments, where kin-based violence may often go unreported and where extensive records of the familial ties influencing different actors may not exist. In the following chapter, I will attempt to address this problem by examining a particularly well-documented example of indisputably dynastic political violence – the wars and international relations of the courts of early modern Europe. But before moving on to this empirical analysis,

it is worthwhile to address the issue of falsifiability more generally. In this chapter, I've suggested that dynastic violence can encompass a wide range of political attacks performed for a variety of different motivations and directed either toward targets outside an attacker's kin network or within the same network. This may seem to represent an overly broad concept – one that verges on a tautological view that characterizes any instances of heightened violence in countries with strong kin networks as potential instances of dynastic violence. It is thus important to conclude with the two primary predictions shared across all theoretical approaches, which represent the main falsifiable and measurable hypotheses against which the empirical results in following chapters will be judged. While my three proposed theoretical lenses differ substantially from one another in a number of respects, all three are united in supporting the following claims:

***Hypothesis I*** – *Political systems with higher levels of dynasticism are likely to experience higher levels of political violence.* Regardless of whether the primary mechanism for conflict is essentialist, instrumentalist, or constructivist in nature, all three approaches described in this chapter suggest that kinship interactions tend to be prone to confrontation and violent contestation. As a result, political systems that tend to heavily incorporate kin relationships into the political process, whether by formal or informal means, will tend to invite these kin-based conflicts into the process of political contestation. When authority is based not merely on winning elections or seizing power through non-democratic means, but also involves threading political leaders' kin networks into political institutions and checking the spread of rivals' kin networks, it substantially increases the risk that kin-based tensions will exacerbate political tensions. This prediction runs counter to both contemporary mainstream wisdom, which generally dismisses dynasticism as a large-scale instigator of violence except insofar as it may reflect broader problems such as undemocratic government or reduced economic opportunity, and also the prevalent view in many dynastic societies, where it is periodically suggested that dynasticism has a stabilizing and pacifying effect on political tensions.

***Hypothesis II*** – *Dynastic violence isn't merely the result of more widespread insecurity stemming from less competent leadership, but instead emerges as a direct consequence of the nature of dynastic authority itself.* While my first hypothesis suggests that higher levels of dynasticism are likely to result in greater violence, it is conceivable that this prediction may be fulfilled through mechanisms that are tangential to dynasticism itself. Most notably, if dynasticism is simply a sub-optimal means of selecting political leadership, it is possible that dynasticism tends to lead to poorer administration and more violent contestation, but in ways that do not distinguish dynasticism from other types of arbitrary and non-democratic political systems. Essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism are united, however, in suggesting that the violent consequences of dynasticism are in large part a direct consequence of kin relationships themselves and the ways in which they shape human interactions. Dynasticism is thus not only predicted to increase political violence in general, but also to direct and shape the direction of violence in observable ways. While each approach differs in predicting exactly how violence is impacted, all three anticipate that a highly dynastic system of authority will tend to shape and direct political violence in ways that can be better understood when combined with analysis of the kin relationships of those in power. In this sense, dynasticism is predicted to be of interest to political scientists not only because it tends to increase violence, but also because it tends to transform the ways in which this violence is carried out and where it is directed.

## Chapter 3 Mars or Venus? Dynastic Relations and Warfare in Early Modern Europe

*“Let others wage war. You, O happy Austria, marry!  
Those kingdoms which Mars gives to others, Venus gives to you!”*  
*Traditional Habsburg motto<sup>1</sup>*

*“Alliance by blood, or marriage, is a frequent cause of war between princes;  
and the nearer the kindred is, the greater their disposition to quarrel...”*  
*Jonathan Swift, Gulliver’s Travels<sup>2</sup>*

**Abstract:** Continuing from the theoretical discussion in the preceding chapter, I now undertake an empirical analysis of dynastic politics to evaluate which theoretical approach best describes the mechanisms through which dynasticism operates – essentialism, instrumentalism, or constructivism. For this test, I rely upon the most well-documented examples of dynastic conflicts in history: the wars and international relations between European states at the height of monarchism. Using detailed genealogical records, animal breeding software, and records of major wars between European great powers in the early modern period, I construct a dyadic dataset recording head of states’ genetic and political interrelationships. I then use each of the three theoretical lenses to construct different potential predictions regarding how kin relationships are likely to impact international diplomacy, and test these predictions using logistic cross-sectional time series regressions. I examine kin relationships among European sovereigns primarily along three dimensions: first, whether heads of state are both part of the same multinational patrilineal dynasty; second, the degree of genealogical relatedness between heads of state; and third, the length of time since an inter-dynastic marriage was negotiated by the two sovereigns or their predecessors. I consistently find strong evidence that shared dynasty reduced conflict between sovereigns while greater overall relatedness increased conflict between them (albeit with a possible curvilinear relationship reducing violence among extremely close relatives). I also find weaker evidence suggesting that recent inter-marriages reduced conflict. Reviewing my theoretical predictions, I conclude that essentialism performs very poorly at predicting dynastic relationships, instrumentalism shows only limited predictive power, and constructivist predictions are strongly consistent with observed results. I conclude that, at least in the case of early modern Europe, dynastic disputes were driven less by evolutionary imperatives or even rational self-interest, but instead were most often the result of social forces such as family honor, dynastic identity, and disputes over the legitimacy of inheritance rights.

### Introduction

The early modern period of European history was in many ways the foundational epoch of the contemporary international state system. Political scientists often point to this period as a historical turning point that witnessed the emergence of modern sovereign states and the gradual

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<sup>1</sup> Beller 2006 p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Part 4, Chapter 5.

victory of centralized state bureaucracies over the more haphazard and diffuse religious and political networks that previously vied for authority across Europe.<sup>3</sup> But alongside this familiar narrative of emerging modern institutions, the period spanning the close of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century to the French Revolution was also in many ways the high-watermark of dynasticism.<sup>4</sup> Even as monarchs and parliaments gradually wrested power from Europe's decentralized land-owning aristocracy, and even as a new merchant class grew progressively more influential in Europe's cities, powerful and ambitious families of the era adapted to these changes by entrenching their dynastic penetration of these emerging institutions.<sup>5</sup> As international relations became increasingly dominated by centralized states organized along primarily monarchical lines,<sup>6</sup> the previously haphazard and localized dynastic networks that had heretofore dominated much of Europe increasingly became enmeshed in an intricate international marriage market that both shaped and reflected political and economic power relationships across the continent.<sup>7</sup>

The international state system was thus at its inception shaped not only by the material capabilities of emerging great powers and cultural linkages between the populations of these states, but also by the dynastic ties and rivalries that connected the families ruling each state. International diplomacy and great powers' continued stability in this era hinged on the birth of anticipated heirs and on the timely consummation of marriage alliances between Europe's ruling

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<sup>3</sup> Works tracing modern political institutions to this critical period include Downing 1993, Spruyt 1996, Ertman 1997, and Philpott 2001. Indeed, the centrality of early modern Europe to political scientists' understanding of historical progression has become widespread enough to foster a backlash of works criticizing the discipline's focus on the period as ahistorical (Osiander 2001 and Teschke 2003). My analysis here takes an intermediate approach, focusing on a political process – dynasticism – that reached a new level of formalization during Europe's early modern period, but which we rarely think of as being a part of politics' transition into its contemporary form.

<sup>4</sup> Though it should be noted that the importance of this dynastic structure of kinship varied greatly across time, region, and social class. During the early modern period, some countries – primarily those in the north of Europe – also witnessed the proliferation of the “European marriage pattern” among some social classes. This marriage structure, which formed the basis for marriage patterns in the contemporary West, is associated with high autonomy for women in choosing a partner without her natal family's intervention, a general emphasis on the nuclear family rather than extended kin networks, and a lower reliance on initial outlays or wealth through dowries or brideprices (De Moor & Van Zanden 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Analyses of the central role played by dynasties and kin networks in the emerging political and economic institutions of the era can be found in Lachmann 2000, Adams 2005a, Greif 2006, and Nexon 2009 pp. 67-98.

<sup>6</sup> The statistical analysis presented in this chapter focuses on the great powers of early modern Europe. The sample I rely on includes two states that were not explicitly monarchical – the short-lived English Commonwealth and the significantly more durable Republic of the Netherlands. I discuss the statistical controls I implemented in my analysis in greater detail below, but it first bears noting that both republics exemplified far more explicitly dynastic institutions than would come to be associated with republicanism in future centuries. As with other European republics such as Venice, and as in elected monarchies such as the Holy Roman Empire and Poland, these republics experienced persistent internal pressure to adopt increasingly formalized rules of succession through inheritance. The transfer of power from Oliver Cromwell to his son Richard after his death (Woolrych 1990) and the persistence of Orangist political sympathies even in periods when the Dutch were without a central Stadtholder (Stern 2004) exemplify the importance of dynasticism to even explicitly republican governments of the era. As such, I largely treat these two republics as operating in continuity with more monarchical states and assume that genealogy and kinship likely influenced the English Lord Protector and Dutch Stadtholders and Princes of Orange in ways comparable to monarchs who explicitly inherited their positions.

<sup>7</sup> The transnational marriage market represented a core element in international diplomacy of the era, and obstructions in the market (most notably, the persistent difficulty in arranging marriages between monarchs of different religious denominations, as described in Kann 1973 pp. 388-390) had profound effects for international relations. Analyses into the importance of arranged marriages in the era include Dewald 1996 pp. 168-171, Davidson & Ekelund 1997, Coontz 2006, and Johnson et al. 2011.

families.<sup>8</sup> In the emerging field of international law, questions of succession and inheritance were a perennial controversy, as varying legal traditions across countries and different ecclesiastical rules across religious denominations created significant opportunity for legal challenges.<sup>9</sup> In this dynastic environment, a sudden death or a monarch's infertility could mean the difference between war and peace, and the changing fortunes of the most important family lineages had the potential to transform the international balance of power. The quotation that begins this chapter reflects the importance of marriage and dynasty to the political actors of the period. In the case of the Habsburgs, a series of savvy marriages, coupled with a string of fortunate deaths among competing claimants, resulted in the dynasty vastly increasing its power over a handful of generations at the start of the early modern period. Through his marriage to Mary of Burgundy, Emperor Maximilian I came to rule the Burgundian territories of his father's chief rival, King Matthias Corvinus. Maximilian in turn betrothed his son, Philip the Handsome, to Princess Joanna of Spain, a match that would in time lead to Spain falling under Habsburg control. And Maximilian's grandson, the eventual Emperor Ferdinand I, further expanded the dynasty's power by incorporating his own wife's homeland of Hungary into the Habsburg domains.<sup>10</sup> Marriage and reproduction were thus not only the means through which ruling dynasties secured their continued existence for another generation – they were also crucial tools of diplomacy and foundational to a government's perceived political legitimacy.<sup>11</sup>

But despite the supposed juxtaposition between “Mars and Venus,” and the common perception among European nobles that properly negotiated marriage alliances could serve as a peaceful diplomatic alternative to bellicose confrontations,<sup>12</sup> the Habsburgs' ambitious marriage strategies did not prevent them from becoming regularly embroiled in warfare against their rivals. To the contrary, as the Jonathan Swift quote that also opens this chapter wryly notes, the web of intermarriages that increasingly bound Europe's great dynasties to one another also seemed to lay the groundwork for intense internationalized inheritance disputes – conflicts such as the War of the Spanish Succession, the War of the Austrian Succession, or the War of the Polish Succession.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly given the centrality of dynasticism to politics of the

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<sup>8</sup> The deep interconnection between a kingdom and the ruler who governed it was encapsulated in the political philosophy surrounding a king's “two bodies.” The need for the timely production of an heir inextricably intertwined the personal kinship ties of a ruler to the broader political relations of the territory he controlled just as the king's body natural was viewed as being inextricably bound to the body politic he ruled (Kantorowicz 2016).

<sup>9</sup> The *casus belli* for the War of the Spanish Armada, for example, traced its roots to the split between the Churches of England and Rome. For Catholics, who refused to accept the legitimacy of Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, the king's subsequent daughter by Anne Boleyn – Elizabeth I – was a bastard and ineligible to inherit the throne. As the next in line to the throne of England, the Spanish relied on this religious dispute as a pretext to justify their attempted invasion (Martin & Parker pp. 57-59).

<sup>10</sup> Ingraio 2000 pp. 1-5 and Anderson 2013 pp. 60-61 and 300-305.

<sup>11</sup> For more on how this history of marriage alliances influences the Habsburg court, see Fichtner 1976. Black 2010 also offers further context regarding how these dynastic strategies fit in the context of international diplomacy of the era, particularly on pp. 55-56.

<sup>12</sup> This belief was epitomized in the common practice of linking dynastic marriages to peace treaties and international alliances. Prominent examples included the 1386 Treaty of Windsor between England and Portugal, and the 1629 Treaty of Susa between the United Kingdom and France. In other cases, such marriages were unilaterally imposed by stronger states on weaker rivals – often with the goal of allowing a male ruler of the winning side to better position themselves to seize territory from their rival through marriage to a female heir. Examples of such unequal agreements included the 1420 Treaty of Troyes or, to a lesser extent, the 1659 Treaty of the Pyrenees.

<sup>13</sup> The tendency of even mutually beneficial royal marriage alliances to erupt into war between the states involved was also noted by the philosopher Erasmus, as described in Warnicke pp. 1-3.

era, even conflicts that weren't primarily focused on succession disputes were often exacerbated by dynastic inheritance claims. The Italian Wars of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century were partially instigated by the French Valois dynasty's claims to the Kingdom of Naples, and the French Wars of Religion were deeply intertwined with anxieties over the possible succession of the Protestant Henry of Navarre to the throne of France.

Early modern Europe thus epitomizes the apparent paradoxes surrounding dynasticism's impact on war and peace. While European courts routinely conceptualized intermarriage and kinship as a vector for diplomacy and a force for stability and the reduction of conflict, it is far from clear that such relationships had this intended stabilizing effect on the international relations of the era. In the absence of detailed analysis, we can equally conceptualize dynastic interrelationships of the period as either a force for conflict or a force for cooperation among the monarchies of early modern Europe. For modern political scientists, unaccustomed to devoting significant attention to intricacies of archaic dynastic disputes, the question of how kin relationships among sovereigns may have influenced the international relations of past centuries has not been a major topic of concern.<sup>14</sup> But for those seeking to better understand the nature of dynastic politics in the present day, Europe's early modern period offers a singularly valuable opportunity to study the politics of kinship with unusual clarity. Family histories for most historical and contemporary political dynasties are poorly documented and difficult to trace in detail. But in dynastic Europe, inheritance was the explicit mechanism for the transfer of wealth, property, and legitimacy, and so was painstakingly documented among the elite nobility. While family feuds and vendettas in most environments are nebulous and fought furtively, the wars of succession and dynastic influence among the royal families of Europe were official conflicts involving the mobilization of a country's population and military. Whereas the politics of dynastic power relationships in the contemporary world tend to be obfuscated by other ideologies and political institutions, kinship was the explicit and commonly recognized basis for authority in early modern Europe. These distinctions certainly mark early modern Europe as a unique case, and thus one from which we should be cautious in generalizing too liberally. But these unique attributes nonetheless demonstrate this historic period's value for understanding the mechanisms of dynasticism in detail and disentangling possible explanations into when, why, and for what reasons dynastic violence might arise.

In this chapter, I will leverage the uniquely central role that complex kin relationships played in the politics of early modern Europe to study the dynamics of dynastic political authority in detail. Because of the deep interconnection between states of the period and their ruling dynasties, I will use the international relations of European great powers as a proxy for the

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<sup>14</sup> In recent years, a handful of studies have countered this trend, presenting statistical analyses of early European monarchs and their reigns comparable to the tests I present in this chapter. Eisner 2011 examines patterns of regicide among European monarchs, while Blaydes & Chaney 2013 contrast the lifespans of European and Muslim rulers and conclude that greater institutional constraints extended the stability and leadership tenure of European sovereigns. Kokkonen & Sundell 2014 have offered compelling evidence that primogeniture systems generated increased stability and lowered the likelihood of coups, while Abramson & Rivera 2016 compared a ruler's length of tenure to succession patterns following their death and argued that monarchs who had longer time to entrench their power succeeded in increasing the likelihood of their designated heirs' succession. A working paper by Dube and Harish (2017) examines the impact of a monarch's gender and that of their heirs on the likelihood of conflict. Most pertinent to this chapter, a recent working paper by Benzell & Cooke (2017) has sought to examine the same issues surrounding a ruler's kin relationships and their impact on international security – intriguingly, they rely on substantially different estimation tools and come to a markedly different conclusion from my own, as they find kinship ties were a reliable promoter of peaceful relations between heads of state.

political relationships of its ruling dynasts. My analysis will begin by applying the three theoretical approaches described in the previous chapter – essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism – to the particularities of European dynasticism. For each lens, I will construct a series of falsifiability predictions regarding the expected outcomes of dynastic relationships such as recent intermarriages, close genealogical ancestries, or shared membership in the same patrilineal dynasty. I will then test the accuracy of each approach’s predictions using detailed genealogical information for each state’s ruling sovereign in a given country-year and the historical records of wars fought between great powers. Through a series of logistic cross-sectional time series regressions across country-dyads, I will thus examine which theoretical approach appears to best describe the mechanisms through which dynastic relationships either exacerbated or minimized conflicts between political rulers.

My analysis will show that the heads of state of early modern Europe almost never went to war against sovereigns that shared the same patrilineal dynasty, and that recent arranged marriages between dynasties appear to have had a similar – but much less reliable – tendency to promote peace. By contrast, when controlling for these factors, my analysis suggests that ancestral relatedness tended to increase conflicts between heads of state – though this effect may have curvilinearly declined among extremely close relatives. My tests of control variables will suggest that these results are unlikely to be the results of confounding variables, such as a tendency for neighboring states to both intermarry and go to war more frequently. From these results, I conclude that the constructivist approach offers the best explanation for the political behavior of European dynasts. Loyalty to kin appears to have been primarily a result of culturally inculcated values about which types of familial relationships should be prioritized, and relatedness outside of this culturally prioritized family tends to generate ambiguity and clashing claims of legitimacy that only exacerbate the tendency of rival dynasties to feud against one another. In the absence of more detailed evidence from other cases, I thus argue that we should be cautious about assuming that kin-based violence and vendettas are simply the result of inborn instincts or individual self-interest. In the case of European states, at least, dynastic conflicts appear to have emerged out of deeply rooted ideas about legitimacy and kin-based loyalty, often generating cyclical patterns of rivalry and contestation both across kin networks and within them. While essentialist and instrumentalist approaches likely still merit attention in some circumstances, I conclude that dynastic violence appears to be primarily shaped by constructivist mechanisms such as competing identities and acculturated beliefs.

### *Section I* *Concepts and Predictions*

#### *Historical Context*

It is difficult to overstate the centrality of kinship to the politics of early modern Europe.<sup>15</sup> While Europe’s class of hereditary landowners may have gradually emerged as a collection of “stationary bandits,” and military leaders settling on pillaged territory,<sup>16</sup> by the

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<sup>15</sup> My analysis here necessarily simplifies and generalizes across the breadth of Europe’s great powers and encompasses a period of three centuries that witnessed dramatic social transformations. For much more detailed analysis of kinship during this time period, see Goody 1983, Seccombe 1992, Anderson 1995, and Sabean et al. 2007. Hummer 2018 also offers an informative review of trends and patterns of kinship in the centuries prior to the period of observation in this chapter.

<sup>16</sup> Tilly 1992.

close of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century entrenched economic classes had become sufficiently formalized so as to create a complex hierarchy of power centered above all on inheritance as a transmitter of wealth and status.<sup>17</sup> Inheritance in this society was not solely viewed as a convenient means of transferring property over time, or as an incentive for individuals to generate wealth to pass on to their children. Ancestral status grew through the intertwining of political and religious authority to be viewed as a divinely sanctioned source of legitimacy – God himself was seen as the architect of society’s inheritance-based social hierarchy, bestowing blessings of wealth and status on favored family lineages.<sup>18</sup> This conflation of birthright with religious status was at its most prominent in religious conceptions of monarchy: in Protestant countries, kings and queens often served as the heads of national churches, while monarchs in Catholic countries were routinely granted dispensation from religious rules – most notably prohibitions against consanguineous unions – to carry out actions related to their political roles.<sup>19</sup> The deep entrenchment of dynastic authority caused even nominally non-inherited positions, such as the title of Holy Roman Emperor, Stadtholder of the Dutch Republic, or Lord Protector of the English Commonwealth, to easily fall into heritable patterns that were passed down from father to son. In an era where nationalism had only begun to solidify, ancestry regularly superseded nationality as the basis for political authority. It was far from uncommon for royal kin to find themselves inheriting the throne of a country in which they were foreigners and selecting a spouse from abroad was even more prevalent. While rulers of foreign birth were often the subject of rumors and suspicion by members of the court and the general populace,<sup>20</sup> lineage still clearly eclipsed mere nationality as a basis for political authority. The precise institutions surrounding dynasticism varied considerably by country, but the broad principle that political authority was an inherently kin-based phenomenon was a universally recognized reality among the great powers of early modern Europe.<sup>21</sup>

By the beginning of the early modern period, the increasing bureaucratization of political and legal systems led to the formalization of dynastic norms into coherent local legal traditions and political institutions. Elites in the period consequently carefully documented their ancestral lines – not only because their personal prestige often hinged on the prestige of their forebears,<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Because I examine only heads of state, my analysis in this chapter does not cover the kin relationships of lower-class Europeans of the period. For analysis into the kinship ties of lower classes, see Laslett 1988 and Kettering 1989.

<sup>18</sup> Monod 2001 and Berend 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Fleming 1973, Davidson & Ekelund 1992, and Knippenburg 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Particularly in cases where a foreign consort or ruler ran afoul of preexisting popular animosities, as with the “Austrophobia,” that conditioned the French populace to be suspicious of Habsburg royals, or English anxieties regarding any possible royal spouses drawn from Catholic countries (Kaiser 2003, Samson 2006).

<sup>21</sup> “Early modern European political relations,” as Daniel Nexon writes, “do not conform to the idealized model of states competing for power and security under anarchy... dynasts cobbled together composite polities through conquest, marriage, and inheritance,” and “reason of dynasty, rather than contemporary notions of reason of state, drove international political competition” (2009, pp. 67-68). Much like the military dimension of state consolidation, which saw centralizing states and national armies repeatedly shaping one another in an iterative process, the accumulation of territories through dynastic inheritance in turn incentivized the state to expand its oversight of (elite) marriage practices and inheritances rules. Over time, domestic inheritance rules and determination of marital legitimacy transitioned from being wholly governed by ecclesiastical courts to becoming a critical function of the state judiciary (Hanley 1989; Glendon 1989 pp. 19-34, Sharma 2015).

<sup>22</sup> Though the prestige of ancestry was certainly a prevalent concern, resulting in practices such as wealthy commoners seeking to establish state recognition of largely invented ties to long-dead prominent figures (Dumolyn 2006).



but also because the peculiarities of different inheritance systems could often mean that important titles and positions might be inherited through circuitous routes.<sup>23</sup> In France, for example, the principle of Salic Law stipulated that the monarchy could only be inherited through a direct male line – a rule that sometimes required tracing lineage back through several generations to find a living heir descended only through the sons of the nearest common ancestor.<sup>24</sup> In the United Kingdom, the monarchy could be inherited through female lines if no sons existed, but the 1701 Act of Settlement eventually formalized a further requirement that the king must be a Protestant – a rule that led the British crown to pass over several possible candidates before settling on King George I.<sup>25</sup> The complexity of these overlapping inheritance systems – and the frequency with which they sparked disputes and conflicts among powerful rivals – challenges the common misconception that dynastic institutions are relatively frictionless forms of power transfer, where inheritance is clear-cut and rarely subject to contestation.<sup>26</sup> To the contrary, ambiguities of authority were ubiquitous across the European dynastic system, both in the form of direct disputes over who was a legitimate heir to a particular title, and more ephemeral tensions regarding how competing loyalties and duties to different branches of one’s family could be reconciled.<sup>27</sup>

The centrality of dynasticism not only shaped the political institutions of the era, but also formed the foundation for interpersonal relationships among Europe’s elites. A patrilineal dynasty – a male line of descent and the wealth and prestige that passed down primarily through this lineage – was, along with patronage of the church or the arts, one of the few means of achieving a lasting social impact that transcended an individual’s death. In the absence of comparably robust political, social, and economic institutions, this could lead to present-day family relationships becoming defined by the weight of family duties and interests.<sup>28</sup> Children

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<sup>23</sup> The influence of different inheritance rules and how they interacted with the reproductive success or failure of particular dynastic lineages were among the most important drivers of international relations of the period. European states at this time were composite or conglomerate states (Elliott 1992, Gustafsson 1998) joined together as often through inheritance as through military conquest. Alongside the Habsburg domains, political events shaped by personal inheritances included the birth of Spain out of the union of Castile and Aragon – achieved only because of Ferdinand II’s failure to produce a male heir during his second marriage – as well as the subsequent failure of Spain to merge with Portugal or England due to infertile subsequent marriages. The United Kingdom’s formation from England and Scotland similarly derived from the convergence of dynastic lines. France’s strategy of annexing Brittany through its female heiress, Anne, even drove its monarch into a series of complicated maneuvers including the forcible prevention of Anne’s marriage to the Holy Roman Emperor and her successive marriages to two different French kings.

<sup>24</sup> Taylor 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Smith 2004.

<sup>26</sup> That being said, it is certainly plausible that some inheritance systems were much more prone to engendering disputes as compared with others. Kokkonen & Sundell 2014, for example, conclude that primogeniture inheritance rules likely offered greater stability than other prevalent alternatives.

<sup>27</sup> The issue of competing claims to loyalty and legitimacy lay at the heart of the “the problem of the spare.” Dynasties were driven to reproduce often both to protect against the untimely death of offspring (to create both an “heir and a spare”) and to expand the range of connections that might be developed through future marriages or strategic placement of children. But overproduction of offspring also risked creating competition and rivalry between these children (Spangler 2014, Schutte 2017).

<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the very concept of political institutions independent of kin networks and family patronage was in many ways alien to the operation of politics of the era. Support for one’s kin at every level of society was considered a matter of filial duty, and so rampant favoritism and nepotism was not only a matter of personal self-interest but also a socially enforced obligation (Flandrin 1979 pp. 20-21, Kettering 1989). The fact that this expectation of favoritism along kin lines tended to generate conflict and competition between powerful families was a well-recognized

and parents often related to one another as links in a chain rather than on purely personal terms, with each tasked to maintain family prestige built by prior generations and held in trust for future descendants.<sup>29</sup> Even more detached was the institution of marriage, which existed primarily for the production of heirs and the shoring up of family alliances through mutual investment in future offspring. Wives and mothers often occupied an ambiguous role, perceived as having divided loyalties between their family of birth and the family of their husband and children.<sup>30</sup> Because of their critical importance, royal marriages could often involve years of negotiation or betrothal. At their most successful, such marriages were presented as helping to cement multi-generational alliances and were often accompanied by the signing of international treaties and agreements.<sup>31</sup> But the extended length of betrothals also reflected anxieties about unanticipated consequences: powerful families negotiated extensively to determine whether or not a wife would abjure inheritance rights to her father's territories, what would occur should either spouse outlive the other and remarry, and what concessions and payments would be required from either side before the union was finalized.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the care and attention given by rulers and their courts toward anticipating future eventualities, disputes over the legitimacy and legality of dynastic political successions were a persistent problem throughout the era.<sup>33</sup> The centrality of family honor, and the fear that a rival might be able to maintain an advantageous position for generations to come, often led the dynastic system to encourage aggressive escalation once disputes began.<sup>34</sup> In some cases,

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consequence of this system, but few leaders undertook systematic efforts to reduce this seemingly natural factionalism. In fact, monarchs such as Louis XIV of France explicitly promoted competition and overlap between official positions in order to promote competition between the kingdom's most powerful families and leave them less capable of uniting against his centralization of power (Beik 1985).

<sup>29</sup> Adams 2005a pp. 75-76.

<sup>30</sup> Parsons 1997 and Delille 2007. While women clearly operated in marginalized positions, the power they exerted on kin networks varied widely across the continent depending on local rules regarding female inheritance and property ownership (see Erickson 2002 for one case). Anxieties surrounding a woman's position within the kin network, including both the fear that an outside wife might instill divided loyalties in her sons and the fear that marrying daughters to rivals could result in inheritance falling into an enemy's hands, contributed in some regions to the popularity of consanguineous marriage. The most prominent example of this practice appeared in the long-standing tradition among the Habsburgs of marrying between the Spanish and Austrian branches of the family. Merzario 1990 describes how similar incentives on a smaller scale encouraged consanguinity among Italian families. For more on the potential political consequences of consanguineous pairings, see Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

<sup>31</sup> The most ambitious agreements included multiple marriages to further establish reciprocity and reinforce ties through multiple links. This marriage diplomacy arguably reached its apex with the Duc de Choiseul marriages, a series of unions between the numerous daughters of Habsburg Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa and the various Bourbon princes across Europe, with the crowning union occurring at the marriage of Marie Antoinette to King Louis XVI of France (Scott 2003).

<sup>32</sup> For further analysis on the diplomatic strategies surrounding dynastic marriage politics, see Mitchell 2015 and McGowan 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Gaddis 1989 p. 139 notes that the wars of this era rested on a level of contestation of regime legitimacy that has been much less prevalent in great power politics from the end of World War II until at least the end of the Cold War. Whereas great powers in the modern era tend to refrain from questioning the basic legitimacy of one another's political regimes, dynastic wars of succession were regularly fought based on claims that a rival great power sovereign was illegitimate and that his rule – and perhaps the very independence of the state he controlled – should not be recognized internationally.

<sup>34</sup> This article focuses on royal dynasties and international relations of the era, but extensive historical research has been devoted to examining the more personal feuds that regularly emerged out of similar dynastic pressures among lower status families. Informative studies of feuding in the early modern period and adjacent eras include Dean 1997, Muir 1998, Ferraro 2001, Carroll 2006, Zmora 2011, and Hyams 2016.

competition took the form of inter-kin rivalries between largely unrelated dynasties seeking to check one another's influence and power.<sup>35</sup> But in other cases, contestation appeared to be ironically exacerbated by the types of dynastic intermarriages typically entered into in the hopes of strengthening ties between nations. Such intra-kin disputes arose through differing legal claims in alternative inheritance systems, through accusations of illegitimacy, or as a result of simple pragmatic compromises combined with persistent claims that might reemerge in subsequent generations.<sup>36</sup> In the absence of robust international laws and reliable treaties, potential inheritance disputes such as these could often only be resolved through warfare and contestation.

Dynastic relations in early modern Europe thus presented an unending series of strategic and political questions that vexed great power rulers throughout the period. Was it truly better for a monarch to intermarry their children with powerful rival dynasties who might either support or threaten that monarch's other heirs in future generations? Or was it better to seek spouses elsewhere, such as from weak families that couldn't credibly threaten or dominate future heirs?<sup>37</sup> Indeed, in some cases, rulers found it best to avoid committing to a marriage entirely – leveraging their potential availability as an enticement for concessions from other powerful dynasties.<sup>38</sup> Heirs faced with potential inheritance conflicts experienced similar dilemmas: was it better to adopt maximal claims to one's ancestry and inheritance, and challenge one's kin for any

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<sup>35</sup> The Valois and Habsburg dynasties, for example, fought fiercely during the Italian Wars, but these struggles were not primarily motivated by an inheritance dispute between the two great powers. While the French crown held a weak claim to the Kingdom of Naples, the primary aim of the conflict for both France and Austria appeared to be the establishment of a broader hegemony in Italy. Here too, however, dynastic disputes and long-running feuds still influenced the war – in this case, primarily in the form of inheritance claims of local Italian proxies, which reshaped military strategies and political alliances around the contours of preexisting dynastic disputes. Because of the clientelistic ties linking stronger and weaker dynasties, even small-scale local disputes between local lords could exacerbate tensions between their great power patrons and draw military alliances back into conflict (Mallett & Shaw 2012). Parrott 1997 and Osborne 2007a offer complementary analyses regarding the confluence of local dynastic interests and great power geopolitics during the War of the Mantuan Succession and for the court of Savoy during the Thirty Years War, respectively.

<sup>36</sup> Carroll 2006 offers an illustrative example of how such conflicts could emerge between kin in his description of the feud between the Alegre and Duprat families in France – a feud that began when Anne d'Alegre remarried following the death of her Duprat husband and bestowed all her property on her new husband rather than the nine children from her first marriage (p. 31). On a larger scale, the War of the Devolution was launched by Louis XIV based on the pretext that his wife's Habsburg family had failed to fully pay her dowry, a fact that the French king claimed nullified several clauses in her marriage contract. Since the contract included her ceding of her inheritance, which included the Spanish Netherlands, Louis could credibly claim that these territories now belonged to his wife and his son by her (Sonnino 2003). Under the right circumstances, even relatives with extremely weak claims to inheritance could threaten their kin. At the beginning of the Wars of the Roses, Henry IV succeeded in claiming the English throne from his cousin Richard II based on a conspiratorial claim that Henry's distant ancestor Edward Crouchback had once been first in line to the throne but was passed over due to his physical deformity. This was widely recognized as a "preposterous claim" (Bennett 1998 p. 581), but Richard's rule was so unpopular that elites across the country flocked to his rival's uprising in spite of the man's tenuous ancestral credentials. The tenuousness of this inheritance claim, of course, served only to encourage further violence between members of the extended kin network in future generations.

<sup>37</sup> Fears of such dominance were likely most prevalent during the reigns of queens, whom courtiers feared might be dominated by a powerful husband. But during the rule of kings as well, the threat of a powerful queen who might shape the mind of her husband or sons or promote the interests of her family of birth in the royal court was potentially a dangerous risk for the established advisers who helped select royal consorts.

<sup>38</sup> This strategic ambiguity concerning marriage was particularly closely associated with Queen Elizabeth I of England (Doran 1989 and Mears 2001).

inheritance a monarch could credibly claim? Or was it instead wiser to pursue friendly relations with one's kin, and to concentrate on areas where common ancestry could build common cause rather than alienating them through inheritance disputes? The correct answers to these questions were far from obvious, and different monarchs and dynasties experimented with a range of strategies.<sup>39</sup> But by examining the period as a whole and the range of observed dynastic relationships and the outcomes of those kin bonds, early modern Europe offers a unique opportunity to test whether dynastic alliances tended to be a force for stability or conflict, and to examine how dynastic ties shaped and redirected political relationships into either alliances or vendettas between dynastic rulers.

### ***Theoretical Approaches and Predictions***

The centrality of dynasticism and its institutionalization as the foundation of international relations marks the state system of early modern Europe as a distinctive and unique opportunity to study the mechanisms of dynastic politics in depth. As described in the prior chapter, it is often difficult to isolate the precise mechanisms through which dynasticism operates, particularly when observers lack detailed information regarding the kin relationships between actors. While essentialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism can all provide plausible rationales for why individuals might band together with their kin against outsiders, they differ markedly from one another in their explanations for why this behavior occurs and how actors are likely to adapt to more ambiguous situations. Understanding these mechanisms and the motivations of actors in dynastic politics is crucial for those seeking to make falsifiable predictions and policy recommendations for contemporary dynastic political systems. Will actors tend to always prefer relatives at the expense of non-kin, as essentialism would predict, or is support for kin largely self-interested and thus alterable through institutional mechanisms, as predicted by instrumentalism? And are actors' behavior and attitude toward kin relatively immune to cultural norms and taboos, as both essentialism and strict instrumentalism would predict, or are preferences over which kin are supported and how they are viewed heavily influenced by societal expectations, as predicted by constructivism? The degree of documentation that exists for the dynastic relations of early modern Europe – both in the form of detailed genealogies and in the highly visible manner in which rulers entered into formalized warfare with one another – presents an ideal opportunity to examine the mechanisms of dynasticism in unusual detail. To be sure, this uniqueness also means that scholars should be cautious about generalizing too heavily from this potentially atypical period. The analysis presented in this chapter cannot definitively confirm that the mechanisms that appear to have operated in early modern Europe necessarily continue to shape more contemporary dynastic politics, nor can it definitely reject alternative theoretical lenses as possible alternative explanations for observed behavior. But in the absence of more detailed data in most contemporary dynastic political systems, the historic relations of European sovereigns offer a starting point for hypothesis building and testing.

To distinguish between essentialist, instrumentalist, and constructivist explanations regarding why political actors embrace dynasticism and pursue kin-based alliances, it is crucial to first disaggregate kinship itself and identify the most salient dimensions of kin relationships in politics of the period.<sup>40</sup> As the foundation of political authority, kinship in Europe's early modern

<sup>39</sup> Jallinoja 2017 p. 29 offers a comparative analysis of different marriage patterns displayed by distinct dynasties.

<sup>40</sup> Though I disaggregate kinship across multiple dimensions in this chapter, in many ways my analysis here still represents a profound simplification of the complex networks through which kinship exerted its influence on the politics of early modern Europe. One dimension of kinship that I do not explore in-depth here, largely due to lack of

period was a complex and multifaceted concept – kin networks encompassed not only the immediate family, but also a wide swathe of extended relations that typically crossed national borders. When we conceptualize how these kin relationships were understood by political actors of the time, the most obvious approach is to focus on the genetic and genealogical relationships that bound different rulers together through shared ancestry. As the primary basis for legitimate inheritance, ancestry was of paramount importance to aristocrats of the period. We can thus hypothesize that the overall relatedness of rulers to one another likely played a significant role in influencing how they interacted with one another. But while female lines of descent were certainly not irrelevant for rulers – many of whom inherited significant wealth and territory from female ancestors – there can also be little doubt that the culture of the time placed a particular emphasis on a sovereign’s patriline. This male line of descent was typically the one most closely associated with rulers’ political identity and claims to legitimacy.<sup>41</sup> We might thus expect heads of state to have behaved differently toward their agnates – relatives born from the same patriline and thus sharing the same noble house – than toward other relatives connected through less emphasized lines of ancestry.<sup>42</sup> Finally, shared ancestry does not account for more recent affinal relationships established through marriages between family lines. Such dynastic marriages played a central role in the diplomatic and interpersonal relationships between sovereigns of the period, and it is thus reasonable to expect that even rulers without shared ancestry may behave differently toward family lineages they or their close family have recently married into. These three dimensions of kinship – ancestral relatedness in general, shared patriline in particular, and finally recently consummated wedding alliances between families – encompass some of the most important ways in which heads of state potentially related to their rivals and allies and offer a valuable framework for comparing different theories of dynasticism.<sup>43</sup>

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systematic record-keeping, is the presence of purely fictive forms of kinship. A wide variety of relationships in the time period were understood as pseudo-kin bonds, and like normal kinships these were used extensively by political actors to influence both rivals and allies. Perhaps the most significant of these for elite dynasties of the era was the “spiritual kinship” of godparenthood, bestowed on prominent allies to foster an intergenerational link with a dynasty’s heirs (Alfani & Gourdon 2012).

<sup>41</sup> While inheritance or status through a female line were common sources of political power in countries that allowed such transmission, it was unquestionably the male ancestors and unbroken male lines of descent that were emphasized in all areas of political discourse (Wiesner 2000, Adams 2005b). Female relatives were largely seen as a necessary link between male-dominated families, rather than dynastic actors in their own right. Situations where this patriarchal fiction could not be maintained – most notably in situations where women inherited a throne – generated collective discomfort which portrayed such undesirable outcomes as a “monstrous regiment” or a “dynastic accident” (Jansen 2002 pp. 1-3). Klapisch-Zuber 1996 describes how this gendered view of kinship was rendered graphically in the elaborate family trees of Italian patricians. When creating visual depictions of their family history and prestigious ancestry, these elites systematically focused on the male line of descent and ignored all but the most prominent female lines of ancestry. The selective “editing” of ancestry to emphasize a particular line of descent was most systematic in the marginalization of female lineages, but also manifested in other forms – most notably in the tendency to downplay or ignore illegitimate and bastard ancestors except when they were critical to an inheritance claim (McDougall 2016).

<sup>42</sup> All royal families who share a common house ultimately descend from a split in inheritance between older and younger brothers – in the case of the Habsburgs this took the form of Charles V bestowing the Austrian half of his empire to his younger brother Ferdinand I, while the Bourbon lines diverged when it was agreed that Louis Petit Dauphin, the grandson of Louis XIV, would renounce his claim to the Spanish throne and allow it to pass to his younger brother Philip V to avoid a destabilizing union between France and Spain. The relationship between the “main” and “cadet” lines of a house often played a critical role in a dynasty’s strategic planning.

<sup>43</sup> I discuss a few further dimensions of kinship – such as the effect of having a shared matrilineal house – in my measurement section below. As expected, these alternative forms of kinship showed a much less consistent effect on

An essentialist analysis of dynasticism offers the most straightforward predictive approach by contextualizing all kin relationships through the lens of evolutionary imperatives.<sup>44</sup> If we assume that all kin loyalties derive ultimately from an evolutionary instinct to support one's biological relatives, then the social dimensions of kinship are relevant only insofar as they aid or hinder the success of genetic relatives. As such, we would expect the primary goal of all dynastic actors to be the support of their biological relatives, with priority given based on the closeness of their relatedness and the likelihood of the relative's successful reproduction. According to this approach, rulers that are related to one another should be relatively unlikely to go to war with one another and would instead prefer to fight against those to which they have no known genetic link.<sup>45</sup> These loyalties should be relatively agnostic as to whether or not kinship is via an agnatic relationship, since a relative that shares one's patriline is just as genetically proximate to ego as an equivalent relative that is associated with a different patrilineal dynasty.<sup>46</sup> And while affinal kin do not necessarily share a preexisting genetic link with ego, an essentialist approach would likely suggest that a recent marriage will nonetheless also encourage higher levels of cooperation. A marriage bridging two families means both families have a shared interest in supporting any offspring emerging from that union, and thus material success for either family is likely to contribute toward better prospects for these offspring.<sup>47</sup> In general, the

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rulers' international relationships, which likely reflects the more ambiguous and less uniform impact of such linkages on dynastic networks of the era.

<sup>44</sup> In addition to the works cited in the previous chapter, further representative examples of this approach can be found in Salmon & Shackelford 2007. In early modern Europe's dynastic politics, individuals worked diligently to amass "lineage assets," and were willing to incur significant costs "on behalf of those imagined future descendants and the patrilineage that they would continue" (Giesey 1977 p. 284). Inclusive fitness offers a straightforward explanation for this behavior, since individuals inclined to sacrifice in this way likely secured reproductive benefits for their offspring and genetic relatives.

<sup>45</sup> The primary exception to this rule will be in situations where the cost of inflicting harm on some relatives' predicted reproductive success is balanced by an equivalent or greater benefit for other individuals that can more effectively increase ego's inclusive fitness. Thus, it can be predicted that a ruler will betray a more distant relative if that betrayal will directly benefit a relative of equal or closer relatedness (including the ruler himself). Similarly, a younger relative of prime reproductive age might be expected to be prioritized above an older relative that is unlikely to have further children. McCullough et al. 2012, for example, analyzes the Wars of the Roses from an evolutionary perspective, noting how the fratricidal conflict emerged out of a proliferation of too many rival offspring fighting over the same inherited resources. Nonetheless, they note that even here, the pattern of violence suggested that the parties involved tended to minimize killing of kin unless it would clearly benefit more direct relations. These cases of intra-kin violence can be expected in essentialism to be rare and highly conditional, and thus are unlikely to significantly undermine the general trend of higher cooperation as relatedness increases.

<sup>46</sup> There is some evidence for class-based asymmetric gender investment in humans based on the claim that status tends to benefit the reproductive success in males more than females (see Boone 1988). In early modern Europe, noble women were susceptible to dying young in childbirth and unlike men were not given the same freedom to have extramarital affairs. Consequently, we might expect to observe the elites of royal dynasties exhibiting a slight preference for male relatives over female relatives of equal relatedness. This evolutionary theory would not, however, translate to a patrilineal preference – a male grandson through a daughter, for example, would be predicted to be preferred over a female granddaughter through a son. More broadly, because mating in Europe was generally monogamous, the evolutionary incentives for differential investment were likely fairly weak. Botticini 1999 finds evidence supporting the alternative view that kin altruism encouraged significant investment in a daughter's dowry, suggesting that parents cared a great deal about the long-term success of their female lines of kin.

<sup>47</sup> Evolutionary arguments have previously been used to explain other characteristics of marriage practices among Europe's elite dynasties. Van Den Berghe & Mesher 1980 argue that a tendency toward consanguineous marriage among royalty in a variety of different cultures may be partly explained as a byproduct of inclusive fitness. Because inbreeding increases the level of genetic relatedness among members of the same kin group, such marriages may have created greater incentives for mutual support. Hager 1992 and Hill 1999 both examine the well-known noble

nature of dynasticism in an essentialist paradigm is likely to be highly stable and predictable, with greater relatedness between a pair of sovereigns clearly transferring into a more cooperative relationship.

Instrumentalist approaches to kinship analyze dynasties as a phenomenon borne ultimately out of self-interest, sharing in Machiavelli's sentiment that "men more quickly forget the death of their father than the loss of their property."<sup>48</sup> This approach encompasses a broader range of arguments concerning kinship strategies, and predicted outcomes may vary radically depending on one's assumptions about actor preferences and the strategic environment in which they operate.<sup>49</sup> Whether or not an actor would be predicted to betray a relative, for example, depends heavily on the assumptions we bring regarding the potential audience costs and long-term consequences of such a betrayal.<sup>50</sup> An instrumentalist approach that assumes dynasties are relatively cohesive institutions that are capable of effectively punishing defectors, for example, may result in predictions closely paralleling the constructivist analysis described below.<sup>51</sup> But if we assume a relatively strict conception of self-interest, where actors possess short time horizons and are highly utilitarian in their relationship with kin, it is possible to develop a coherent set of instrumentalist predictions. In such a scenario, significant cooperation between related sovereigns can still be predicted to occur as a result of the self-interest-based logic described in the previous chapter. Kin networks are often effective tools for resolving collective action and principle-agent problems, and offer increased opportunities for communication and reputation-sharing, making support for one's relatives a tempting strategy.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the explicitly inheritance-based nature of political authority in the period meant that increasing the power of

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practice of discouraging reproduction of younger offspring – most often by encouraging them to become nuns and priests – and explain how the consequent reduction in competition between siblings may have been in the long-term reproductive interest of those taking vows of celibacy.

<sup>48</sup> Machiavelli 1998 Ch. 7.

<sup>49</sup> Instrumentalism and other rationalist approaches in this sense represent a broad analytic approach, rather than a single falsifiable theory (Levi 1997).

<sup>50</sup> Kin relationships, at least from a parental perspective, typically represent a significant investment of time and resources, and a strictly instrumentalist analysis suggests that individuals support kin because they anticipate that this investment has a reasonable chance of delivering returns during ego's lifetime. Typically, these returns are conceptualized in terms of human or social capital (Becker et al. 1990, Astone et al. 1999). Examples include the added loyalty a ruler receives from having a reliable heir and the social connections and payoffs garnered through the process of marrying off children. This expectation of a reciprocal return on investment was given added credibility by the fact that parents at all social levels remained heavily invested in children's lives well after the child's marriage (Foyster 2002). While typically framed in the language of filial duty and family honor, the explicit understanding that family members were expected to repay one another with loyalty and reciprocity was ubiquitous throughout elite society (MacHardy 1999).

<sup>51</sup> In scenarios where social norms play an important role in signaling preferences or maintaining cohesive transactional networks, actors may be willing to invest heavily in punishing violators of those norms in some circumstances. This necessarily means that the distinction between instrumentalist and constructivist predictions can blur significantly despite their focus on distinct mechanisms. See Checkel 1997, Fearon & Wendt 2002, and Dafoe et al. 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Kin networks in early modern Europe played a critical role in economic transactions at every level of society (Wrightson 2002, Lynch 2003). As a network of individuals who had a long-term stake in one another's prosperity, kin networks functioned as both a reputation network and a means of reducing transaction costs through long-term favor-trading (North 1991, Greif 1993). It was thus critical for self-interested elites to maintain generally positive ties with their kin: "commerce functioned through a network of kin and personal connections... to deal with kin and trusted acquaintances was not simply understandable but justifiable. Nepotism had a basic commercial rationale." (Devine 1995 p. 25). This economic dimension of kinship emerged out of the broader pattern of reciprocal favor-trading that characterized political alliances and economic transactions of the era (Ben-Amos 2000, Muldrew 2016).

relatives or fighting to affirm their inheritance claims often served to strengthen a ruler's own interrelated claim to authority – especially if the sovereign or the sovereign's heirs had a reasonable expectation that they might inherit some of their relatives' lands at a future date.

Paradoxically, the principle in network analysis of “the strength of weak ties,” suggests that these incentives for cooperation may have been at their strongest among more marginal kin, such as those related through female lines or too distant to be direct competitors for the same inheritance.<sup>53</sup> Cultivating webs of alliances with moderately remote descendants had the potential to increase a ruler's *betweenness* – their level of connection to a diverse set of kin networks – and thereby accrue social capital as an intermediary. But whereas heads of state who shared peripheral ties could often derive mutual benefits from these links without directly threatening one another's positions, these same rulers may have had to exercise greater caution around closer kin, who possessed a potentially strong claim to the ruler's own inheritance. An instrumentalist approach following this chain of reasoning might therefore predict that intra-kin cooperation will be particularly prominent among indirect or peripheral kin – such as those that do not share the same dynasty – while rulers that are more direct competitors for the same inheritance will have a stronger incentive to launch a fratricidal violence.<sup>54</sup> The main disincentive compelling sovereigns not to betray their immediate kin and close agnates so as to seize their inheritance was the fear of ostracism or disinheritance, but history suggests that legal efforts to exclude heirs from a line of succession were often disregarded after a ruler's death.<sup>55</sup> Close relatives and kin sharing the same dynasty – who generally occupied stronger positions to inherit from ego – might still not be expected to initiate conflict regularly, given the persistent

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<sup>53</sup> For the strength of weak ties, see Granovetter 1977 and Burt 2009. In Padgett & Ansell 1993 a compelling and highly influential illustration of this principle is generated through analysis of the rise of Cosimo de' Medici, who used his family's sprawling network of patronage and marriage ties to gain unprecedented power in Florentine politics. Kettering 1989 (pp. 414-418) notes that cousins could often offer contacts and social ties that weren't accessible through closer relatives.

<sup>54</sup> In a dynastic system, heirs and close relatives are effectively susceptible to the same principle-agent problems that generate succession crises in other types of dictatorships (Herz 1952, Egorov & Sonin 2011). Duindam 2015 p. 289 notes that alliance structures in kin networks typically run counter to rules of inheritance so that in societies where inheritance is generally through the male line, cooperation will be easier to achieve with relatives from maternal and female lines. European monarchs demonstrated repeated examples of conflict between close kin – even in cases where one relative served as the heir to the other. Both Emperor Frederick II and King Henry II of England experienced roughly contemporaneous rebellions launched by their own sons (Weiler 2007). Peter the Great of Russia had his only son, Alexei, tortured and executed for a similar rebellion. Emperor Rudolph II experienced a rebellion led by younger brother and primary heir Matthias which ultimately left him isolated and stripped of power. Stereotypically, the most fraught relationships were perceived to be between a young heir and their patrilineal uncle, who stood to inherit should the child die. Shakespeare's plays presented two examples of this trope in Hamlet and Richard III, inspired by preexisting legends and history respectively. The War of the Quadruple Alliance was launched out of similar motivations, as the Bourbon king of Spain, Philip V, sought to take advantage of his seven-year-old nephew Louis XV's rule over France and position himself to either dominate the French court as regent or seize the throne should the young king die.

<sup>55</sup> Inherited land, wealth, and titles were often “immovables which individuals got from their parents and were required to save for their children...” and were “... considered to belong corporately to the successive generations of the lineage, so that the individual's right to dispose of them as gifts or in testament was limited” (Giesey 1977 p. 272). King Edward VI of England attempted to remove his half-sisters Mary and Elizabeth from the line of succession, but after his death they successfully petitioned the English parliament to have their royal titles recognized. Emperor Charles II spent much of his reign securing international support for his abolition of the 1713 Pragmatic Sanction in order to place his daughter ahead of his nieces in the order of ascension to the throne of Austria. But even so, many rulers and electors rapidly renounced their commitments following the emperor's death, leading to the War of the Austrian Succession between two patrilineal cousins.



incentives for cooperation, but conflicts among these relatives might be expected to be relatively more frequent than among kin more generally.<sup>56</sup>

By contrast, perhaps the strongest levels of cooperation under instrumentalism are likely to emerge between dynasties that have recently concluded a marriage agreement and are thus linked through affinal kinship. Unlike most kin relationships, which are inherited through processes beyond an actor's control as a result of prior generations of self-interested actors, marriage agreements represented the most important strategic action available to rulers to build up new dynastic alliances and reshape their kin networks.<sup>57</sup> While one-sided marriage unions forced upon a weaker dynasty were not unknown, they were far from the norm – instead, most unions were the result of careful negotiation pursued by the families of both bride and groom. Betrothals and marriage negotiations typically lasted years and involved extensive negotiations over the transfer of resources and potential inheritance claims. The care and effort with which these unions were made suggests that self-interested actors were unlikely to arrange marriages between dynasties unless both sides believed that a mutually beneficial period of cooperation was likely to emerge from a marriage. Even more so than among kin in general, instrumentalist assumptions suggest that cooperation should be extensive among families that recently completed inter-dynastic marriage alliances.

A third potential approach to studying dynastic conflict in early modern Europe – constructivism – focuses primarily on the social context surrounding kinship ties and would predict that political behavior was heavily shaped by prevalent kin identities. Accordingly, wars and conflicts are not solely instigated out of self-interest, but also as a result of perceived violations of a ruler's family honor, symbolic authority, or legitimacy.<sup>58</sup> Because social identities are complex and multifaceted, this approach – as with instrumentalism – can potentially generate a variety of different predictions that could plausibly be explained through a constructivist lens. But the most direct approach to applying constructivist assumptions to the case of early modern European dynasticism lies in emphasizing the agnatic, patrilineal identities that served as the clear core of family loyalties in nobles' kin relationships. A head of state's patrilineal dynasty – their identity as a Bourbon, a Habsburg, a Tudor, etc. – represented the source of their political

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<sup>56</sup> Further analysis of the ambiguous strategic relationship between close competitors for the same inheritance can be found in Terrasa-Lozano 2010 and Vester 2012.

<sup>57</sup> “Marriages were made to create and cement patron-client relationships and brought connections which could be useful to both families” (Kettering 1989 p. 420). Muir 1998 p. 42 adds that the most important kinship decision “involved the selection of marriage partners. Knowledge of who married whom helps to fix the position of a family vis-à-vis its friends and enemies and to determine the composition of factions.” See also Bullard 1979.

<sup>58</sup> Tallett 2010 notes that “questions of honour and precedence were not without significance in an age of dynastic rule... what mattered above all to rulers were their dynastic rights; only rarely would a ruler renounce his inherited rights, and almost all were prepared to go to war, certainly to defend territory which they held by right of inheritance, but also to gain territory to which they had a claim.” And while some of these claims may seem to contemporary observers to be mere pretexts for state expansionism, “we should hesitate before jumping to a conclusion which may be anachronistic” (p. 17). Osborne 2007b notes that the intense rivalry between the Medici and Savoy dynasties was fueled through constant symbolic competition – the highly ritualized nature of diplomacy and social events in the era forced rival dynasties into recurring confrontations regarding which family held higher status and prestige. Symbolically, family honor was seen as a just motivator for conflict, and elites of the era were socialized into viewing defense of this honor as a critical part of maintaining their legitimate authority (Hall 1997). We might thus compare dynasticism in the early modern era to the ideology of nationalism in more recent centuries, which may similarly have generated conflict by creating a symbolic framework that justified international military confrontations (Scheff 1994, Van Evera 1994).

authority and the foundation of their personal status and reputation.<sup>59</sup> European nobles were heavily acculturated to exhibit filial loyalty and support for their dynasty, and constructivist analyses would thus likely predict that high levels of cooperation will be observed between sovereigns from the same dynasty.<sup>60</sup> By contrast, more peripheral and ambiguous kin relationships are likely to play a more problematic role. Heads of state linked through female ancestors, for example, possess shared genealogies and overlapping claims to inheritance, but nonetheless identified themselves as members of distinct patrilineal dynasties – in some cases, dynasties that may have centuries-old ingrained rivalries against one another. In such cases, higher relatedness may have been more likely to increase tensions rather than decrease them, since deeply ingrained feuds may have been more pronounced when stoked by the fear that a rival may be taking authority or territory that rightfully belongs to another dynasty.<sup>61</sup> Recent political marriages may have temporarily lowered tensions between families, but because

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<sup>59</sup> Dynasties and families are at their core social constructions; because ancestry doubles with each prior generation and expands rapidly beyond living memory, dynastic actors necessarily edit and manipulate their ancestry, attaching intersubjective identities, histories, and narratives to family history (See Bouchard 2010 and Gevers & Marini 2015, especially pp. 1-32 and 217-242). In an era of pervasive patrimonialism, this almost universally involved prioritizing male ancestry. Dynasties “were made by men. Kinship was determined by men, and the male branching drawn up by contemporaries shows how little importance was given, after one or two generations, to kinship through women....” In the families controlled by their fathers and husbands, “women were passing guests,” (Klapisch-Zuber 1987 pp. 117-118). The tendency to focus above all on one’s patrilineal line of ancestry, and to only reference one’s female or mixed-gender lines of ancestry when those lines brought with them prestige or inheritance, were consistent with women’s broader role in early modern European society. Women, through inheritance and skill, managed with some frequency to achieve positions of power and influence, making it impossible to ignore them entirely in the political sphere (Coolidge 2016). But the existence of powerful or prestigious women, both in the present-day and in one’s ancestry, always retained an ambiguity that caused them to be symbolically marginalized in favor of male figures and lines of descent.

<sup>60</sup> Cooperation between different branches of the same patriline was the implicit goal underlying the Habsburg practice of marrying their heirs to cousins or nieces from other Habsburg lines. After the Bourbons began to replace the Habsburgs as the premiere transnational dynasty among Catholic states, they formalized the practice of patrilineal alliances with the signing of the Bourbon Family Compact in 1733. Professed loyalty to one’s patriline was a virtue that was equally prioritized in Protestant states and among lower rungs of the elite. Describing patronage and social support in the Netherlands, Adams 2005a writes “the patrilineage—descending diachronically from a founding father and persisting in the form of a single line (when each generation designated one male child as heir) or branches (when several male children were chosen)—was the family principle that these men had in mind... those men whose name he bore, and who would bear his name in return” (pp. 75-76).

<sup>61</sup> The presence of multiple competing systems of inheritance across the continent, along with the social pressure for dynastic elites to fiercely defend their inherited status, meant that rulers with shared ancestry were at significant risk of overlapping territorial claims. “Few states or dynasties, even as late as the seventeenth century, possessed any formal or codified law of succession. Moreover, the assumption that primogeniture and the selection of the nearest male blood relative in some sense constituted an ‘unwritten rule’ for the operation of an order of succession, looks decidedly unconvincing in the light of early modern dynastic practice” (Parrott 1997 p. 25). While a patriline was foremost and non-negotiable, the importance of the rest of one’s ancestry and lineage was much more changeable – actors prioritized or deprioritized these secondary lines of ancestry in the hopes of maximizing inheritance claims while downplaying any filial duty to rival kin (Chojnacki 1985). Some of Europe’s most devastating wars emerged out of the ambiguity inherent in cross-dynasty inheritance. The Hundred Years War, for example, was launched with the death of Charles IV of France and the ensuing inheritance dispute between Charles’ sister’s son Edward III of England (his closest living relative, but a Plantagenet through his father) and Charles’ father’s brother’s son Philip (a more distant relation, but a member of the same patrilineal Valois dynasty). The risk from overlapping ancestral claims is comparable to the risk of modern wars erupting over competing and overlapping claims to territory or ethnic history and symbols (Gartzke & Gleditsch 2006, Goddard 2006). Linz 1990 similarly argues that overlapping claims to authority, such as those that occur in presidential systems, generate systemic vulnerabilities and institutional failures over time.

**Table 3.1**  
**Competing Theoretical Predictions for European Dynastic Relations**

<b><u>Theoretical Approach</u></b>	<b><u>Primary Predictions</u></b>	<b><u>Most Significant Kin Relationship</u></b>
<u>Essentialism</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared dynasty has <u>little or no impact</u> independent of relatedness</li> <li>• Higher relatedness <u>reduces</u> violence among peripheral kin</li> <li>• Recent marriages <u>reduce</u> violence between dynasties due to shared interest in seeing offspring thrive</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Relatedness</u> Genetic similarity and inclusive fitness override all other priorities</p>
<u>Instrumentalism</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared dynasty has either <u>no impact</u> distinct from general expected cooperation among relatives, or <u>increases</u> violence among agnates due to higher inheritance competition</li> <li>• Higher relatedness <u>reduces</u> violence among relatives who offer mutual support, with possible exception of close relatives who are competitors for the same inheritance</li> <li>• Recent marriages <u>reduce</u> violence between dynasties because they represent a costly commitment and strategic alliance</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Recent marriages</u> Best opportunity to influence kin relations through a strategically planned marriage</p>
<u>Constructivism</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared dynasty <u>reduces</u> violence among agnates due to a shared common identity</li> <li>• Higher relatedness <u>increases</u> violence among peripheral kin due to contested legitimacy over shared ancestry</li> <li>• Recent marriages <u>reduce</u> violence between dynasties, or have <u>no impact</u> – marriage may do little to resolve deep rivalries</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Shared dynasty</u> The kin identity most heavily prioritized by European aristocratic culture of the time</p>

allegiance to one's spouse and affines was of relatively marginal importance compared to the ruler's loyalty to their own patriline and lineage, the effects of such marriages were unlikely to resolve long-term tensions or vendettas.<sup>62</sup> A constructivist perspective thus suggests that the cooperative benefits of kinship were relatively constrained and limited to the subset of kin that shared a dynastic identity, while more peripheral kinship ties at best offered little benefit, and at worst introduced increased opportunity for rivalry and war between relatives.

I summarize these distinct theoretical predictions in Table 3.1, laying out how each proposed approach might lead to measurable and falsifiable predictions regarding expected dynastic relationships. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will use the case of early modern Europe – with its uniquely detailed records on the lineage of dynastic authorities and their history of violence against each other – to determine which approach most accurately describes how sovereigns interacted politically with their kinsmen and non-kin. Through this analysis, it will be possible to evaluate which theoretical mechanisms appear to most accurately represent the driving forces behind dynastic politics, albeit only in the context of a single case. While we should be cautious about assuming any conclusions derived from this study can be generalized across all cases, these tests will nonetheless allow us to approach less well-documented contemporary cases of dynastic political systems with more empirically grounded assumptions regarding which mechanisms are most responsible for driving dynastic violence – whether those be essentialist evolutionary instincts, the rational self-interest of instrumentalism, or the social pressures explored by constructivism.

## *Section II* *Methodology*

### *Dependent Variable: Great Power Wars*

In analyzing the influence of dynastic relationships among the historical great powers of Europe, it was first necessary to select a frame of reference, including units of analysis and the precise time-period to be studied. Unlike analyses of warfare in recent centuries, studies of historical warfare and politics are hampered by the relatively less formalized nature of statehood and international relations. Europe in the period of powerful monarchs such as Emperor Charles V, Charles Gustavus, and Louis XIV was a continent undergoing sporadic and inconsistent centralization of power, with many territories that possessed unclear claims to sovereignty and ambiguous political relationships with their neighbors.<sup>63</sup> The nebulous nature of statehood in early modern Europe potentially complicates any analysis of warfare in the period. Which polities, for example, should be counted as distinct, independent states that have the potential to go to war against each other? And what level of conflict constitutes warfare in a period where inter-state violence was not clearly formalized?<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Dynastic marriages, though often attached to treaties or enacted with promises of eternal love and support between families, were arguably motivated primarily by the desire for status and aggrandizement by the houses involved (Jallinoja 2017 pp. 19-89). Dynasties were deeply invested in the prestige of ancestral lineages and may have been willing to subject themselves to significant risk of future inheritance disputes if that risk was associated with marriage into a powerful, wealthy, and prestigious family.

<sup>63</sup> Spruyt 1996 provides an in-depth analysis of some of the myriad types of polities that coexisted prior to the formalization of sovereign statehood.

<sup>64</sup> Detailed analysis of warfare in the period can be found in Ruff 2001.

To resolve these questions, I relied initially on Jack Levy's study of great power wars extending from the early modern period into the recent past. Levy convincingly points to the year 1495 as a convenient starting point for the modern international system – a date that roughly coincides with increasing centralization of state power under national monarchies in Europe's most powerful states.<sup>65</sup> In his analysis, Levy proceeds to identify the dates for the rise and fall of different countries' status as great powers, and the start and end dates for wars involving these great powers. These data served as the starting point for my own dataset, which comprises observations of dyad-years for every combination of European great powers during the period of observation. This approach necessarily excludes wars that involved one or more great powers fighting solely against minor powers, as well as the much rarer instances of large European wars that didn't involve any great powers on either side, which presents both benefits and drawbacks for analysis.<sup>66</sup> On the one hand, wars between great powers tended to be larger in scale and more organized, making them less subject to ambiguous coding decisions. Moreover, great powers tended to be more highly bureaucratized and thus less subject to the personalistic whims of leaders, and we might therefore expect these states to operate more rationally and strategically. Limiting observations to wars between great powers thus represents a higher threshold for identifying and measuring any dynastic effects on international relations. Smaller states were also more likely to exhibit ambiguous sovereignty, and less likely to have well-documented royal genealogies, both of which may lower the accuracy of coding. On the other hand, exclusion of lesser European powers eliminates a wealth of interesting examples of international marriage alliances – including networks of marriages that bridged different great powers through the ruling families of weaker states. At present, this study follows Levy in focusing primarily on the international relations of great powers, but subsequent analysis expanding observations to encompass lesser European states represents a promising area for future study.<sup>67</sup>

From Levy's starting point of 1495, my dyadic dataset extends to 1791, prior to the start of the French Revolutionary Wars. This window was chosen as the period in which dynasticism represented a relatively uniform force operating across Europe's international system. While dynasticism unquestionably held political influence for a significant period of time after the French Revolution, its political role became more complicated as rising nationalism and new ideologies became bound up in old dynastic struggles. Rather than include the brief rise of Napoleonic cadet dynasties across Europe, and the subsequent retrenchment of old elite families in the Congress of Vienna and the Concert of Europe system, my analysis terminates prior to

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<sup>65</sup> Levy 2015.

<sup>66</sup> Another critique of the approach taken in this chapter is its focus on conflict and its failure to examine possible levels of peace dividends from dynastic ties, such as increased cooperation and more robust alliances. My analysis here does not distinguish between different categories of peaceful relationships, and so cannot examine any such impact beyond noting when war did not occur. Unfortunately, detailed analysis with respect to this issue for the early modern period is extremely complex – peace treaties and alliances tended to have large informal components, and rarely had clearly defined end dates (Gibler 2008). While it is thus likely that dynastic links had some measurable impact on diplomatic alliances, such an impact may be better observed through qualitative historical analysis rather than through statistical tests.

<sup>67</sup> Working papers by Kokkonen & Sundell (2017) and Benzell & Cooke (2018) describe two efforts to assemble a complete database of wars that extends through the early modern era. Of particular note for analysis extending beyond the great power states is the question of how the impact of dynastic links may have differed when between a great power and a weaker state. Dynasticism is often tied to patron-client relationships (Davies 1992), and it may be that “vertical” ties between different levels of a patronage relationship had a markedly different impact than “horizontal” kin linkages between dynasties that were roughly comparable in status.

these transformative events.<sup>68</sup> The observed period still includes two republican regimes – the Netherlands as well as Cromwell’s English Commonwealth – but neither of these governments were nearly as disruptive to the international aristocratic system as the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras would prove to be. During the period of observations, the great power system was limited almost exclusively to Europe. Of the great powers during this period, I omit only the Ottoman Empire and its sultan, which were excluded from the international marriage market that connected Europe’s dynasty due to their adherence to Islam.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Space precludes a detailed analysis in this chapter of the Bonapartist dynasties and their impact on great power dynasticism. The post-1791 period witnessed first the rise of a revolutionary republican government in France, followed by the rise of Napoleon and his placement of his family members on thrones across Europe (Grab 2003). Inclusion of this time period without further controls would almost certainly tilt evidence strongly in the direction of essentialist and instrumentalist expectations that kin tend to cooperate closely with their relatives and to fight non-relatives. Certainly, Napoleon and his family were considered an upstart “bastard dynasty” (Semmel 2000 pp. 146-147), and his systematic unseating of established monarchs likely created a sense of common purpose among Europe’s interrelated dynasties. Moreover, the post-Napoleonic era saw relative peace coincide with the restoration of Europe’s intermarried dynasties – the Concert of Europe was at least symbolically built on the restoration of a conservative aristocracy who shared a newly united drive to maintain international dynastic ties as a bulwark against revolutionary movements (Jarrett 2013). Napoleon himself appeared to believe that intermarriage into the old aristocracy might allow him to more easily become accepted among Europe’s established dynasties, and it was for this reason that he chose a princess of Habsburg and Bourbon ancestry to be his second wife. But it’s unclear how much the violent confrontations between Napoleon and the old monarchies can be attributed to any inherently dynastic rivalries versus how much animosity was created by the specific circumstances of his rise. The closest historical parallel – the execution of Charles I of England and the rise of Oliver Cromwell – did not generate a comparable military crisis. Nor did the later rise of Napoleon III under more peaceful circumstances spark similar international outrage, even though he similarly lacked dynastic ties to Europe’s established crowns. It seems instead more likely that the tremendous violence of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars grew primarily out of the explosive nationalism unleashed by the new revolutionary spirit. Dynastic ties likely exacerbated tensions, insofar as the execution of Louis XVI, his Habsburg wife Marie Antoinette, and their children, generated horror among their relatives in the Bourbon courts across Europe and the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty that ruled Austria (Mansfield & Snyder 1995, Smith 1998, Steger 2008). However, these personal concerns were likely only a minor contributor to war and were merely a side effect of the broader cataclysmic ideological differences between the old regime and the new revolutionary nationalism that had taken hold of France.

It is possible, for example, that a more restrained French revolution that allowed a figurehead Bourbon monarch to remain as symbolic head of state might have also engaged in less widespread military adventurism. But would this be because of the mediating role of a dynastic monarch, or would both outcomes be the byproduct of a more moderate strain of nationalism? The difficulty in distinguishing between dynastic, ideological, and political causes speaks to the increasing difficulty in studying dynasticism among the great powers of the modern era. It is almost certain that dynastic ties played some role in international diplomacy and matters of war and peace in the Nineteenth and early-Twentieth Centuries. Extensive examples of dynastic communications and diplomatic channels are described in Kann 1973, Urbach 2008, and Carter 2010. But as monarchies and aristocracies generally waned in direct influence, and as dynastic legitimacy gradually became marginalized in comparison to new ideologies based on nationalism, democratic representation, or economic class consciousness, the influence of dynasticism seems to have grown more idiosyncratic and inconsistent. Understanding dynasticism thus continues to be important for understanding the politics of the modern era, but the international relations of that era cease functioning as a clear and relatively straightforward case through which to understand dynasticism’s impact absent other major ideologies and political forces.

<sup>69</sup> A case could be made for the exclusion of Russia as well, since its geographic isolation and Eastern Orthodox religion often impeded the country’s reliable access into the European royal marriage market. However, Russia’s rise as a great power coincided with a concerted effort by Peter the Great to tie the country into the West’s dynastic webs. The most obvious example of this trend prior to 1791 was of course the rise of Catherine the Great, a German aristocrat whose only local claim to authority was her marriage into the Russian royal family. While Russian dynastic connections were not at that time nearly as extensive as they would be in later generations, the country’s

These criteria result in a sample of eight countries in my dyadic dataset. Four of these – France, England (and the subsequent United Kingdom), Spain, and Austria (effectively synonymous with rulership over the Holy Roman Empire) – were perennial great powers throughout the period of observations. Four other states possessed great power status for only part of the early modern period: Russia and Prussia emerge as great powers only in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, while the rise and fall of Sweden and the Netherlands as great powers occurred entirely within the period of analysis.<sup>70</sup> For every year, dyadic observations were made combining every possible pair of great powers. Special attention was paid to periods in which two Great Powers were united in personal union – namely, during the period when Emperor Charles V ruled both Austria and Spain, in the brief marriage of Phillip II of Spain and Mary I of England, and during the marriage of William III of the Netherlands and Mary II of England (as well as William’s subsequent rule over both countries following his wife’s death). Following Levy, I determined that the level of integration present in the first instance was high enough to treat the unified Austrian-Spanish Habsburg Empire as a single country, with only one set of dyadic relations with foreign states. By contrast, because both the Anglo-Spanish and Anglo-Dutch unions involved significantly unification of foreign policy, each constituent state continued to be coded separately during the span of these latter two unions. Nonetheless, because the effect of an ongoing personal union likely overwhelmed other political and dynastic factors to make war during such a union inconceivable, all dyadic observations specifically between the two states bridged through the union were dropped until they returned to having distinct sovereigns.

Having defined the units of observation and time-period for this analysis, Levy’s analysis was also incorporated to estimate the time periods and participants for every war involving at least two great powers. Wars must meet a 1,000 battle-death threshold for the conflict as a whole to be recorded in the dataset. In-keeping with standard statistical practices in the study of warfare and political violence, I use the onset of warfare between the two members of the dyad as my primary dependent variable. The practice of focusing specifically on conflict onset, rather than every year of subsequent hostilities, is used to control for the heavy correlation between instances of conflict in the preceding year and high likelihood that this violence will carry over into the next observed year.<sup>71</sup> I define a conflict onset as the emergence of a war between both members of a dyad after at least one observed dyad-year of peace. Because observations are dyadic, I do not distinguish between new conflicts that emerge immediately after prior wars. Thus, for example, the Franco-Spanish War of 1659 is treated as a direct continuation of the Thirty Years War. Measuring only onset of conflict helps control for autocorrelation between years of continuing violence, but it fails to control for the parallel problem associated with correlation between continuous years of peace. Temporal autocorrelation is primarily controlled for through use of a cross-sectional time series model design, but further controls can also be implemented to minimize the risk of systematic longitudinal correlation.<sup>72</sup> For this purpose, a

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efforts to tie itself into the kin networks of other great power monarchies were too extensive to justify omission from analysis.

<sup>70</sup> In a few cases, minor adjustments from Levy 2015 coding were made. For example, Russia’s entry into the great power sample was delayed by one year to avoid having a single year of observation for the Russia-Sweden dyad, out of concern that a single year for the dyad presented leverage issues. Of the temporary great powers, the Netherlands is observed from 1609 to 1713, Sweden from 1617 to 1721, Russia from 1722 onward, and Prussia from 1740 onward.

<sup>71</sup> Examples of statistical analysis of interstate war onset include Bremer 1992, Kocs 1995, and Jones et al. 1996.

<sup>72</sup> Beck et al. 1998. In subsequent chapters, tests will also include a similar “war year count” variable to control for any temporal bias originating from successive prior years of continuous conflict, which may impact the likelihood of

series of “peace count” cubic splines were included in each model to control for the number of years of uninterrupted prior peace between the two countries in the dyad. All models also included a series of year splines to control for any general changes over time influencing the overall likelihood of conflict onset in specific time periods. Lastly, since a country’s recognition as a great power often involved demonstrating its material capabilities in conflict, the first observed year as a great power was highly likely to correlate with an observed war onset. A dummy variable was thus included delineating the first year of observation for each dyad. All of these variables, along with my use of cross-sectional time series models for all tests, were included to minimize any risks of temporal dependence between observations.

***Independent Variable: Relatedness and Kinship Ties Between Great Power Rulers***

The key explanatory variables of interest for this analysis are the degree and type of kinship ties between the rulers of great power states during the period of observation. In operationalizing this concept, the first step was necessarily to assemble a list of the ruling heads of state for each individual country-year. In most cases, the ruling sovereign of a given state was not a matter of significant contention, but periods of dual monarchy, dynastic transition, or contested rule necessarily involved some level of coder discretion. In transition years from one ruler to another, the ruler of a specific country-year was designated based on who carried the title on January 1<sup>st</sup> of that year, thus avoiding mistaken anachronistic attribution of war onset to a ruler that had not yet ascended to power. In the case of monarchs that ruled jointly, the primary ruler was determined based on analysis of which monarch appeared to hold the greater political status, as well as observation of the transition of power after each monarch’s death. Thus, for example, in the case of the dynastic unions of England, Queen Mary I, rather than her foreign husband Philip II of Spain, is designated as the ruler of England from 1554 until 1558, largely because effective political legitimacy remained firmly rooted in Mary’s hands. By contrast, the later union between King William III, Prince of Orange, and his wife Mary II of England designates William as king, both because of his greater influence over English politics as well as the fact that he retained the crown after his wife’s death, rather than having to pass authority immediately to Mary’s closest familial heir.

Using these guidelines, a systematic listing of the primary ruling sovereigns for each country-year was assembled.<sup>73</sup> In many cases, it is worth noting that this ruler did not necessarily

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new conflicts emerging. However, because observations in this chapter are dyadic and do not distinguish between different overlapping wars between the same combatants, it is impossible for a new conflict to emerge within a dyad in which conflict is already ongoing.

<sup>73</sup> As noted previously, further consideration had to be taken when coding the two republics in my sample. The English Commonwealth functioned as a republic from the execution of Charles I until the restoration of his son Charles II to the throne. Throughout the majority of this period, Oliver Cromwell functioned as the effective ruler of the country, and this status was briefly passed down to his son Richard following the senior Cromwell’s death. As such, the Cromwell family ancestry – which bore no measurable dynastic connections to European monarchs – was used to code for the English republic’s leadership during this period. For the Dutch Republic, effective control for most of the period of observation rested with the central stadtholder, invariably a member of the Orange-Nassau family descended from William the Silent. In most cases, though not universally, this stadtholder title was held in conjunction with the title Prince of Orange. When there was a stadtholder in existence, I treated this individual as the sovereign of the country. In two periods – during the minority of William III and in the years after his death – the republic experienced a decentralized stadtholderless period, in which local factions resisted pressure to keep the republic unified under a central figure. Nonetheless, in both periods an influential Orangist faction visibly maintained that lineage as a political force in spite of its barriers to power. This Orangist influence even in the stadtholderless period had very real political implications: during the decentralized period of William III’s minority,



exert actual effective political power. Throughout the years of observation, many countries experienced extended periods during a head of state's minority and in which political power was ceded to a regent theoretically administering on their behalf. Similar scenarios arose when a sovereign was mentally or physically unfit to rule, or when extended periods of warfare kept the ruler far from their state for long periods. While it is certainly plausible that kinship's salience may have declined in such periods, advisors and regents were still heavily constrained by the dynastic relationships of their sovereigns, since ancestry and inheritance played such a crucial role in states' political and territorial claims.<sup>74</sup> As such, I assume that even when heads of state themselves weren't the main decision-makers – when they reigned but did not rule – their primary advisors were still institutionally compelled to operate in a comparably dynastic fashion.<sup>75</sup> This assumption is unlikely to generate false positives in my statistical analysis, because if it proves inaccurate and states run by advisors and regents tended to disregard their sovereign's dynastic ties, the most likely effect would be to bias results away from showing consistent trends tied to kin relationships.

Having established each country-year's reigning head of state, the more complex process began of establishing their kinship ties with one another. As described in the previous section, the interconnected nature of the dynastic web shaping the relationships between sovereigns was too complex to be adequately summarized with a single unidimensional variable. Instead, several different facets of kinship were estimated to describe each dyadic relationship. First, and most simply, a dummy variable was created for dyads containing two rulers from the same patrilineal dynasty – namely the two Habsburgs dynasties ruling Austria and Spain from 1517-1700, and the subsequent Bourbon rulership over France and Spain from 1701-1791. This variable captured the effect of the strong cultural priority assigned to patrilineal kin ties in European politics and most inheritance laws of the period. To test for any other effects generated from shared parental dynasties, I also created two other dummy variables incorporating the sovereign's mother's dynasty – one designating whether both rulers' mothers came from the same dynasty, and a third designating cases where one ruler's mother came from the dynasty of the other ruler's father. Unsurprisingly given the priority assigned to patrilineal ties, these two alternate dummies were far less reliably significant than my shared patriline dummy, as I will discuss in greater detail in Section III.

Parents' patrilineal ties only represent a small portion of an individual's family tree. Observing the male line of descent for a ruler, or even adding their mother's patriline, still

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his future rival Louis XIV of France already showed substantial concerns about the Dutch prince and his extensive kin ties to many of the most illustrious and politically influential Protestant families in Europe (Lynn 1999 and Dencher 2014). In recognition of this special status, for periods in which there was no central stadtholder, I treat the Prince of Orange as the effective head of state for the Dutch Republic.

<sup>74</sup> A compelling line of research might examine periods in which kings had reduced power and autonomy and test whether such periods decreased the salience of international dynastic ties. Periods of a king's minority, in which a king tended to be dominated by a mother, close agnate, or unrelated advisor, may offer a particularly compelling opportunity for comparison. I present a very rough attempt at estimating these issues through tests of the impact of executive constraint on monarchs, but at present I have found no evidence to suggest such constraints had any impact on the importance of kin ties to international relations.

<sup>75</sup> For the same reason, I disregard the rare instances where monarch's paternity was questionable. Such accusations tended to be leveled by critics without strong evidence, and there were no compelling cases in my sample where monarch behavior appeared to be based on an alternate paternity. For a discussion on the issue of monarchy and the cultural importance of paternity claims, see Geaman 2017's discussion of Edward of Westminster in the period just preceding my window of analysis.

dismisses all other ancestors outside those particular of descent. A second dimension of kinship was thus created to capture a more complete estimate of sovereigns' ancestral interrelatedness. The first step in this process was assembling a thorough genealogical background for every sovereign in the dataset, so that common ancestors could then be identified for each dyad.<sup>76</sup> A consistent cut-off point of six generations, back to each individual's great-great-great-grandparents, was implemented to ensure a detailed map of each ruler's recent ancestry. Each ruler was thus associated with a family tree encompassing up to 63 individuals, including the ruler themselves. In some cases, particularly among rulers with less prestigious lineages, significantly less information was often available regarding the ruler's ancestry: in the case of Catherine I of Russia, for example (a woman who was originally a low-status commoner before being elevated to the ruler of Russia with the death of her husband Tsar Peter I), no records existed regarding her grandparents or any ancestors of greater distance. In cases of missing information, ancestries were completed as thoroughly as possible, and missing ancestors were assumed to be unrelated to any other individuals included in the analysis.

Three methods of estimating ancestral ties between heads of state were used – descent linkage, a relatedness dummy, and a coefficient of relatedness – each of which reflects subtly different assumptions about how kin relationships and dynastic politics are likely to operate in practice. First, we might assume that individuals generally only think of each other in terms of their closest ancestral tie, rather than in ways that encompass the totality of their genealogical relationships. If this is the case, all that's necessary is to identify the closest common ancestor between two rulers and count the shortest chain of descent that connects each ruler through this ancestor. I refer to this measure as a *descent linkage*.<sup>77</sup> Figure 3.1 (below) illustrates this process through one example dyad – the paired genealogies of King Louis XIV of France and King Charles II of Spain. In these family trees, repetition of ancestors has been noted with either an “X”, signifying external repetition through ancestors shared by both Louis and Charles, or with an “I”, signifying internal repetition inside the same genealogy due to prior inbreeding.<sup>78</sup> In the case of Charles II and Louis XIV, who were first cousins, the linkage is the number of steps to arrive at either Philip III of Spain or his wife Margaret of Austria. From the perspective of Louis XIV, the chain can be listed as Louis XIV – (1) – Anne of Austria – (2) – Philip III of Spain – (3) – Philip IV of Spain – (4) – Charles II of Spain, for a linkage score of 4.

In the six-generation genealogies constructed for this analysis, linkage estimates can rise to a maximum score of 10, the equivalent of two rulers that are fourth cousins. But because observations are cut off past this threshold, allowing a linkage score up to the maximum risks arbitrarily excluding some relationships – a score of 10 captures a dyad with both rulers

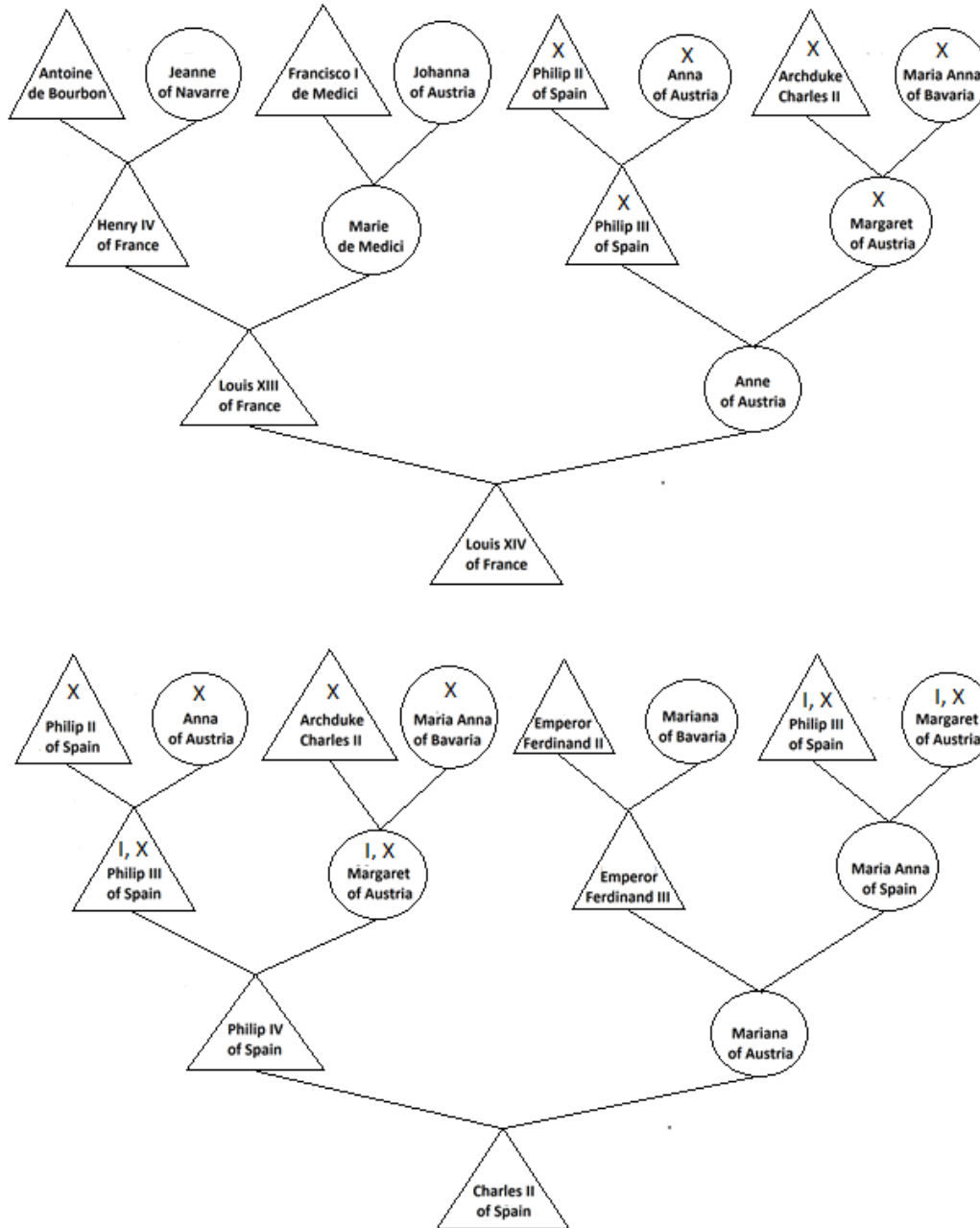
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<sup>76</sup> Ancestry for the vast majority of great power sovereigns was well-attested and uncontroversial. Those cases where records were unclear or contradictory were heavily concentrated in rulers or ancestors with low-status origins – so that prestigious lines of common ancestry between multiple great power monarchs were precisely those most likely to be recorded. Genealogical data were collected primarily from the Tompsett 1994 Directory of Royal Genealogical Data – originally accessible at <http://www.hull.ac.uk/php/cssbct/genealogy/royal/> but which unfortunately was taken offline near the completion of this chapter's writing. When possible, corroborating or reports were collected from other commonly used genealogical resources, including the Medieval Lands genealogy project (Cawley 2018) and crowdsourced genealogical resources such as [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

<sup>77</sup> In the models presented in this chapter, linkage is always presented as a negative number so that a positive coefficient reflects rising relatedness. The highest possible linkage is a score of -1, reflecting the link between a parent and child.

<sup>78</sup> The trees depicted in Figure 3.1 are restricted to only four generations for ease of visualization. All calculations relied on expanded six-generation versions of these trees.

**Figure 3.1**  
**A Four-Generation Genealogical Dyad**



connected to their common ancestor by 5 links, but this process would not capture a similar relationship wherein one ruler was connected to the ancestor via 6 links, and the other through 4.<sup>79</sup> Thus, counting descent linkage to the maximum observed score creates a substantial risk that

<sup>79</sup> An example of this issue can be seen in the dyad between Emperor Leopold I of Austria and Charles XII of Sweden. These two monarchs shared a common ancestry in the form of Emperor Ferdinand I and his wife Anna of

false negatives will be reported between related individuals. To account for this, a lower cut-off was established to reduce the risk of faulty descent scores. A six-generation tree captures all relationships with an ancestral linkage of 5 or less – the equivalent of one ruler in a dyad being the great-great-great-grandparent of the other ruler in the dyad. However, the limits of mortality and typical fertility make the coexistence of this many generations in the same time-period unlikely, so the bulk of dyads are likely to display a much more “horizontal” band of relatives – a linkage of 5 between two coexisting individuals is much more likely to represent a first cousin once removed, for example, than it is to reflect an individual and their great-great-great-grandparent living contemporaneously. To account for these issues, a middle ground of 8 linkage points was chosen. While this cut-off doesn’t guarantee that everyone with that level of relatedness will be reported correctly, it is likely to capture the vast majority of such relationships. All dyads without an observed score of 7 links or more were collapsed together at a linkage of 8 – effectively, I assume that any relative who is a third cousin or further is sufficiently distant as to be perceived by a ruler as being effectively no more related to them than a total stranger would be.<sup>80</sup> It can be argued that the distinction between a relative and a non-relative is more appropriately estimated dichotomously, and so a third alternative dummy estimate was also created, assigning a “1” to any dyads with a linkage below 7 – that is, a score of “1” is assigned to any head of state dyads that are more closely linked than the third cousin level.

But it can also be argued that relatedness is better understood as the overall genealogical similarity between two individuals, in which case neither my linkage nor dummy variables properly capture relative degrees of relatedness. Among European nobility, the complex web of prior marriages often resulted in heads of state that were related to one another through a dizzying variety of genealogical connections and overlapping ancestries, and such relationships are not represented effectively by simply noting their relationship to the closest common ancestor. These secondary lines of ancestry are particularly significant to political analysis, since contestation and inheritance disputes tended to be centered on these more complex cases – wars were regularly fought over questions regarding whether a female line of descent trumped a weaker male claimant, for example. To operationalize a more complete estimate of relatedness, I rely on a method of estimating relatedness commonly used in the biological sciences: the *coefficient of relatedness* between individuals. First developed by Sewall Wright, the coefficient of relatedness (designated by the symbol “*R*”) operationalizes ancestral ties through the observation that parents each contributed half of their genetic code to each of their offspring.<sup>81</sup> Based on this consistent halving of relatedness each generation, and assuming an initial equal distribution of dominant and recessive genes in the first parent generation, it is possible to estimate the percentage of expected homozygosity between any two individuals resulting from

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Bohemia & Hungary. These two were Leopold’s great-great-grandparents and Charles’ great-great-great-great-grandparents, making the two monarchs third cousins twice removed. This is a ten-link connection, but because Charles XII requires six links to connect to Emperor Ferdinand I, their common ancestry is not displayed on a six-generation family tree dyad.

<sup>80</sup> In case this decision to collapse non-relatives together with distant relatives unintentionally biases results, an alternate sample was created that only included observations of country-year dyads in which some form of shared ancestry was observed in the six-generation trees of both monarchs. This sample is tested below, using both the original onset coding and a modified onset coding that treats ongoing wars as beginning at the first point of observation. In this modified sample, linkages above seven are still collapsed to the seven-point level to account for the general uncertainty regarding whether other, closer links exist outside the six-generation depicted genealogy.

<sup>81</sup> Wright 1922.

their shared common ancestry.<sup>82</sup> Thus, for example, identical twins have an  $R$  of 1, because they inherit exactly the same genetic information from their parents. Every child has an  $R$  of 0.5 with each of their parents, having inherited half of their genetic makeup. Because each act of breeding involves a new randomized halving of a parent's genetic information, half-siblings each inherit half of their shared parent's DNA, but only 50% of that shared information is likely to be common to both offspring, and so half-siblings have an  $R$  of 0.25. By contrast, because full siblings are linked not through just one parent, but both of them, they have an  $R$  of  $0.25 * 2$ , or 0.5, signifying that full siblings will be, on average, as closely related to one another as they are to either of their parents.

To demonstrate how the coefficient of relatedness can serve as a more thorough descriptor of shared ancestry, Figure 3.1 once again provides a convenient illustration. Louis XIV and Charles II are expected to share a certain amount of genetic information in common through their shared descent from Philip III of Spain and Margaret of Austria. Louis XIV is linked to these shared ancestors through only one line of ancestry, a two-generation chain through his maternal line. By contrast, Charles II of Spain is linked through two lines: a two-generation chain through his paternal line, and a three-generation chain through his maternal line. The likelihood that Louis XIV and Charles II were homozygous due to shared genetic information passed down from either Philip III or Margaret of Austria is thus  $2*(0.5)^{(2+2)} + 2*(0.5)^{(2+3)}$ , which is equal to an  $R$  of 0.1875, or 18.75% chance of homozygosity.<sup>83</sup> By contrast, if there were no inbreeding in Charles II's line and the two sovereigns were merely first cousins, they would still have the same Linkage of 4, but would have an  $R$  of only 0.125. As this example makes clear, the coefficient of relatedness helps capture elements of closed breeding pools, multiple shared ancestors, and regular inbreeding in the parent population that aren't fully captured when merely measuring distance to the closest common ancestor. Because the coefficient of relatedness is commonly used by animal breeders to lower the risks of inbreeding, a number of animal breeding computer programs have been developed to facilitate the process of calculating a large number of coefficients.<sup>84</sup> For this study, I relied primarily on the *Breeder's Assistant* program (available at [www.tenset.co.uk](http://www.tenset.co.uk)) to systematically estimate relatedness for each dyad.

Both shared dynasty and overall relatedness reflect kinship ties that exist from birth, but sovereigns had access to one tool that allowed them to transform kin relationships over the course of their lifetime – the ability to negotiate marriage options for themselves and their close kin. The third dimension of kinship I test in my analysis is thus the existence of recent affinal ties between rulers in a dyad. Marriage alliances were a crucial tool for dynastic political relations, and a successful marriage union was often the result of years of negotiation and sometimes the lynchpin of international agreements and treaties. It is thus worthwhile to examine how effectively they operated in practice, and whether recent marriages resulted in more peaceful relations between the dynasties involved.<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately, operationalizing marriage unions is

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<sup>82</sup> In effect, the estimate reflects the predicted probability that the two individuals will inherit identical copies of a gene from any common ancestors.

<sup>83</sup> The six-generation dyads reveal further inbreeding among more remote ancestors, and so in the actual dataset their coefficient of inbreeding rises to 32.4%.

<sup>84</sup> Animal breeding software has previously been used to study inbreeding rates and their impact on the royal families of Europe in Alvarez et al. 2009 and Ceballos & Alvarez 2013.

<sup>85</sup> Marriage and other relatively contemporaneous kin relationships should be analyzed with caution, however, since the more proximate the temporal relationship between a new marriage and the political relationship to be analyzed,

not as simple as noting the families of a ruler's spouse. To be sure, a simple dummy variable can be created denoting whether either or both monarchs had a living spouse originating from the other monarch's dynasty – such a dummy was created for this analysis and is discussed in Model 9, below. But this dummy fails to capture the complexity of marriage practices in dynastic Europe. Discrepancies in available marriage partners, and sometimes the gulf in social prestige between different families, meant that even the most crucial marriage unions did not always entail the direct marriage between sovereigns and their immediate families.<sup>86</sup> As such, I instead defined dynastic weddings as those marriages that involved the active planning of participation of two or more great power dynasties, rather than defining such unions through a specific genealogical cut-off point. At times, this definition led to the inclusion of ambiguous cases wherein a sovereign played a documented role facilitating the union but was not related to either spouse – notable examples include King Francis I's diplomatic efforts to facilitate the marriage of Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn, and Frederick II's role in the marriage of Catherine the Great to Czar Peter III<sup>87</sup> – but this approach more accurately reflects the strategic flexibility rulers exhibited in promoting marriage matches for political influence. In the appendix to this chapter, I include a list of all dynastic marriages between dyads that I identified through historical sources and genealogical data. To measure the effect of a recent dynastic marriage, I also avoid focusing on the existence of a living spouse, and instead assume that the impact diminishes linearly over time since the wedding. This assumption captures the importance of the wedding itself, which typically involved significant transfer of resources and inheritances, and could have an impact long after the spouses involved may have died. I assume a linear diminishment of impact over time to reflect both lowered salience compared to more recent events and the accumulating probability of a more radical change, such as the transition to a new dynasty in one or both states. I thus constructed a *fractional wedding count* variable, defined as an equation of  $1/n$ , where  $n$  is the number of years since the last wedding negotiated between the two states (states with no

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the higher the likelihood of endogeneity effects. Marriages are not randomly determined, and it is likely that monarchs based their marriage choices on their expectations regarding where wars were or weren't likely to occur. Recent marriages may thus function primarily as a screen and a sorting mechanism rather than a true causal influence. Since monarchs had only limited information, this type of future planning has fewer causal inference implications when studying remote ancestry. But for recent marriages it is perfectly plausible that, for example, a monarch chose to marry a child to a dynasty with which they already anticipated remaining at peace, and that the marriage had no causal influence on the subsequent likelihood of peace. The issue here is comparable to the problem of ascertaining the causal relationship between peace treaties and alliances and the subsequent likelihood of war (Von Stein 2005, Kimball 2006, Simmons 2010).

<sup>86</sup> An illustrative case can be seen in the marriage negotiations for an alliance between James V of Scotland and Francis I of France. Status and diplomacy dictated that James should be married to Francis' daughter Madeleine of Valois, but at the time it was feared that she was too frail to endure a pregnancy. Instead, Francis succeeded in a preliminary agreement that his ally would instead marry Francis' more distant relative Mary of Bourbon. Francis in effect sponsored Mary's petition, promising to secure a dowry and concessions equivalent to what James would receive for a marriage to a royal princess. This particular agreement was eventually canceled when James visited the French court and became enamored of Madeleine despite her poor constitution, but this broader pattern of royal patronage of more distant relatives and loyal clients was a reasonably common negotiating tool among dynastic diplomats (Paul 1906).

<sup>87</sup> For the role of Francis I in promoting international support for Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn, see Parmiter 1967; Frederick the Great's support for the betrothal of Catherine the Great is discussed in Alexander 1989. Preliminary tests eliminating these cases where no known ancestral relationship existed between the "patron" sovereign and the proposed spouse did not radically change statistical results. At present, I use my more expansive definition to avoid arbitrary relatedness cutoffs and because it more accurately reflects the role that minor client families sometimes played in the marriage negotiations of the era.

previous intermarriages in the observed time period were coded as zero). Thus, the year immediately after a marriage has a score of 1, the next year 1/2, the year after that 1/3, and so on so that the fraction approaches zero again after long periods without a wedding. Through this variable, the models below are able to incorporate the recent affinal kinship ties that influenced politics of the period, just as shared dynasty and genealogical relatedness capture more prolonged and entrenched effects of kinship through shared ancestry.<sup>88</sup>

### *Control Variables and Alternate Explanations*

Several potential control variables were included in this analysis, and those that proved consistently significant were incorporated into models to better estimate the actual effect of my variables of interest. In addition to those previously mentioned – such as controls time-dependent effects and potential dummy variables to test for other peripheral kinship links – the most important control variables were those included to control for country- or dyad-specific effects. First, country dummies for each of the great powers were constructed to control for the possibility that some states were more or less likely in general to become involved in conflict throughout the period of observation. Secondly, a control dummy for geographical proximity was devised, based on the intuition that countries that border one another may be both more likely to go to war and also more likely to develop either direct or indirect kinship ties. Initially, tests were performed on a variable denoting the distance between the capitals of each country, but this control showed only fragile effects in preliminary models. A more effective geographical control variable proved to be a dummy variable demarcating great powers whose core territories roughly bordered one another. Since borders in the period were relatively fluid and less coherent than in later centuries, this dummy demarcated only countries with coherent core territories abutting one another.<sup>89</sup>

The early modern period was an age of expansion into the Atlantic Ocean, and this led to rapid expansion and competition among the major Atlantic powers. The tension between Atlantic powers, and the close proximity of Atlantic powers to one another, could potentially impact

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<sup>88</sup> It is possible that neither a fractional wedding year count nor a living spouse dummy are the most effective estimates for a dynastic marriage's influence. Other alternatives might include an estimate that includes and counts the years of negotiation and betrothal that preceded many dynastic marriages, an estimate that also reflects whether the marriage has produced children or not, or a dummy variable extending for a specific amount of time – perhaps ten years – after either the marriage or the death of a spouse. At present, the alternative methods of estimating marriages' impact on dynastic relations that I have tested have not shown comparable significance when compared to the marriage year count I describe above.

Benzell & Cooke's 2018 working paper does offer one intriguing alternative approach that extends the principle behind the "living spouse" dummy I test here and estimates living network links through several different types of relatives – in their case, denoting whether links exist between the parents, children, spouses, or siblings of monarchs in a dyad. The authors then test the impact of deaths among these linking relatives to estimate the impact of kinship ties on international relations. This method captures a wider range of possible living connections than a simple marriage count or a living spouse dummy, but their stronger focus on recent living relatives may increase the likelihood of endogenous correlation between conflict and dynastic connections. I have not at present tested the impact of their approach on my own sample of great power dyads but doing so may prove to be a reasonable alternative to a marriage count.

<sup>89</sup> Thus, for example, Austria was coded as bordering France, the Netherlands, and Prussia because core Holy Roman Empire territories extended to each of these borders, but Spain's more peripheral Spanish Netherlands territories weren't central enough to represent a shared border with any great powers. Spain was thus treated as only bordering France. Despite being separated by the English Channel for the latter part of the period of observation, England and France were still coded as bordering one another due to the narrowness of the maritime buffer between them.

international relations in ways that correlated with political marriages between the powers, and so it was important to also isolate the effect of these rivalries.<sup>90</sup> As such, a further dummy variable was created to demarcate those dyads in which both states were major Atlantic naval powers throughout their periods of observation: France, England, Spain, and the Netherlands. A control for the number of great powers in a given year was also included in my tests, based on the neorealist premise that a more multipolar system with a greater number of actors may be more vulnerable to war incidents.<sup>91</sup> To further test neorealist arguments regarding polarity in the state system, I also created two further variables reflecting the distribution of power between great powers. I based these variables on coding from Levy & Thompson 2005, where they examine the great power system from 1495 onward to determine which states were dominant in a given time period, and whether any state possessed hegemonic authority.<sup>92</sup> Two dummy variables were constructed from those data, the first of which was a dyadic dummy marking dyad-years in which one of the two countries was the dominant or hegemonic power, thus offering a crude estimate of the presence of significant power disparities in a dyad. The second dummy was a systemic variable denoting those years in which a hegemonic power, in order to test whether an uneven distribution of power in this form increased or decreased the general likelihood of war breaking out in Europe.

Material capabilities and domestic economic performance presumably also had some impact on great powers' willingness to go to war with one another, and likely influenced marriage choices by influencing the power and prestige of different dynasties. Thus, an effort was also made to include some measure of these effects in my analysis. Unfortunately, the lack of detailed and reliable historical records made any estimates necessarily rough. Acemoglu et al. 2005 provide estimates for the GDP, population, rates of urbanization, and the level of constraint on the executive for each of the great powers, but for most of the early modern periods these figures are only estimated for each century of observation. In the absence of more reliable data, these estimates were used for the start of each century, and the intervening time was derived through linear interpolation.<sup>93</sup> Because observations were dyadic, tests were conducted using two estimates derived from the difference between both great powers' characteristics and the average of both states, respectively. All time-dependent controls were lagged by one year. Finally, several straightforward dummy variables were constructed to estimate other possible explanations for any observed correlations between violence and kinship. Among the most important of these was a dummy for states with two different dominant religions – a crucial test, given that religious differences were often a significant barrier to pursuing marriage alliances.<sup>94</sup> The only great power to experience a shift in the religion of the ruling dynasty during this period was England and the United Kingdom, which was ruled by Catholic monarchs during the periods 1495-1533, 1554-1558, and 1686-1688, and was otherwise Protestant. Other potential

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<sup>90</sup> Acemoglu et al. 2005.

<sup>91</sup> Waltz 1993.

<sup>92</sup> They define a global hegemon as any state that possesses one third or more of the total military capability in the great power state system.

<sup>93</sup> Because executive constraint was coded on an integer scale, for this variable I instead opted to extend observations forward from the most recent coded value until a change in estimated constraint was recorded.

<sup>94</sup> Religion was also, of course, a significant driver of conflict in the era, though it may have had a consistent influence primarily in civil wars and conflicts between small states of the era, as in the cascade of violence that exploded into the Thirty Years War or in the French Wars of Religion. Internationally, the presence of prominent great power alliances that spanned sects somewhat clouds the religious dimensions of violence. For more on this topic, see Kaplan 2009.



confounding variables tested via dummies included whether different ruler sex impacted the likelihood of war between great powers, and whether specific powerful dynasties like the Bourbons and Habsburgs<sup>95</sup> were more likely to engage in war than were their peers. While tensions between monarchical and republican governments were not yet as pronounced as they would be in the period following the French Revolution, and while republics themselves had arguably more prominent dynastic tendencies during this period, it was certainly plausible that republican governments may impact any observed relationship between kinship and interstate warfare, and so a dummy for any dyad containing at least one republic was also included in tests.<sup>96</sup>

### *Section III* *Results*

Presented in the following section are the statistical tests analyzing the correlation between different measures of kin relationships across ruler-dyads and the outbreak of wars during the early modern period in Europe. All models are logistic cross-sectional time series regressions with random effects, save for the Model 15 which tests the impact of using fixed effects instead. In all cases, the units of observation were country-dyad-years, while the dependent variable of interest was onset of warfare between the two members of the dyad. Models 1 through 5 offer a series of tests examining the impact of different measures of relatedness and variant sampling choices. These tests show that such variants nonetheless depict a consistent relationship between dependent and independent variables. This relationship can be summarized as follows: there is extremely strong evidence that shared patrilineal dynasty is correlated with reduced conflict, and that general relatedness is tied to increased conflict, and weak evidence that recent dynastic marriages may be associated with lessened conflict. I conclude that these results are most consistent with a constructivist interpretation of dynastic conflict. Models 6 through 8 then modify this model slightly by showing a possible curvilinear effect associated with my coefficient of relatedness estimate. Based on these results, I include this squared term in subsequent models, though its inclusion or exclusion does not radically alter results. In the remaining Models 9 through 15, I test alternative explanations, and demonstrate that none of these other variables significantly diminish the observed correlations between dimensions of kinship and onset of wars between dynasties.

Model 1 depicts a basic plausibility test, including only my 3 core kinship variables along with controls for temporal dependence. The three kinship variables show a set of relationships that will remain broadly consistent for the rest of the analysis. First, shared patrilineal dynasties are strongly correlated to reduced risk of warfare, significant to 0.01 level. This is immediately suggestive of a dynamic where constructivist mechanisms are highly influential. As readers will recall, I argued that essentialist arguments would suggest that shared patrilineal dynasties would likely have weak or no effects independent of general relatedness, and strict instrumentalism potentially predicts that conflict might increase among members of the same dynasty when other effects of relatedness are controlled for. My second variable measures this more general level of shared ancestry. I've proposed several possible indicators for this dimension of kinship, but begin here

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<sup>95</sup> For the purposes of this dummy variable, I consider Maria Theresa of Austria to be the final Habsburg monarch. Her sons, coming from a new patrilineage, are instead categorized as the first emperors from the house of Habsburg-Lorraine.

<sup>96</sup> No interaction effects were found, for any of the models described below.

**Table 3.2: Relatedness and European Great Power War Onset, 1495-1791**

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Shared Patrilineal Dynasty	-5.472** (1.978)	-5.487** (1.797)	-4.758*** (1.005)	-4.086*** (1.209)	
Relatedness (Coefficient of Relatedness)	0.054** (0.017)	0.056*** (0.014)			0.058*** (0.014)
Relatedness (Negative Descent Linkage)			0.304*** (0.077)		
Relatedness Dummy (Less Than 8 Links)				0.795** (0.293)	
Fractional Year Count Since Last Wedding	-2.92 † (1.669)	-3.633* (1.68)	-3.733* (1.684)	-3.01* (1.513)	-3.641* (1.511)
Both Atlantic Naval Powers		2.178*** (0.456)	2.114*** (0.475)	2.005*** (0.486)	2.16*** (0.46)
Shared Border		0.9** (0.298)	0.907** (0.297)	0.938** (0.314)	0.863** (0.297)
First Observation Dummy	5.373*** (1.04)	5.596*** (1.007)	5.443*** (1.005)	5.446*** (1.0)	5.555*** (1.016)
Year Splines	X	X	X	X	X
Peace Count Splines	X	X	X	X	X
Country Dummies		X	X	X	X
Constant	9.644 (14.744)	7.545 (13.725)	7.562 (14.3)	2.039 (15.415)	7.014 (13.153)
Observations	3132	3132	3132	3132	2894

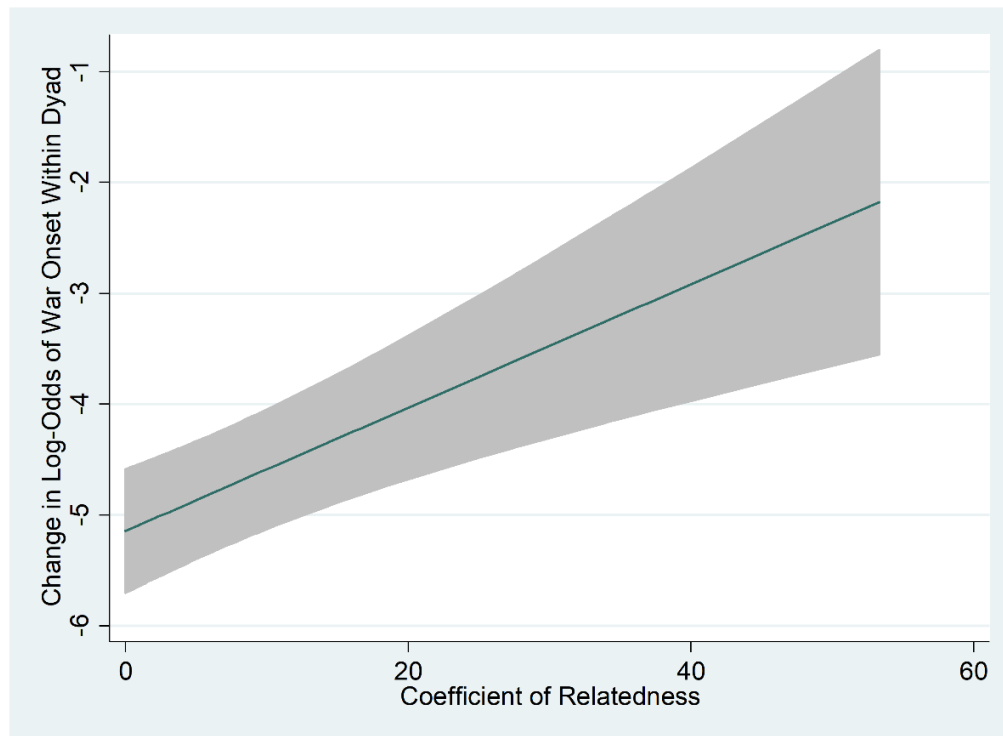
†  $p \leq 0.1$ , \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$  ; Clustered Robust Standard Errors in parentheses  
 “X” signifies control variables included in the model but omitted from table for space

with the coefficient of relatedness, which is the measure most commonly used in the biological sciences and which most accurately captures the totality of ancestral ties. With this measure, we see that a higher coefficient of relatedness – which corresponds to closer genetic relatedness – is significantly correlated to a higher likelihood of conflict between rulers at 0.01 level. This again is strongly indicative of constructivist and sociological mechanisms, since both instrumentalism and essentialism would generally predict that relatedness tends to improve cooperation. Finally, Model 1 shows the fractional count since the most recent wedding between sovereigns’ dynasties fits the direction predicted by all three theories – with recent marriages correlating with reduced likelihood of conflict – but that the effect is only strong enough to reach the 0.1 suggestive level. This may imply that inter-dynastic weddings were only mildly effective at reducing the likelihood of war; alternately, weddings may have had a stronger impact, but my decision to simulate that impact with a simple fraction may be a poor method of estimating that impact. Along with year and peace count splines, this model also includes a first observation dummy, which as expected is highly correlated with higher likelihood of conflict.

Model 2 expands on Model 1 by including the control variables that proved consistently significant in preliminary testing. Most of the proposed controls described in the previous section did not prove reliably significant and were excluded from most tests to avoid unintentionally

impacting my primary variables of interest. Of the controls that remain, by far the most significant is the dummy for dyads in which both states were Atlantic naval powers. Unsurprisingly, given the powerful rivalries over expanding naval trade colony acquisition during this period, this dummy variable correlates to higher likelihood of war at the 0.001 level. Dyads that shared a border were also more likely to experience war, significant at the 0.05 level. Country dummies were also included in this and subsequent models, although the individual results are not depicted to conserve space. As is clear from Table 3.2, the results from Model 1 remain extremely consistent after inclusion of these controls. The only major change is that the fractional wedding count has become significant at the 0.05 level, while the coefficient of relatedness is now significant at the 0.001 level. I visually depict the predicted effect of changes in each of my kinship variables in Figures 3.2 through 3.4.<sup>97</sup> It should be noted that the Fractional Wedding Count displayed in Figure 3.3 exhibits extreme variation in its margin of errors across the range of observed units.<sup>98</sup> This reinforces the need to be cautious when describing the observed effects of a recent marriage, since the variable's apparent significance may be biased due to heteroskedasticity. Out of caution, all models described in this chapter

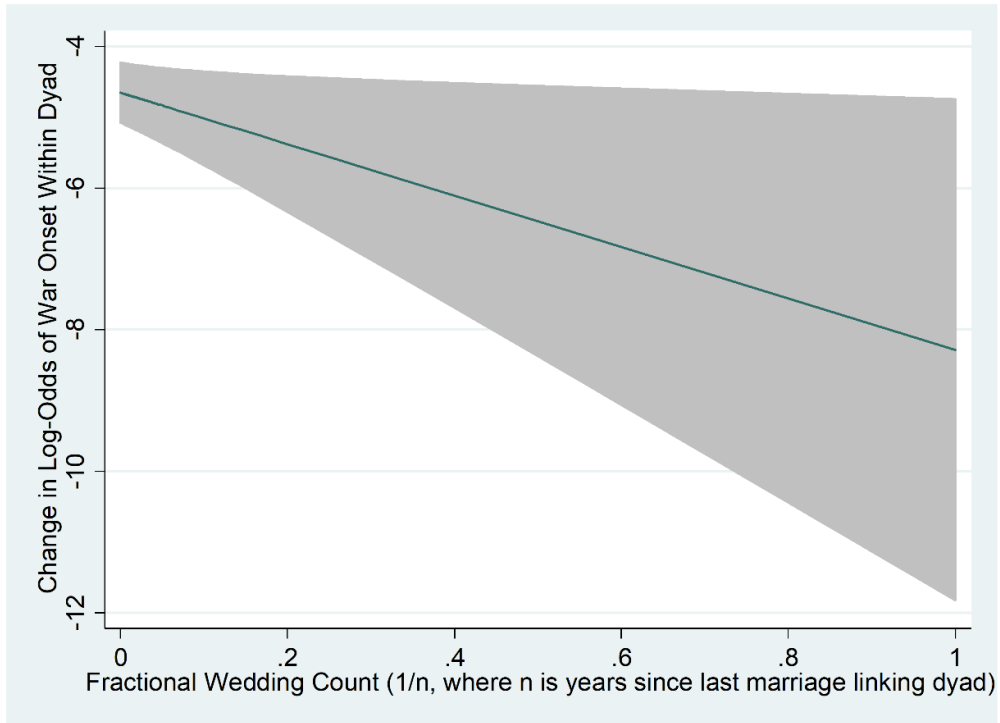
**Figure 3.2**



<sup>97</sup> Margins depict 95% confidence intervals for all figures.

<sup>98</sup> This may be the product of my decision to estimate the effect of recent weddings as a fraction, since the entire range of 0.5 to 1 along the x-axis comprises the small range of 2 years after a wedding. As a result, there are far fewer observations on the right-hand side of the graph, and correspondingly higher uncertainty about the effect of a change in those areas. As previously noted, preliminary tests using other formulae to indicate a recent marriage did not produce robustly significant correlation with conflict onset, so at present this fractional count appears to still represent the best approach to estimating the effect, if any, of marriage alliances on subsequent conflicts.

**Figure 3.3**



**Figure 3.4**

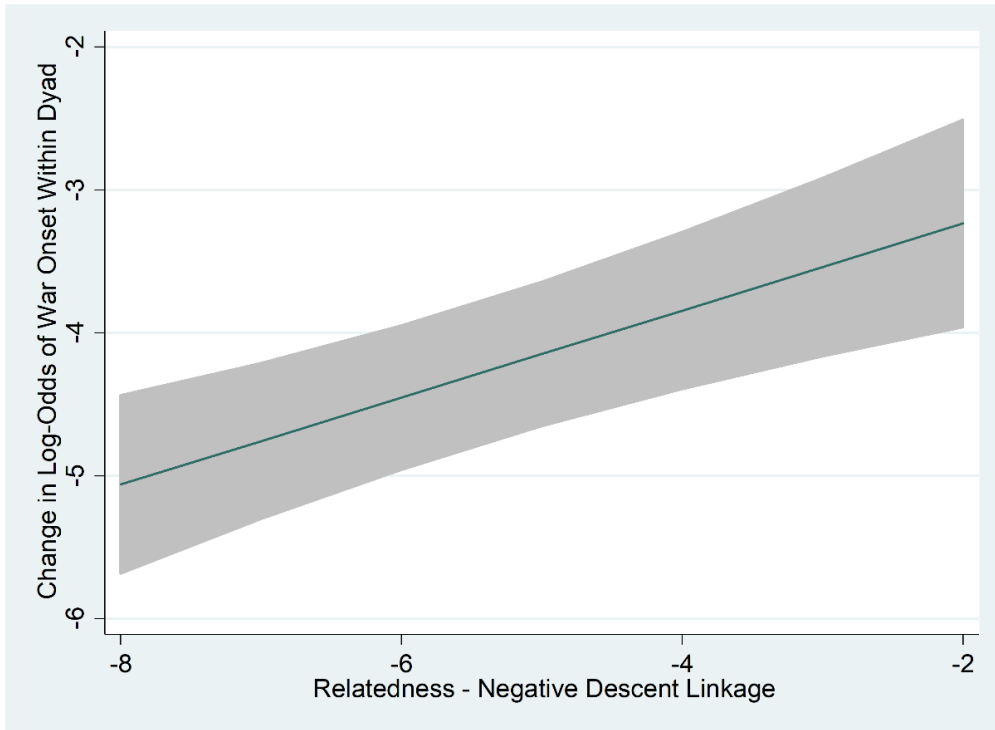


were also tested while omitting the fractional wedding count variability, and I found that changes from this omission were rare and did not substantially change conclusions derived from any of these models. Along with the variable's lack of significance in the prior model, these issues further reinforce my conclusion that evidence supporting marriage alliances' pacifying effects is ambiguous and relatively weak.

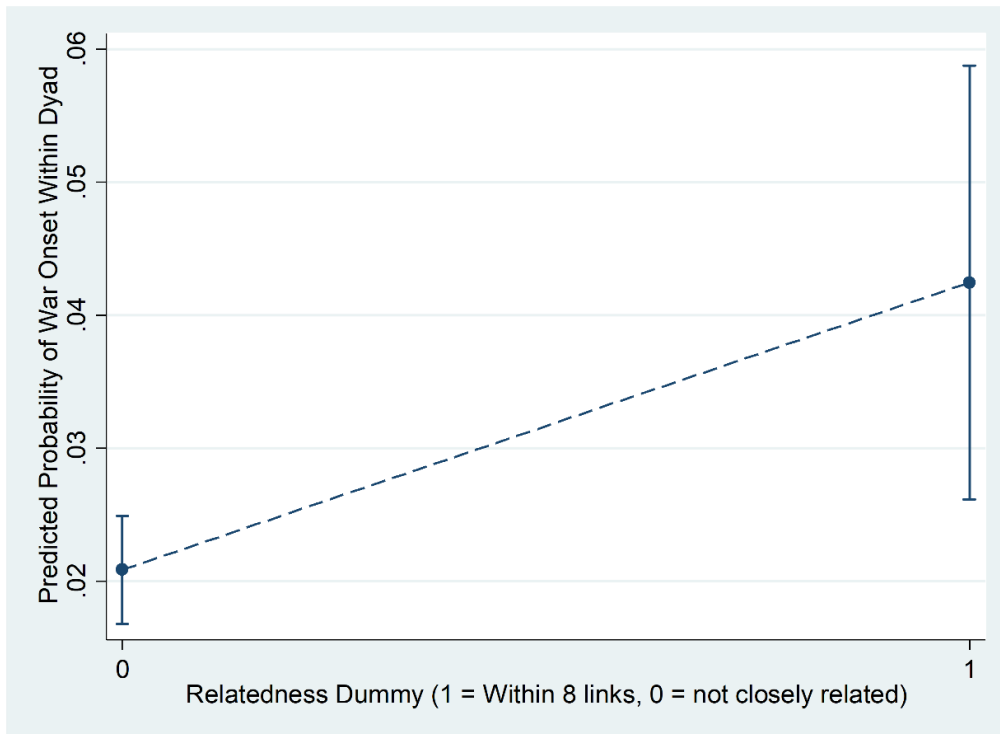
In Model 3, I begin to test the robustness of my results by substituting a separate measure of relatedness, which I refer to as negative descent linkage. As previously explained, my main measure of relatedness – the coefficient of relatedness – estimates the overall genetic similarity between individuals given a specified number of ancestor generations. This makes it a reliable measure for many purposes, but some may argue that it does not accurately reflect how most individuals understand relatedness. Even in the highly intermarried courts of Europe, where monarchs were often related to their peers in a number of different ways due to extensive inbreeding of family lines, sovereigns may have been less influenced by the sum totality of their familial relationships, and instead may have simply been concerned with their closest shared ancestry with a peer. For example, rulers may have treated their 1<sup>st</sup> cousins fairly similarly, without regard to how many overlapping past relatives they shared in common with some but not others. Because inbreeding can substantially influence the coefficient of relatedness between individuals, it's plausible that it may create radically different estimates than a measure focusing only on closest common ancestry. Model 3 tests the impact of using this alternate estimator instead. As depicted in Table 3.2, it shows comparable significance to the coefficient of relatedness and its inclusion increases the significance of shared patriline to 0.001 level. These results offer reassurance that the apparent correlation between closer relatedness and higher conflict is robust to alternate ways of estimating relatedness. The predicted effect of changes in this variable are depicted in Figure 3.5, below.

Model 4 examines a third alternative conception of relatedness, one that conceptualizes relatedness dichotomously such that individuals are either considered to be relatives or not, without any further hierarchy within these two categories. This is a particularly useful test for instrumentalist arguments, since it avoids further assumptions regarding whether cooperation should primarily be observed among close kin or among more distant relations. Instead, a dummy variable merely tests whether individuals overall tended to show more cooperative relationships with kin rather than non-kin. Any particular cut-off for defining who is or is not kin is necessarily arbitrary and subject to debate, but here I rely on my previous negative descent linkage variable to assign a value of "1" to any dyads with a linkage of 7 or fewer generational links between the members. This model shows results comparable to those of prior tests, with all other variables retaining the same direction and level of significance as observed in Model 3, and with the relatedness dummy showing significant correlation with higher levels of conflict at the 0.01 level. This indicates that, using an admittedly arbitrary cut-off point, it is reasonable to say that mutual relatedness is correlated with higher rates of war onset than would be predicted for unrelated heads of state. This once again challenges typical instrumentalist assumptions regarding the benefits of cooperation across kin networks – cooperation across kin networks appears to have been primarily restricted to the culturally prioritized core dynasty of the ruler, while the broader kin network appears to have been treated more as rival than as assets for mutual gain. I depict the change of predicted effect from a designation of "kin" vs. "non-kin" in Figure 3.6.

**Figure 3.5**



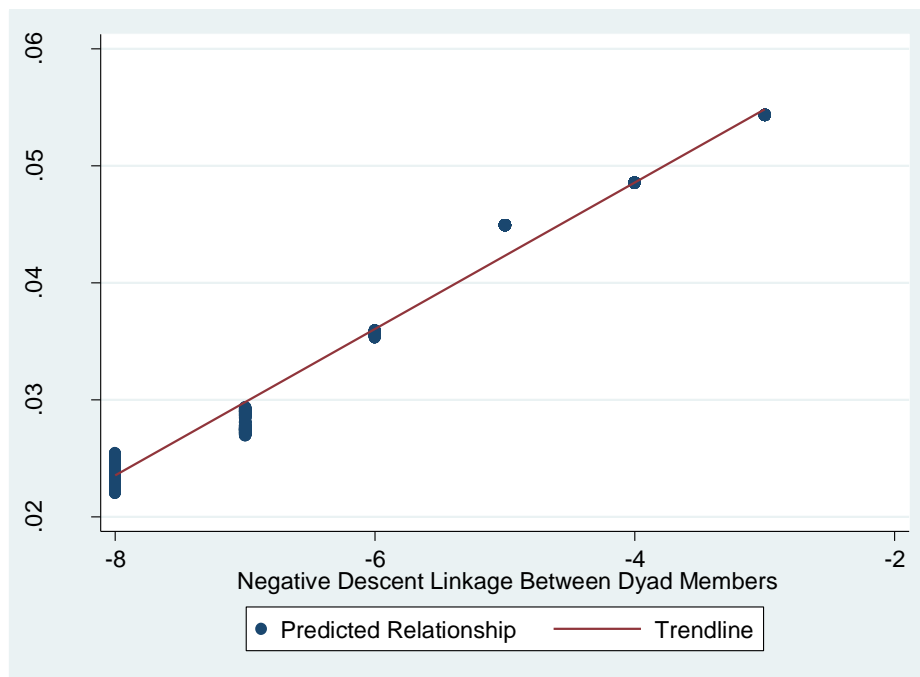
**Figure 3.6**



One potential critique that might be raised over the preceding models is in my inclusion of dyads with shared dynasties in sample of observations. Wars between shared patrilineal dynasties are extremely rare; only one war, the War of the Quadruple Alliance was observed to have been fought with two great powers of the same dynasty on opposite sides of the war.<sup>99</sup> Inclusion of a variable with so little variation thus introduces concerns over problematic leverage issues. It may thus be more prudent to drop such dyads entirely and only observe the relationship between rulers that were not from the same dynasty. Model 5 tests this premise by returning to the variables included in Model 2 and dropping all shared dynasty dyads. The results suggest that limiting the sample in this way has little impact on results. None of the variables show any change of significance in the transition from Model 2 to Model 4.<sup>100</sup>

Models 1 through 5 present a relatively stable set of results, all consistent with what was first described for Model 1: shared dynasty (when included) correlates to low conflict, recent weddings show weak-but-consistent evidence of some potential correlation with lowered risk of conflict, and higher relatedness – after controlling for other effects – is consistently correlated with higher likelihood of violence onset. All of these are strongly consistent with constructivist

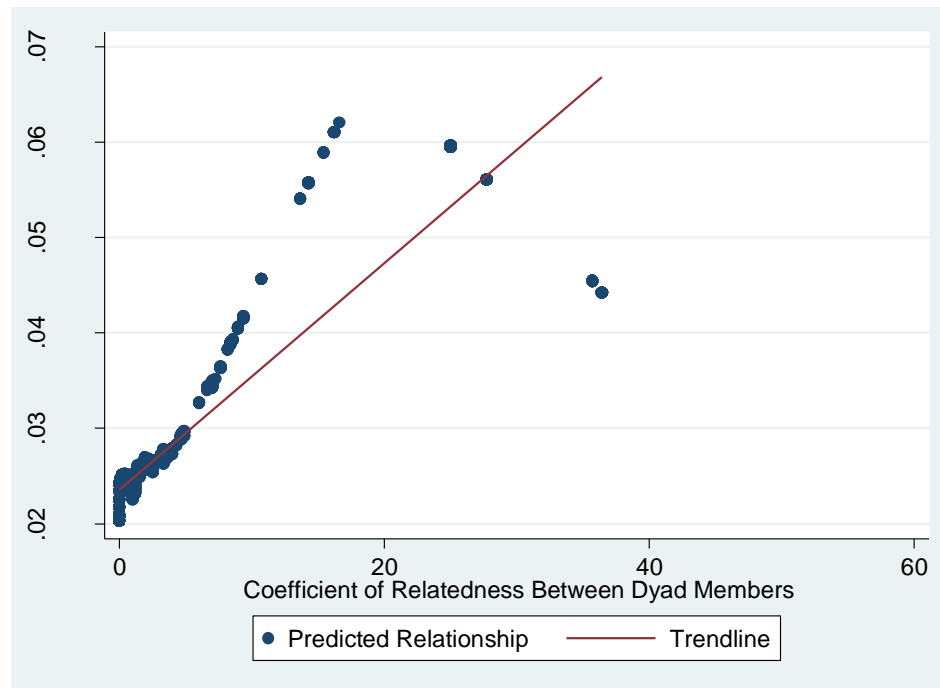
**Figure 3.7**  
**LOESS Based on Negative Descent Linkage**



<sup>99</sup> And in this case, Louis XV was still a young child whose court was dominated by the foreign members of the quadruple alliance (the United Kingdom, Austria, and the Netherlands) whose primary goal was preventing an alliance between Spain and France. The Spanish war against these forces was certainly self-serving – and Spain’s Philip V doubtless sought to better his position should his nephew Louis suffer death at a young age – but does not clearly fit into a narrative of direct animosity between members of the same dynasty.

<sup>100</sup> If negative descent linkage is included in place of coefficient of relatedness, all variables retain their same level of significance. This includes the negative descent linkage variable itself, which remains significant at the 0.01 level.

**Figure 3.8**  
**LOESS Based on Coefficient of Relatedness**



predictions and seem to falsify key predictions from the other two approaches. But there is some reason to believe that relatedness may not have an entirely linear relationship with war onset. In Figures 3.7 and 3.8, I present a scatterplot with locally weighted smoothing (LOESS) to show the relationship between likelihood of conflict and either negative descent linkage (in Figure 3.7) or the coefficient of relatedness (in Figure 3.8).<sup>101</sup> Figure 3.7 shows a clear linear relationship. The figures on the left side of the scatterplot (i.e. dyads with the lowest observed relatedness, requiring 8 or more links needed to find a common ancestor) also show the lowest likelihood of war onset. As the number of links diminishes – and the relatedness between individuals rises – to the right of the screen, probability of war onset increases consistently. But the results are more ambiguous when we observe Figure 3.8 and its depiction of the more comprehensive coefficient of relatedness. Here, we see that the right side of the scatterplot, with dyads with the highest level of relatedness, are associated with an eventual decline in violence – suggesting a possible curvilinear effect for the most closely related rulers. This peak probability of violence (estimated based on Models 6 and 7, described below) occurs at a coefficient of approximately 22. For comparison, the coefficient of relatedness between two first cousins is 12.5, while the relatedness between a grandparent and grandchild, an aunt/uncle and a niece/nephew, or between half-siblings is 25. The apparent decline is thus only observed among extremely close relatives – and even there, is only estimated as mitigating some of the violence predicted among related rulers. The curvilinear effect on predicted likelihood of violence isn't predicted to reach a level

<sup>101</sup> These figures depict simple correlation without the inclusion of other control variables and omit dyads that share the same patrilineal dynasty; in other words, they are based off the sub-sample presented in Model 5.



equivalent to that between unrelated kin until a coefficient value around 45 – where 50 is the coefficient between a parent and child or between full siblings.

There are reasons to be skeptical of this observed curvilinear effect. Not only is it not reflected in my alternative measure of relatedness, but the curvilinearity is itself a product of a small number of potential outliers. There is thus a danger of potentially overfitting the data; only six ruler-dyads show a level of relatedness past the point of inversion. And of those six, at least one is an ambiguous case – the dyad of James II of England and William III of Orange, following Levy’s coding, shows no wars occurring between the two. But this is a questionable observed data, and inclusion of a squared term does not radically change any results for subsequent tests.

Models 6 and 7 (presented on Table 3.3, below) duplicate Models 2 and 5, respectively, but simulate a curvilinear effect for relatedness by including a squared term for the coefficient of relatedness. Comparing Model 6 to its template, Model 2, we see that inclusion of a squared term categorization, since William notably led a successful (though remarkably casualty-light) invasion of Britain to unseat his unpopular uncle and father-in-law James. Nevertheless, this apparent curvilinear relationship between relatedness and war onset does appear to match the does further raise the significance of the coefficient of relatedness – the linear term for this variable rises to the 0.001 level of significance, while the squared term itself is also significant at the 0.001 level. Both terms follow the predicted direction: increased relatedness tends to raise the likelihood of violence until extremely close levels of genetic similarity, at which point the risk of violence begins to decline from its peak. The fractional wedding count also substantially increases in significance to the 0.01 level, consistent with the hypothesis that recent dynastic weddings are correlated to lowered risks of warfare. Shared patrilineal dynasty also rises from 0.01 to the 0.001 level of significance. Model 7 also fits closely with its template, Model 5: the linear term for the coefficient of relatedness stays at the 0.001 level, while the added squared term is significant at the same level. Once again, the wedding count shows a rise in significance to 0.01 level. I thus conclude, despite some lingering concerns over the risk of overfitting, that the squared term for the coefficient of relatedness does not radically alter results and does appear to match the observed data more closely than a linear estimate. As such, subsequent models will rely on Model 6 as the basis for testing alternate explanations and further possible controls. Figure 3.9, below, offers a visualization of the new curvilinear estimate of relatedness’ relationship with the probability of war onset.

In Model 8, I consider the possibility that my observed effects are being biased by inclusion of dyads that don’t demonstrate any observed kin relationship whatsoever. If interactions between heads of state with kin ties to one another are radically different from those with no binding kin ties, then it’s possible that inclusion of the latter category is biasing results in unexpected ways. To test for this possibility, an alternate sample was constructed that dropped out all dyads in which no common ancestors were observed in the six-generation genealogies of both rulers – in other words, the sample for Model 8 includes only those ruler-dyads that showed at least one common ancestor between them in their six-generation genealogies.<sup>102</sup> Comparing the results here to Model 6, we see almost no changes despite a significant reduction in the total

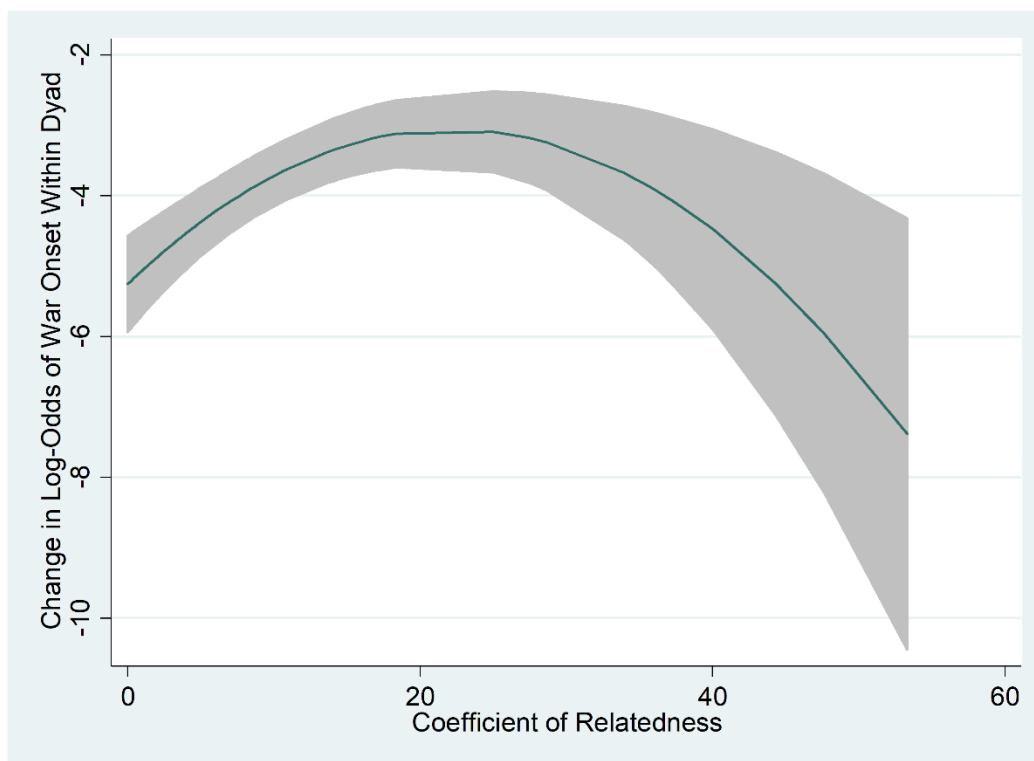
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<sup>102</sup> The results depicted in Table 3.3 use my primary war onset estimate. This means that monarchs coming into power in the midst of a war are not coded as entering hostilities against one another, even if subsequent fronts of conflict are opened during uninterrupted fighting. To test the effect of this assumption, I also created an alternate onset estimate that codes a new onset for dyads that enter into observation already at war. Use of either onset does not substantially change the results described in Model 8.

**Table 3.3: Curvilinear Estimate of Relatedness and Alternate Explanations for War Onset**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Model 6</u>	<u>Model 7</u>	<u>Model 8</u>	<u>Model 9</u>	<u>Model 10</u>	<u>Model 11</u>
Shared Patrilineal Dynasty	-3.891*** (0.675)		-4.713*** (0.715)	-4.079*** (0.903)	-3.899*** (0.618)	-3.82*** (0.655)
Relatedness (Coefficient of Relatedness)	0.198*** (0.036)	0.197*** (0.041)	0.223*** (0.043)	0.226*** (0.041)	0.205*** (0.032)	0.227*** (0.041)
Coefficient of Relatedness Squared	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)
Fractional Year Count Since Last Wedding	-4.336** (1.619)	-4.073** (1.402)	-5.403** (1.768)	-4.996 † (2.57)	-4.519* (1.791)	-4.13** (1.501)
Both Atlantic Naval Powers	2.279*** (0.459)	2.238*** (0.456)	2.494*** (0.331)	2.271*** (0.464)	2.448*** (0.505)	1.945*** (0.433)
Shared Border	1.005** (0.318)	0.973** (0.315)	1.13*** (0.269)	1.06*** (0.321)	1.059** (0.339)	1.09** (0.344)
First Observation Dummy	5.382*** (0.981)	5.374*** (1.006)	6.321*** (0.993)	5.38*** (0.931)	5.302*** (0.999)	5.344*** (0.939)
Shared Matrilateral House				0.28 (0.3)		
Cross Mother-Father Shared House				-0.913* (0.458)		
Spouse from Other Ruler's Dynasty				0.527 (0.467)		
Number of Great Powers					0.605 (0.536)	
Hegemonic System					-0.301 (0.37)	
Leading Power vs. Weaker Power					-0.188 (0.246)	
Lagged Difference in GDP per Capita						0.001 (0.001)
Lagged Log of Diff. in Population						-0.444 † (0.258)
Lagged Diff. in Executive Constraint						0.088 (0.203)
Lagged Diff. in Urbanization Rate						-4.886 † (2.584)
Year Splines	X	X	X	X	X	X
Peace Count Splines	X	X	X	X	X	X
Country Dummies	X	X	X	X	X	X
Constant	4.596 (14.58)	3.884 (14.172)	1.152 (12.444)	6.442 (16.736)	3.907 (15.006)	y
Observations	3132	2894	2187	3132	3132	3132

†  $p \leq 0.1$ , \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$  ; Clustered Robust Standard Errors in parentheses  
 "X" signifies control variables included in the model but omitted from table for space

**Figure 3.9**

number of observation (and thus the statistical power of the test). The most notable change in results is that the bordering states dummy shows a slight rise in significance. I thus conclude that, whether observing all great power sovereigns or only those with a known relationship to one another, the effects of kinship appear to be very consistent.

In subsequent models, I test whether alternative variables may better explain the observed correlation between interstate wars and the dynastic ties between their rulers. Model 9 tests other possible dimensions of kinship that weren't included in my core model. I have, for example, followed the cultural norms of the time-period in emphasizing the patrilineal house of each head of state without accounting for the ruler's mother's house of origin. This reflects the heavy bias toward the father's family in early modern European aristocracies, but it is worthwhile to test this assumption and determine whether a mother's family had more influence than predicted. The shared matrilineal house variable is a dummy demarcating whether both rulers had mothers that came from the same family, while "cross mother-father shared house" denotes instances where one ruler's mother came from the house of the other ruler's father.<sup>103</sup> A third dummy was also included to test an alternate estimator for the effect of marriages – a dummy signifying cases in which at least one head of state had a living spouse from the other ruler's family. Of these three variables, only one – cross mother-father shared house – demonstrates significance, and this result is relatively fragile, disappearing if alternate indicators for relatedness are used. The result,

<sup>103</sup> In some situations all three relevant dummies (shared patriline, shared matrilineal house, and shared cross-mother-father house) are all coded "1" simultaneously. This is the case, for example, for Habsburg monarchs that practiced the tradition of marrying a cousin or niece from a foreign branch of the Habsburg dynasty.

though weak, does reinforce the importance of the patriline, suggesting that a minor peace dividend did emerge through maternal family lines – but only so long as one of the two rulers was related through their father to the other ruler’s mother. Heads of state connected solely through maternal relationships, or to a rival dynasty through a still-living spouse, showed no significant tendency to engage in fewer wars against each other.

Model 10 tests whether variables describing the distribution of power within the international system may impact observed results. Some of the most powerful European heads of state, such as Louis XIV of France, also possessed significant familial ties to rival sovereigns. Furthermore, a state’s power influenced the long-term likelihood of kinship ties developing between their ruling families – powerful states tended to have better access to prestigious marriage matches than did weak and peripheral states. It is thus possible that my observations are being distorted by the effect of power variance between state actors. I include a variable indicating the number of extant great powers in a given year to test the proposition that a more multipolar system may be more prone to conflict, and to account for the possibility that a system with fewer powers may also tend to see more substantial intermarriages between the relatively small number of comparably powerful states. The hegemonic system dummy is another systemic variable coded by year, with a designation of “1” for those years in which a single state held hegemonic power over its rivals. The leading power vs. weak power dummy, by contrast, is a dyad-level variable, marking those dyads in which one state was either the dominant or hegemonic power, and the other state in the dyad was not. None of these variables prove significant, contrary to the expectations of theories surrounding the distribution of power between states. More importantly, their inclusion does not weaken the observed effects of any kinship variables.

In Models 11 and 12 (spanning Tables 3.3 and 3.4), I test the effect of individual state-level conditions on the likelihood of war. Because each observation in these tests comprises a dyad of states, variables had to be adapted from individual-level observations. Model 11 shows the average between both states, while Model 12 is based on the difference between the two states. For both models, the individual characteristics comprised the GDP per capita, population size, urbanization rates, and constraint on executive for each of these states. Constraint on executive, in particular, was of interest because it is reasonable to speculate that such constraint may have an impact on dynastic relations between rulers. For example, we might posit that sovereigns have a personal incentive to either support or oppose their own kin, but that strong or weak constraints on their power influence their capacity to shape foreign policy based on such personalistic concerns. However, as seen in both Models 10 and 11, there is no clear statistical evidence suggesting that constraint influenced interstate violence; though not pictured in the table, interaction effects involving each of these variables were tested but similarly showed no signs of significance. There is some minor evidence that discrepancies in population and urbanization may have lowered violence, which would most plausibly suggest that weak states tend to find ways to mollify strong states and avoid violence, but evidence for this is fairly weak. It should be noted that estimates for all of these variables are necessarily extremely rough, given the lack of detailed records from this historical time period. As such, it is quite plausible to theorize that more precise data could reveal that some variables, such as economic performance, had a clearer correlation with interstate belligerence. But based on the currently available data, I must conclude that there’s no strong evidence regarding the relationship between individual state characteristics and war in early modern Europe. Most importantly, inclusion of these economic

and political effects does not appear to change or diminish ruler kinship effects, which remain comparably significant in these models.

Models 13 and 14 similarly test alternate control variables, in both cases focusing on traits of the ruling dynasty, regime, or individual ruler. In Model 13, I tested whether the results I had observed might have been skewed by either the Bourbon or Habsburg families – both dynasties being ones that spanned multiple countries during the period of observations, and that ruled states powerful enough to conceivably covary with both high relatedness and high levels of conflict. As described in the table, none of the results suggest that either dynasty is driving observed results. Model 13 also tests the impact of a republic dummy, to determine whether republics, whose leaders might plausibly have been less dynastic than those of monarchies,<sup>104</sup> may be skewing observed results in unexpected ways. This variable, too, proved insignificant, as did tests of an interaction effect between this republic dummy and estimates of relatedness. All kinship variables remain significant as well despite inclusion of these potential alternative explanations. Model 14 tests whether rulers with different religions, or those of the opposite sex, may have been more or less likely to go to war, and if so whether this explains the apparent ties between relatedness and war onset. Both variables prove similarly insignificant, and so too do tests for interaction effects. This suggests that being of the opposite sex did not particularly influence warfare between sovereigns, even though it potentially opened more opportunities for a marriage alliance between rulers. The lack of an effect likely stems from the rarity of inter-sovereign marriages – which tended to be threatening to domestic courts wary of too much foreign influence – as well as the reality that even rulers of the same sex tended to have appropriate relatives or client families from which a marriage union could be built if desired. The lack of any impact from religious differences may at first appear surprising, given the unquestionable significance of religious motivations for conflicts of the era. But as critical as religion could be in instigating violence, alliances at the international level often necessitated overlooking religion in service to geopolitics. Among the most prominent rivalries of the period, after all, were those between the Catholic dynasties of Habsburg and Bourbon, as well as the repeated hostilities between the Protestant Netherlands and United Kingdom. Meanwhile, critical alliances could easily span religious lines, such as alliances between Protestant Prussia and Orthodox Russia, between England and Catholic Portugal, and French alliances with Protestant Sweden and Scotland and even the Muslim Ottomans. Religion did unquestionably have an impact on how closely related rulers were to one another, since marrying a spouse of a different faith often encountered serious obstacles.<sup>105</sup> But the tests presented here suggest that it was these dynastic ties that played a crucial role, with religion only indirectly influencing war onset through its role in marriage selections. Despite the ubiquitous intersections between politics and religion that persisted in all observed states, religious differences proved far less consistent than kinship relationships when it came to determining interstate relationships.

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<sup>104</sup> Though this was not always the case – William III of Orange-Nassau had a particularly illustrious lineage and regularly took advantage of his extensive dynastic ties to some of the most important Protestant families of Europe.

<sup>105</sup> A prominent example of this barrier occurred with the English effort to arrange a “Spanish match.” In this incident, initial negotiations to arrange a marriage between the future Charles I of England and the Spanish infanta Maria Anna collapsed due to widespread public outcry in England against the possibility of a Catholic queen (Redworth 2003). Regressing relatedness on the “different religion” dummy showed a relationship between these two factors significant to the 0.001 level, although actual correlation between the two was only at approximately 50% - potentially because co-religious monarchs weren’t necessarily closely related to one another.

**Table 3.4: Alternate Explanations for War Onset (Continued)**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Model 12</u>	<u>Model 13</u>	<u>Model 14</u>	<u>Model 15</u>
Shared Patrilineal Dynasty	-3.589*** (0.723)	-4.436*** (0.837)	-3.802*** (0.66)	-4.399** (1.387)
Relatedness (Coeff. of Relatedness)	0.21*** (0.035)	0.193*** (0.036)	0.183*** (0.04)	0.217*** (0.063)
Coeff. of Relatedness Squared	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.004*** (0.001)	-0.004*** (0.001)	-0.005** (0.002)
Fractional Year Count Since Last Wedding	-4.186** (1.515)	-4.393** (1.579)	-4.453** (1.598)	-5.308* (2.459)
Both Atlantic Naval Powers	2.466*** (0.502)	2.125*** (0.923)	2.246*** (0.395)	
Shared Border	0.968*** (0.28)	0.984* (0.403)	0.987*** (0.285)	
First Observation Dummy	5.324*** (0.992)	5.438*** (0.923)	5.525*** (1.002)	5.414*** (0.897)
Lagged Average GDP per Capita	0.004 (0.006)			
Lagged Log of Average Population	-0.747 (2.074)			
Lagged Average Exec. Constraint	0.604 (0.559)			
Lagged Average Urbanization Rate	-28.77 (18.584)			
Habsburg Dummy		-0.667 (0.559)		
Bourbon Dummy		-0.52 (0.465)		
Republic Dummy		-0.628 (0.473)		
Different Ruler Religion			-0.276 (0.191)	
Different Ruler Sex			0.444 (0.371)	
Year Splines	X	X	X	X
Peace Count Splines	X	X	X	X
Country Dummies	X	X	X	
Dyad Conditional Fixed Effects				X
Constant	3.796 (18.584)	-0.937 (15.88)	1.925 (15.487)	
Observations	3132	3132	3132	2957

† p ≤ 0.1, \* p ≤ 0.05, \*\* p ≤ 0.01, \*\*\* p ≤ 0.001 ; Clustered Robust Standard Errors in parentheses  
“X” signifies control variables included in the model but omitted from table for space

The models reported above are based on random-effect models to avoid dropping those dyads in which no war onsets were observed and to build an analysis based on both within-case and between-case variation. However, random-effect models do run the risk of including substantial omitted variable bias through comparison across radically different cases. Model 15 thus presents a fixed-effect model, which controls for all between-case variation so that the only effects measured are changes over time within each case. Thus, variables that are time invariant, such as geographical characteristics, are dropped out entirely from the model. Observing the results of a fixed-effects test, kinship variables continue to show results generally consistent with expectations. Shared dynasty continues to show significance, this time at the 0.01 level. The linear estimate for relatedness shows a positive correlation with war onset at the 0.001 level, while the curvilinear term for relatedness is associated with gradually reduced risk of war at the 0.01 level. Finally, recent dynastic marriages are also associated with less war at the 0.05 level of significance. These results suggest that the observed correlations have not been caused by any omitted variables resulting from comparing radically different country-dyads against one another.

Viewed as a whole, the statistical tests described above present an extremely consistent and robust narrative about the relationship between kinship relationships and conflict. Kinship appears to have been closely associated with matters of war and peace in early modern Europe, but this relationship was not a simple unidimensional interaction. Kinship had complex, interweaving elements that encouraged rulers to enter into conflict with some kin, but also to remain extremely loyal to others. The precise nature of this conflict – and in particular, whether we should treat relatedness between rulers as a linear or curvilinear relationship – is somewhat debatable, but the results most consistent with my statistical analysis are summarized in Table 3.5. As this shows, different sub-sets of kin relationships spanned the gamut from those least likely to go to war against one another, to those at highest risk of falling into violence. Relationships that most closely fit with the cultural priorities of the era – those between members of the same patrilineal dynasty – were the least likely to fight against each other. By contrast, those kin with the most culturally ambiguous relationship – those from rival dynasties and just outside the immediate circle of kin – were the most likely to resort to violence. For each of these categories, there is weak evidence supporting the idea that a dynastic marriage often had the temporary effect of reducing tensions. The failure of recent marriage alliances to reliably correlate at significant level with reduced conflict may suggest that dynastic marriages were an unreliable strategy. Alternately, it may suggest that my relatively simply fractional year count is not properly estimating the short-lived peaceful effects of these marriages. Even if we accept that dynastic marriages offered short-term peace-dividends, it stands to reason that in many cases such marriages had the long-term effect of increasing the genealogical ties between these rival dynasties, and thereby potentially increasing the likelihood of war in subsequent generations.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> The fractional count since the most recent wedding correlates to relatedness between monarchs at 22%, and a regressing relatedness along this wedding count variable shows this relationship to be significant to the 0.01 level. The relationship between the two variables was likely complex. To be sure, a recent wedding meant it was more likely that subsequent heirs would be related to both families, but closer relatedness (including through outside families intermarrying with both dynasties) also likely made marriage negotiations more appealing to both sides.

**Table 3.5**  
**Summary of Results Regarding Likelihood of Conflict Among Dynasties**

<b><u>Likelihood of Conflict</u></b>	<b><u>Degree and Form of Relatedness</u></b>
High	Rulers from different dynasties, but with low to moderate levels of relatedness (coefficient of relatedness of 22% or lower – equivalent to the relationship between 1 <sup>st</sup> cousins or further). Within this range, higher levels of relatedness correspond to higher risks of conflict.
Moderate	Rulers from different dynasties, but with an extremely close genetic relationship (coefficient of relatedness of 22% or higher – equivalent to the relationship between a grandparent and grandchild, an uncle/aunt and niece/nephew, or half-siblings). Closer relatedness within this range appears to correlate with lower risks of conflict.
Low	Rulers with no recorded kinship
Very Low	Rulers born into the same dynasty (Habsburgs and Habsburgs, or Bourbons and Bourbons)
Effects of a Recent Marriage Alliance	Potential short-term reduction in the likelihood of war, but evidence for this effect is ambiguous, and marriage may raise the risk that the next generation of rulers will have overlapping and contested ancestral inheritance claims.

**Section IV**  
**Discussion**

Having presented the statistical evidence surrounding the international relations between the interrelated dynasties of Europe, I will now review how well each of the potential theoretical approaches coheres with the observed results. Of the three, essentialism appears to be by far the most divergent from my observed results. Essentialism's primary prediction – that individuals have an evolutionary interest in supporting their genetically similar kin – proves directly contrary to observed results, wherein closer relatedness often tends to be associated with higher violence and competition.<sup>107</sup> The only plausible essentialist explanation for this outcome lies in the curvilinear correlation between violence and relatedness – which, as previously noted, should be

<sup>107</sup> It should be reiterated that this pattern could be consistent in some evolutionary contexts – primarily if conflicts between relatives primarily emerge when monarchs are defending the inheritance of children or other close relatives against more distant kin, or when they stand to gain personal reproductive benefits commensurate with the cost imposed on a relative. A systematic study uncovering such a pattern – for example, that cooperation between related monarchs occurs primarily when one ruler is old and childless – could thus provide greater support for an essentialist analysis.



viewed with some caution given the potential impact of outliers and overfitting. To confirm an essentialist argument regarding dynastic politics, it would be necessary to show that the extensive fighting between moderately related rulers was overwhelmingly in service to protecting the rights of even more closely related kin. However, even with the apparent drop in violence I observe among extremely closely related rulers, the curvilinear effect seems merely to moderate competitive pressures, rather than counteracting them entirely. Even kin as closely related as an uncle and nephew, or a grandparent and grandchild, still demonstrate a higher predicted probability of entering a war against one another than they would be with an entirely unrelated ruler. Instead of genetic similarity, the cooperative impulses to support family appears to heavily prioritize only a small subset of genetic relatives – those sharing the same patrilineal family name and those within the sovereign's extremely close family.

An essentialist response might note that in extended periods of observation, rulers were not necessarily the primary decision-makers, and it may have been the case that the various advisers, regents, or parliaments that influenced foreign policy did not allow rulers to perfectly pursue their genetic imperatives.<sup>108</sup> It's possible that further investigation would show that in periods where sovereigns had more personal power, cooperation with kin tended to be more widespread. Such an argument is compelling, and would suggest that less formalized dynastic systems, in which dynasts themselves are more directly in control of decision-making, might follow essentialist expectations more closely.<sup>109</sup> But even if true, such a conclusion still reinforces the limitations of the essentialist approach, and the caution with which we should pursue this theoretical lens. If even institutions as explicitly dynastic as European monarchies were still too institutionalized to follow evolutionary pressures, this suggests that analysts should be extremely cautious in relying heavily on essentialist predictions in other political environments. This is not to say that evolutionary psychology had no impact on dynastic behavior. But the evidence presented here does suggest that scholars should be cautious in assuming that evolutionary psychology can easily adapt to institutional behavior far-removed from the conditions that once shaped human evolution.<sup>110</sup> For most of human evolutionary history, humans were largely organized into hunter-gatherer clans of extended kin, and individuals' social community and extended kin networks were likely sufficiently convergent that humans did not need to develop a strong ability to differentiate beyond closely related kin – especially since there was ample incentive for humans to cooperate with even unrelated individuals for mutual survival.<sup>111</sup>

My results here similarly cast doubt on strict instrumentalist theories of kin cooperation, though in this case we should perhaps be more cautious in drawing overly broad implications. A staunchly instrumentalist view of kinship would suggest that highly self-interested rulers will often find reasons to cooperate within their kin network because kin benefit from reputation

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<sup>108</sup> This would effectively suggest that monarchies suffer from a principal-agent problem, where advisors and bureaucracies fail to loyally implement the evolution-based preferences of their monarch. Miller 2005 reviews the use of this concept in political science, and analysis of the concept's relevance to kinship is a widely discussed topic in studies of family firms (Karra et al. 2006, Chua et al. 2009, and Le Breton Miller & Miller 2009).

<sup>109</sup> While perfectly plausible, I see no particular trend in the cases described here to suggest that this was the case. Louis XIV, for example, was the archetypal absolute monarch but was also ruthless in exploiting kinship ties for gain at the expense of his relatives.

<sup>110</sup> Discussion regarding how evolutionarily derived instincts may prove counterproductive when interacting with complex modern social institutions can be found in Nicholson 1997, Richerson & Boyd 2005, and Van Vugt & Ronay 2013.

<sup>111</sup> Trivers 1971.

networks, long time horizons, and shared interests that make them highly effective at resolving collective action problems. However, these incentives for cooperation are purely self-serving and will be most strained among the kin that gain more from defection or free-riding. The results presented here do not closely match these assumptions. In general, as shown in Model 4, kinship among European heads of state was not associated with greater cooperation, but rather with higher rates of conflict. My later curvilinear results are even less compatible with this strict approach to instrumentalism. The results of my regression show that rulers cooperated most with close family and with members of their male patriline. Conversely, heads of state were most prone to conflict with their mid-level kin. If rational rulers merely weighed the benefits of cooperative kin networks against the payoffs from betraying their most direct competitors for inheritance gains, we would expect a curvilinear relationship between relatedness and warfare to display the inverse of these results. Close kin, along with members of the same patriline, would likely be frequent competitors, while intermediately related kin a few steps removed from the line of succession would be expected to show the lowest levels of conflict. My results here show the reverse effects, with cooperation being ubiquitous among rulers whose proximity should make them natural competitors and intermediate relationships corresponding to the nadir of cooperation, worse even than relations between entirely unrelated rulers. Of course, instrumentalism and other rationalist approaches reflect a mode of analysis more than they do a coherent theory with strong assumptions about human priorities, and thus there is likely still ample room for instrumentalist interpretations for many of the dynastic behaviors described in this chapter. Certainly, a review of historical conflicts shows that sovereigns acted in their own self-interest and that there was an undeniable level rational strategic thinking involved in how rulers managed their relationships with both kin and non-kin. But the statistical results in this chapter strongly suggest that dynasts' rational planning was heavily constrained and bounded by social norms.<sup>112</sup> In particular, social norms rather than ruthless self-interest appear to have played a critical role in so clearly entrenching actors' prioritization of kin, with family members who shared a dynastic name being consistently treated as reliable allies even while closely interrelated sovereigns of different dynasties continued to fiercely compete against each other.<sup>113</sup>

While rulers seemed to mediate their self-interest through social identities and acculturated relationships, these rulers often pursued clear strategies to maximize their authority within those constraints. Instrumentalism thus remains a potentially useful perspective for understanding dynasticism of the early modern period. For example, the heavy strategizing that was involved in marriage negotiations presents an interesting puzzle: why were monarchs so eager to marry off family members – especially daughters – to powerful rivals even knowing that this could lay the groundwork for future disputes?<sup>114</sup> A number of possible rational explanations

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<sup>112</sup> This conclusion fits with Ben-Porath 1980's argument that culture and identity influence transaction costs the reliability of trust networks, and that it is through this process that cultural institutions like families influence rational strategy.

<sup>113</sup> Hicks 1983 p. 33 offers an informative description of Richard III that contrasts the controversial king with social expectations of the day. Richard's ruthless pragmatism and disregard for filial loyalty were seen as highly abnormal by his contemporaries, who considered family honor to be a key element of political authority. This account suggests that overt self-interest uncoupled from demonstrations of loyalty to kin were uncommon for elites of the era.

<sup>114</sup> Because loyalty was so deeply invested in the patriline, a daughter's marriage effectively gave her husband's family a stronger claim to her father's assets through any credible inheritance claims she might pass to her children. This was clearly a very real concern for rulers of the period, as dynastic marriages came to involve elaborate renunciation contracts on the part of the bride for any inheritance rights she possessed. But examples such as the

present themselves.<sup>115</sup> First, it may be that monarchs had a secondary interest in ensuring the wellbeing of their daughters or saw their female heirs as an important failsafe if their male lineage died out, and so sought out strong husbands who could defend territory and inheritance claims.<sup>116</sup> Alternatively, marriage to a powerful family may have been approached as a risky but potentially rewarding opportunity – in the right circumstances, forging new alliance ties or allowing a loyal daughter to become one of the most powerful figures in a rival’s court.<sup>117</sup> A third explanation might instead analyze dynastic marriages as a form of costly signaling: by knowingly committing themselves to a match that could leave future heirs vulnerable, monarchs demonstrated their commitment and secured short-term peace and immediate policy priorities.<sup>118</sup> Fourth, agreeing to some potentially threatening marriage matches may have been a necessary price to pay to secure reciprocity and more desirable future marriages.<sup>119</sup> Fifth, marriages may have primarily been focused on positioning to block more deleterious unions between rivals.<sup>120</sup>

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War of the Devolution and the War of the Spanish Succession demonstrate that these contracts were not a foolproof means of preventing inheritance disputes. Whereas attempts by a husband to undermine a bride’s natal family were relatively common, a wife’s agnates generally weren’t in a position to similarly exploit a marriage tie to benefit at the expense of the husband’s dynasty. Among the great powers of the early modern period, the closest equivalent to such a scenario to my knowledge was the role played by the powerful de Guise family of France in Scottish politics. In this case, the de Guise family intervened after the death of King James V of Scotland, who had married Mary of Guise but had died soon after Mary gave birth to their daughter, Mary Queen of Scots. For a time, the de Guise family succeeded in systematically suppressing the influence of Mary’s Stuart agnates and in using her inherited position to advance their own interests in Scotland. But this type of aggressive assertion on the part of a wife’s family was from typical. Even so, a bride’s family was often heavily committed to arranging a marital union and traditionally were expected to pay a dowry for the honor.

<sup>115</sup> It should also be noted that wars were not always an unintended consequence. Some marriages – especially those entered under duress by a weaker dynasty – may have been intended to justify future violence. But a preliminary analysis of conflict initiation data derived from Wang & Ray 1994 suggests that the dynasties that were most deeply intermarried with other European monarchies were more likely to be the target of a war rather than its initiator. Extensive and persistent marriages with rival states thus appears to have increased a state’s vulnerability.

<sup>116</sup> This hypothesis is fairly consistent with essentialist expectations, since evolutionary instincts should incentivize facilitating reproductive success for both sons and daughters. Monarchs who had no male heirs were particularly invested in their daughters’ success – examples include Louis XII of France, who arranged for his daughter to marry his distant cousin and heir by Salic Law Francis I, and Emperor Charles VI, who expended significant political capital to try and ensure that his daughter Maria Theresa and her husband would inherit Charles’ position.

<sup>117</sup> Molho 1994 provides a detailed analysis of marriages in Florence in the late medieval period and provides detailed analysis regarding how successful marriage matches could enrich a family through increased connections and access. Levin & Bucholz 2009 offers a wide-ranging analysis describing the many ways in which queens were able to exert influence even when lacking formal authority. These types of subtler benefits may well have balanced out the risks of future conflict.

<sup>118</sup> Fearon 1997 provides an overview of modern examples of states risking future costs for the purposes of credibly signaling international commitments. While families sometimes spent years negotiating marriages and maintaining betrothals for young children, the final creation of a binding marriage could involve rapid and radical changes in strategy that suggested a rulers’ primary purpose was often the resolution of short-term obstacles. Diggelman 2004, for example, examines the marriage negotiations for the son of Henry II and shows how important immediate priorities were for participants.

<sup>119</sup> In essence, monarchs may have feared that other dynasties took note of matches that were made available and would punish free riders who only accepted the most advantageous unions; see Keohane 1986 for comparable issues of reciprocity in modern international relations. A focus on reciprocity may explain the popularity of “double weddings” that created roughly simultaneous and symmetrical matches between dynasties – perhaps the most famous of which was the marriage of Elisabeth of France to Philip IV and the simultaneously negotiated marriage of their siblings Louis XIII and Anne of Austria (McGowan 2016).

<sup>120</sup> Discussing the previously noted double-union between Spain and France, Sutherland 1992 describes the negotiations between these two states along with England as follows: “Each also feared that the other might achieve

Finally, international dynastic marriages may have primarily been a response to domestic political pressures – through prestigious marriages to foreign dynasties, monarchs avoided unnecessarily strengthening potentially threatening internal rivals from elite domestic families.<sup>121</sup> While my results suggest that rulers were not purely instrumental in their relationships with kin, an instrumental lens nonetheless offers a valuable analytic method for exploring potential strategic motivations underlying observed behavior.

But of the three approaches described in the previous chapter, it is constructivist analysis – focusing on the importance of social identities and competing claims to legitimacy – that seems to provide the clearest correlation between prediction and observed outcomes. Among the different dimensions of kinship, the shared identity of a common patriline was, by far, the kin relationship that best predicts peace among relatives. This strongly suggests that European rulers tended to prioritize the culturally emphasized patriline over other kin relationships, even in situations where an evolutionary or rationalist approach would predict that such a prioritization is counter-productive. Perhaps just as importantly, my results indicate that relatedness outside the patriline was generally associated with higher levels of conflict. Constructivism provides the most parsimonious explanation for this relationship, whereas instrumentalism and essentialism would both typically predict cooperation among kin to be much more common. In a constructivist approach to kinship, kin outside the “main” patriline – particularly those from a historical rival to one’s own patriline – inhabit an ambiguous position in which they retain important rival claims to ego’s ancestral legacy without a concomitant culturally imposed sense of loyalty to these rival kin.<sup>122</sup> Unlike loyalty to one’s patriline, which was deeply entrenched and consistently culturally reinforced, the more ephemeral concept of a generalized family loyalty was easily and regularly cast aside. This was particularly the case when two norms came

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a hostile dynastic alliance with France. All three monarchs had children to barter, and intensive marriage negotiations filled the first two decades of the seventeenth century, primarily as obstructive, blocking devices” (p. 601). My analysis in this chapter lends particular light to this concern in regard to the Habsburg habit of endogamously marrying heirs within the family. While typically seen as a means of maintaining close ties between different branches of the family, my results here suggest that this was far from necessary given how peaceful relations within a dynasty tended to be. Instead, these matches may have been motivated primarily by caution – in marrying female lines back into co-dynasts who were unlikely to instigate wars, the Habsburgs may have sought to lower the risk of rival dynasties gaining claims to Habsburg inheritance. Tentative analysis does indeed suggest that the oldest children, who had the strongest inheritance claims, were the most likely to be married to another Habsburg. If this was the strategic goal, it was ultimately undermined by the Habsburgs’ willingness to marry other daughters exogamously to other prestigious dynasties.

<sup>121</sup> For the relationship between contemporary international relations and domestic politics, see Putnam 1988. Harris 2016 argues that the most ambitious dynastic unions tended to emerge in periods of domestic turmoil. For France, the Valois’ transition to marrying external partners coincided with rising tensions that created the French Wars of Religion, and the later ambitious web of marriages negotiated between the Habsburgs and the Bourbons preceded the explosive emergence of the French Revolution. Domestic interests were also almost certainly a driver of dowry inflation among rulers. Because local elites stood so much to gain from marrying a daughter hypergamously to a monarch and ensuring they would have a close connection to the royal family, they were likely willing to pay exorbitant amounts for the match. Foreign royal families of other great powers had less to gain in terms of personal status from a union with this same monarch but were still forced to offer competitive dowries to incentivize the union. For more on the economics of dowry inflation, see Anderson 1993 and Rao 1997.

<sup>122</sup> Women, and more generally any kin relationships derived through women, played a fundamentally ambiguous role in Europe’s dynastic system, and this ambiguity created ample opportunity for contestation. Whereas loyalty to one’s patriline was an immutable norm, relations with the rest of one’s kin network were flexible and thus unpredictable. Bouchard 2010 offers a more in-depth analysis of this amorphous character of kin loyalties, and how it gradually solidified into the early modern European dynastic system.

into competition with each other – for example, a general loyalty to relatives on the one hand, and a credible legitimate claim to their inheritance or a previously entrenched family rivalry on the other. In cases where competing identities could be mobilized for either cooperation or confrontation the most powerful loyalties held firm – as demonstrated by the rarity of conflict between members of the same dynasty – but more peripheral relationships could be more easily circumvented in favor of the most personally advantageous norms. Ironically, the tool most often used to resolve these tensions – marriage alliances to reaffirm familial loyalties – often served to exacerbate these problems in the long-term by further increasing the overlapping genealogies, and with them the risk of competing inheritance claims for land, titles, and prestige.

What did these types of conflicts – driven by competing claims to dynastic legitimacy and rival inheritance norms among interrelated heads of state – look like in practice? History offers multiple examples, but I will briefly reference two cases that are particularly illustrative of these dynamics – the War of Three Henries (1589-1598) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713). In both cases, relatively clear-cut legal processes of succession collapsed when an outside ruler with weak inheritance claims balked at the idea of a great power crown passing into the hands of a new patrilineal dynasty. In the War of Three Henries, conflict arose when the last Valois king, Henry III, was poised to pass the throne to his distant cousin Henry of Navarre, head of the Bourbon dynasty.<sup>123</sup> This succession followed the deeply entrenched French legal principle of Salic Law, which stipulated that inheritance could only pass through male lines of descent and skipped over all female lines of ancestry. The principle had repeatedly been followed in prior centuries, resulting in the crown regularly jumping to distant dynasties and even fierce enemies of the previous king.<sup>124</sup> But the newest heir was a Protestant in the midst of France's Wars of Religion and was unacceptable to Henri de Guise – head of France's most powerful family outside the monarchy itself – and de Guise's ally Philip II of Spain. Notably, the fiercely ambitious de Guise family could not demand the throne for themselves despite their power and influence. Instead, they were compelled to mobilize around an acceptable candidate who could make a strong inheritance claim. When the Catholic League's first candidate, Cardinal Charles de Bourbon, died in captivity in 1590, Philip II went so far as to call for his daughter Isabella Clara Eugenia – related to the House of Valois through her mother – to be recognized as Queen of France in contravention of the core principles of Salic Law. Despite its questionable legal basis, the merging of religious conviction with credible ancestral ties proved strong enough to win over notable domestic support. Isabella was recognized by the Parlement de Paris and her claim was considered by a meeting of the Estates General in 1593.<sup>125</sup> Royal kinship ties thus provided legitimacy and support to internationalize a religious civil war and escalate the conflict over time.

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<sup>123</sup> Sources discussing this conflict and the politics surrounding inheritance of the French throne include Garrison 1995, Rule 1999, Sutherland 2002, Holt 2005, and Lesaffer 2016.

<sup>124</sup> Salic law had become a bedrock legal principle because of its central role in legitimizing the Valois monarchy and French sovereignty more generally. The death of Charles IV of France in 1328 made the English monarchy a potential inheritor of the French crown through King Edward III of England's mother, and it was with this justification that the English had launched the Hundred Years War. While Salic law was not nearly so clearly defined a legal principle prior to the start of that war, by the sixteenth century it had become a crucial rule that was central to France's claim of continued legitimate independence from England.

<sup>125</sup> Holt 2005 pp. 150-151, Lesaffer 2016.

The War of the Spanish Succession similarly began when the intricacies of inheritance rules failed to conform to the strongly held kin identities of Europe's various ruling dynasties.<sup>126</sup> When Charles II of Spain – its last Habsburg king – died without children, the throne passed to the son and grandsons of King Louis XIV of France through his Habsburg wife Maria Theresa of Spain. Louis had already proven himself adept at exploiting inheritance claims to expand his kingdom, having previously launched the War of Devolution based on the pretext that the failure of the Habsburgs to pay his wife's dowry had nullified a clause in her marriage contract, thereby transferring ownership of the Spanish Netherlands to her Bourbon son. Despite an official will and testament drafted by the Spanish court reasserting the Bourbon inheritance of the Spanish crown, Austria's Habsburg ruler Leopold I refused to accept Spain's transfer to his powerful Bourbon rival and close relative, and joined an alliance led by William III to keep Spain out of Bourbon control. The conclusion of this conflict saw Louis' grandson Philip V ascending to the Spanish throne in exchange for renouncing all claims to France, but subsequent history showed once again that the temptation to claim ancestral privileges could not be easily checked through the legal system. In 1718 Philip in turn launched the War of the Quadruple Alliance to better position himself to dominate French politics during his nephew Louis XV's minority. Once again, the web of family ties that bound Europe's monarchies didn't so much lessen conflict as generate new opportunities for resentment and rivalry as each dynasty dwelled on past slights and the demands of family honor.

The statistical results presented in this chapter suggest that these sociological dynamics – where clashing identities and norms generated resentments that couldn't easily be resolved through non-violent political alternatives – were widely associated with increased levels of warfare in dynastic Europe. Norms and social identities created a self-reinforcing pattern of hostilities and punctuated inheritance disputes. Competing dynasties intermarried to reinforce their hereditary status or in the hopes of resolving prior disputes, but in doing so created further overlapping inheritance claims that future generations would feel driven by honor to defend.<sup>127</sup> The only major pattern that diverged from my initial constructivist predictions was in the apparent evidence for a curvilinear effect in relatedness. This evidence may suggest that patrilineal preference alone wasn't the sole norm governing dynastic loyalties, but that a

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<sup>126</sup> Further information on this war and the political environment in which it emerged can be found in Bérenger 1976, Lynn 1999, and Roosen 2013. Thomson 1954 also offers a particularly salient analysis, focusing on the French court's general distaste for a war over the Spanish throne. The advisors of Louis XIV nonetheless felt that abandoning the Bourbon claim was an unacceptable option that could have dire future consequences. The pressure to engage in unwanted violence to signal commitment strongly parallels the experience of many modern participants of smaller-scale feuds and vendettas.

<sup>127</sup> The risks of some inter-dynastic marriage unions, which I previously discussed in the context of rational instrumental strategy, are more understandable from the perspective of constructivism. Monarchs' entire claim to authority and their central political identity were invested in their ancestry. As such, they were likely willing to endure significant risks to themselves and their children in order to marry among the most prestigious and powerful families. Marrying a daughter to a rival potentially gave that rival's heirs a claim to the ruler's inheritance, but it also reinforced that ruler's status as the head of a premiere dynasty – a social affirmation that many likely viewed as justifying the risk. The experience of Louis XV illustrates the costs monarchs were willing to incur to ensure a lofty and prestigious position for their dynasty. Louis' marriage to the deposed Polish princess Marie Leszczyńska had been encouraged by his advisors for pragmatic reasons – she was viewed as the candidate best suited to produce an heir as quickly as possible, and her family's low status would avoid dangerous foreign entanglements. But following the marriage, the sting of a queen of France coming from such an ignoble family proved so galling that the French eventually committed significant resources to restoring Louis' father-in-law as king in the War of the Polish Succession (Sutton 1980 pp. 10-14).

secondary norm encouraging loyalty to close relationships, such as an aunt/uncle or closer, also mitigated some of the likelihood of intra-kin violence between sovereigns.<sup>128</sup> If we accept these results, they may suggest that this secondary social pressure was enough to mitigate, but not altogether eliminate, the tendency of interrelated rulers from different dynasties to contest each other's power. It is certainly plausible to hypothesize that such a norm could exert this type of influence on dynastic relations of early modern Europe.<sup>129</sup> If so, this result doesn't so much contradict constructivist predictions as remind us that cultures do not operate with a simple unidimensional view of kinship. There are likely to be multiple competing ideas operating simultaneously in a society regarding how one is expected to treat family members, and the results in this chapter demonstrate that these different rules can combine to achieve unexpected results. This underscores the importance of methodological flexibility – including appropriate use of instrumentalist and essentialist approaches alongside constructivist interpretations when appropriate – and multiple varieties of tests when possible to empirically evaluate how kin interact with one another in a given society's political system. Because of the multidimensional nature of kin relationships, and the degree to which these relationships are sensitive to changing attitudes and viewpoints, it is critical that analysis not only identify the broad cultural outlines of kinship in a given society, but also that researchers think about ways that subtler norms may influence the dynamics of dynastic relationships in a given political system.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has presented an in-depth analysis of the dynastic relationships among the heads of state of early modern European great powers, and the ways in which dynasticism impacted incidents of warfare and political violence between these powerful states. Through this analysis, I have demonstrated that the most important stabilizing effect of dynasticism on international relations was cultural – rulers from the same dynasty were remarkably unlikely to go to war against each other. By contrast, broader interrelatedness across distinct dynasties instead tended to increase war between rulers – and in many cases, these wars were explicitly launched due to crises of legitimacy, inheritance, and succession emerging out of overlapping genealogies between leaders. The only other dynastic effects that limited these conflicts appear to have been relatively weak and short-lived – sovereigns that were within each other's immediate families, and rulers whose families had very recently negotiated a marriage alliance, may have mildly reduced tensions. These results are all consistent with a constructivist interpretation of dynastic violence, and in important respects appear to contradict expectations derived from an essentialist or strictly instrumentalist approach. Loyalty was not consistent among close genetic relatives as essentialists would predict, and contrary to a strict instrumentalist view, military challenges were not directed consistently at a ruler's clearest rivals, but instead matched closely with cultural kin prioritization. For the great power heads of state of early modern Europe, at least, the strong norms and values that surrounded inherited political authority appear to have been the crucial dynastic driver of international wars and disputes.

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<sup>128</sup> Hicks 1998 finds evidence of a similar pattern in the political maneuvers of the Nevilles, one of England's most prominent dynasties. Observing family members' political maneuverings in the fifteenth century, Hicks finds that the lineage as a whole tended to divide into factions that corresponded closely to nuclear family divisions.

<sup>129</sup> George II of England, for example, eventually allied with his nephew (sister's son) Frederick the Great.

It is unclear to what degree we should generalize these findings to dynastic politics of other eras. It may well be that in other time periods, cultures, or political systems, essentialist and instrumentalist explanations are more efficacious for understanding kinship's influence on politics – and in many societies, dynasticism is likely sufficiently weak so that any dynastic effects on political outcomes are greatly attenuated. Even in the context of these results, the apparent influence of constructivist mechanisms suggests that kinship politics in other dynastic societies are likely to be governed by other norms and values. Societies that do not emphasize patrilineal lineage as heavily, for instance, or in which inheritance is more partible, may be significantly less likely to demonstrate stark and decisive delineations between descent lines. But the results in this chapter can serve as a useful starting point in the absence of similarly well-documented examples of kinship and its impact on politics.<sup>130</sup> In the most generalizable terms, the results of this chapter suggest that dynasticism tends to follow the logic of culture and identity – and that the violence that emerges as a result stems from the intense loyalties and sense of entitlement derived from familial ties. In early modern Europe, this was as much a matter of norms as laws – political actors regularly disregarded legality and would fight on the basis of even weak inheritance claims so long as they were able to mobilize supporters and patronage networks through compelling narratives of aggrieved ancestral rights and threatened family honor. This history suggests that we might expect similar patterns of violence in contemporary dynastic societies. When political power becomes bound with family identities, elites will fight ferociously to defend their family's status and retaliate against familial slights. This violence might not be easily resolved through strategic marriages or widespread interbreeding among rival families, since such unions only increase the likelihood of further inheritance and legitimacy disputes in future generations. We should thus be cautious about assuming that genetic proximity or the logic of self-interest will be able to resolve the types of feuds and vendettas generated by dynastic authority structures. Whether these results are applicable to contemporary politics and security will be the subject I address in the following chapters.

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<sup>130</sup> Mahoney & Reuschemeyer 2003 discuss the analytic value of historical cases. Historical analysis is of particular value for study of security issues, as political changes after the Cold War have complicated the traditional IR picture of a Westphalian state system inhabited primarily by coherent sovereign states (see Osiander 2001).



## Appendix 3.1

### List of Dynastic Marriages Involving Two or More Great Power

<u>Marriage</u>	<u>Great Powers</u>	<u>Date</u>
Philip the Handsome m. Joanna of Castile	Austria, Spain	1496
Prince John of Asturias m. Margaret of Austria	Austria, Spain	1497
Arthur Prince of Wales m. Catherine of Aragon	England, Spain	1501
Ferdinand II of Aragon m. Germaine of Foix	France, Spain	1505
Henry VIII of England m. Catherine of Aragon	England, Spain	1509
Louis XII of France m. Mary I of England	England, France	1514
Francis I of France m. Eleanor of Castile	France, Spain	1530
Henry VIII of England m. Anne Boleyn	England, France	1533
Emperor Maximilian II m. Maria of Spain	Austria, Spain	1548
Philip II of Spain m. Mary I of England	Austria, England, Spain	1554
Philip II of Spain m. Elizabeth of Valois	France, Spain	1559
Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy m. Margaret of France	France, Spain	1559
Philip II of Spain m. Anna of Austria	Austria, Spain	1570
Charles IX of France m. Elisabeth of Austria	Austria, France	1570
Philip III of Spain m. Margaret of Austria	Austria, Spain	1599
Archduke Albert VII m. Isabella Clara Eugenia	Austria, Spain	1599
Louis XIII of France m. Anne of Spain	France, Spain	1615
Philip IV of Spain m. Elisabeth of France	France, Spain	1615
Charles I of England m. Henrietta Maria	England, France	1625
Ferdinand III of Spain m. Maria Anna of Austria	Austria, Spain	1630
Prince William II of Orange m. Mary of England	England, Netherlands	1641
Philip IV of Spain m. Mariana of Austria	Austria, Spain	1649
Louis XIV of France m. Maria Theresa of Spain	France, Spain	1660
Duke Philippe I d'Orleans m. Henrietta of England	England, France	1661
Emperor Leopold I m. Margaret Theresa of Spain	Austria, Spain	1666
Prince William III of Orange m. Mary II of England	England, Netherlands	1677
Charles II of Spain m. Mary Louise d'Orleans	France, Spain	1679
Philip V of Spain m. Louisa of Savoy	France, Spain	1701
Louis I of Spain m. Louise Elizabeth d'Orleans	France, Spain	1722
Prince Philip of Spain m. Louise Élisabeth of France	France, Spain	1739
Tsar Peter III m. Sophie of Anhalt-Zerbst (Catherine Alexeevna)	Prussia, Russia	1744
Dauphin Louis of France m. Maria Teresa Rafaela of Spain	France, Spain	1745
Emperor Joseph II m. Isabella of Parma	Austria, France, Spain	1760
Emperor Leopold II m. Maria Luisa of Spain	Austria, France, Spain	1764
Charles IV of Spain m. Maria Luisa of Parma	Austria, France, Spain	1765
Ferdinand I of Naples m. Maria Carolina of Austria	Austria, France, Spain	1768
Duke Ferdinand of Parma m. Maria Amalia of Austria	Austria, France, Spain	1769
Louis XVI of France m. Marie Antoinette of Austria	Austria, France, Spain	1770
Count Louis Xavier of Provence m. Maria Giuseppina of Savoy	Austria, France, Spain	1771
Count Charles of Artois m. Maria Teresa of Savoy	Austria, France, Spain	1773
Charles Emmanuel IV of Sardinia m. Marie Clotilde of France	Austria, France, Spain	1775
Prince Frederick of England m. Fredericka Charlotte of Prussia	England, Prussia	1791

## Chapter 4

### Dynasticism as an Indirect Driver of Civil Wars: Clan Feuding in the Philippines and its Impact on Intrastate Political Violence

*“Politics is not something you can entrust to non-relatives.”*

*Congressman Ramon Durano Sr.<sup>1</sup>*

*“[My uncle Danding Cojuangco] has seen what happens to other families, when there’s too many of them struggling over a small pie. His rule is you’re the only one in your area, as long as you do your job, nobody will bother you.”*

*Congressman Gilbert Teodoro<sup>2</sup>*

**Abstract:** In this chapter, I examine the case of the Philippines to study the contemporary role of dynasticism as an underlying driver of instability and civil war. I begin by reviewing the long history of dynastic networks that dominate elite culture in the Philippines, showing how prominent clans have coopted electoral politics at the national and provincial level to maintain their political and economic influence. Next, I discuss the phenomenon of dynastic and clan-based violence, including the tradition of *rido* blood feuds, and describe how this dynastic violence can become intertwined with conflicts between the state and rebel groups, exacerbating tensions and generating flare-ups of violence. To test my hypothesis that dynastic conflicts increase the likelihood of broader civil war violence in the Philippines, I construct a province-level dataset of Philippine governors and members of Congress. I rely on Philippine naming conventions to identify dynastic officials based on shared names with previous or current officeholders from the same province. These distinctive naming practices ensure that family names are duplicated relatively rarely, and that maiden names and a mother’s family are often included alongside a patronym. I use these data to construct several estimators designed to measure the level of dynasticism in a given province-year. Relying on multiple forms of estimation, I find a general curvilinear relationship between dynasticism and civil war violence – dynasticism in general tends to increase civil war violence in a province, but dominance by a single dynasty tends to reduce this risk. I conclude that the most parsimonious explanation is reflected in a measure of dynastic polarization, with the highest likelihood of civil war violence emerging when two roughly equal dynasties both compete to dominate the same province.

### Introduction

On the morning of November 23, 2009, the Philippine province of Maguindanao experienced a brutal day of violence that proved shocking even in the context of the Philippines’ persistent security crises. As a part of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Maguindanao had long been one of the most conflict-prone provinces in the country. The province was regularly host to outbreaks of ethno-nationalist violence between the state’s formal and informal security forces, on the one hand, and a variety of militant rebel groups on the

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<sup>1</sup> Cullinane 1993 p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Coronel 2007.

other.<sup>3</sup> But the attack that would come to be known nationally as the Maguindanao Massacre stood out not only for its size – with later investigation finding that the attack involved over 100 assailants and killed 58 people – but also for the brazenness with which attackers targeted elite members of society. Victims of the massacre were members of a convoy traveling to the province’s capital of Shariff Aguak on behalf of Esmael Mangudadatu, vice-mayor of Buluan and nephew of Pax Mangudadatu, a powerful politician from the neighboring province of Sultan Kudarat. Among those killed in the attack were 32 journalists, as well as Esmael’s wife, two sisters, and aunt. The female victims of the massacre were particularly brutalized during the attack, with later evidence showing that many of them were raped and their bodies mutilated.<sup>4</sup>

But this savage violence was not carried out by any of the region’s ethnic or religious separatist groups, nor was it perpetrated by the Philippines’ ongoing communist insurgency. Instead, the mastermind of the assault was quickly proven to be Andal Ampatuan Jr., mayor of Datu Unsay and son of Maguindanao’s then-serving governor, Andal Ampatuan Sr. The involvement of the Ampatuan clan in this violence was far from surprising, as the family was long rumored to be one of many Philippine political dynasties with a history of criminal ties and involvement in electoral violence.<sup>5</sup> Andal Ampatuan Sr. had spent years entrenching his political power in Maguindanao through both formal and informal mechanisms – using patronage and vote buying to position family members in elected offices throughout the province while using his wealth to fund a private army that could fend off threats from other Mindanaoan warlords and insurgent groups.<sup>6</sup> Tensions emerged between the Ampatuans and the Mangudadatus – who enjoyed a similar dynastic dominance in neighboring Sultan Kudarat – when Andal Sr. was term limited from running once again as Maguindanao’s governor.<sup>7</sup> Despite the governor’s hand-

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<sup>3</sup> In domestic conflicts, the official institutions that most often fight on behalf of the Philippine state are the military and the national police. In addition, the state officially sanctions the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU), a paramilitary network of local militias, to respond to insurgents in areas where state power is weak. Insurgent groups can be grouped into two major categories – Marxist and communist groups operating in economically distressed territories, and groups fighting for the autonomy of the Muslim Moro populations in the southwestern portions of the archipelago. The largest communist group is the New People’s Army (NPA). The two largest groups advocating for Moro self-determination are the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The latter group split from the former in the 1970’s following a peace agreement between the Philippine government and MNLF leader Nur Misuari. This agreement created the ARMM, of which Misuari was the first governor, but failed to end the Moro rebellion. In addition to these larger groups, a variety of smaller violent groups have regularly emerged in the Philippines, often straddling the line between terrorist groups and organized criminal conspiracies. Among the most infamous of these for Western audiences is the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), a Moro Islamist group that came to prominence through its capture of Western tourists.

<sup>4</sup> Detailed reporting on the incident can be found in McIndoe 2009, Murphy 2009, and Santos 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Accounts of the rise of the Ampatuan dynasty and their continued influence in many parts of Maguindanao can be found in McGeown 2010 and Lingao 2013a. While the bulk of the family’s power is tied into mainstream electoral politics, some elements in the clan have instead allegedly built up influence with the insurgent MILF (Dizon 2012) – a factional balancing strategy that is relatively common for large dynasties in parts of the Philippines where insurgent groups hold substantial power.

<sup>6</sup> In peripheral territories of the Philippines, where legal enforcement is lax, media access is limited, and state institutions are weak, it is common for ruthless political leaders to leverage their formal elected offices into tools of personal enrichment and to cement this power through semi-legal or illegal tactics. The practice of widespread vote-buying and election manipulation is analyzed in Khemani 2015, while the politics surrounding warlordism in the region and the building up of private armies are discussed in Van der Kroef 1986, Bentley 1993, and Aguak 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Leaders of the Ampatuan and Mangudadatu clans shared the same party and were both seen as regional allies of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The clans also shared peripheral family ties through marriage – an unsurprising connection given the size and local prominence of the two dynasties (Unson 2010 and Ilagan 2013a).

selection of his son Andal Jr. to serve as his successor, Vice-Mayor Esmael Mangudadatu had let it be known that he intended to run against the Ampatuan scion. Having grown used to the flow of income and influence that came from using provincial offices for their family's gain, the Ampatuan clan were enraged by the idea of a powerful neighboring dynasty encroaching on one of their family's key sources of power.<sup>8</sup> The threat of a backlash and inter-dynastic fighting was clear from the start. Indeed, the convoy that was attacked in the massacre – which was in the midst of a well-publicized trip to file Esmael's candidacy paperwork – had intentionally been filled with journalists in the hopes that such high visibility would discourage the Ampatuans from attacking the expedition. These precautions likely played a crucial role in unambiguously identifying the perpetrators of the assault. Initially the Ampatuans sought to lay the blame for the attack on the insurgent Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), but these efforts at misdirection were refuted by contemporaneous text messages from the many victims in the convoy, who succeeded in identifying their attackers before being killed.<sup>9</sup>

This fatal clash between two powerful families had long precedent in Maguindanao and surrounding provinces. Mindanao in general, and its ARMM region in particular, possessed a well-earned reputation as a land of vicious family vendettas and generations-old feuds. These vendettas – most often referred to as *rido*<sup>10</sup> – are inextricably intertwined with local norms surrounding the duty to aggressively defend family honor and status. In this environment, a wide variety of personal slights or perceived insults can rapidly escalate into deadly killings between large family networks – and when those families hold political power or significant resources, these feuds have the potential to draw political, military, and insurgent actors into the conflict. The fiercest *rido* between politically connected clans can involve the use of military-grade weaponry and the ruthless exploitation of families' connections with state institutions or rebel groups to secure advantages and resources for their feuding.<sup>11</sup> *Rido* are widely seen as a brutal and devastating element of Mindanaoan society, and though some local norms and rules exist in order to limit and constrain these conflicts, these taboos are widely seen as unreliable and unlikely to provide a meaningful check on deep-seated inter-clan grievances.<sup>12</sup> In the rest of the

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<sup>8</sup> Personalistic dynasties so thoroughly dominate Maguindanao that it has become routine for the province's capital to be uprooted each time a new family wins the governorship so that security and government patrimonialism can be directed to regions loyal to the new ruling family. Ferdinand Marcos approved a capital in Sultan Kudarat, the hometown of Governor Baraguir, but the capital was moved under the Ampatuans to the more loyal city of Shariff Aguak. When Esmael Mangudadatu won the governorship after the massacre and the ensuing political scandal, government offices were moved again to Buluan (Lingao 2013b and Unson 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Lunt 2009. Mangudadatu's victory in the subsequent gubernatorial election has allowed the politician to amass significant wealth and influence (Ilagan 2013b). The Ampatuan clan remains among the most prolific dynasties in the country, however, sprawling across a wide range of more localized elected offices. Following the massacre, a split reportedly occurred within the family, dividing the "good Ampatuans" who disavowed violent tactics and the "bad Ampatuans" who remained close to Andal Jr. and his fighting forces (Geronimo 2013, Manlupig 2014, Cabigo 2016).

<sup>10</sup> *Rido* is the term used by the Meranao and Maguindanaoan ethnicities, who are among the groups where the practice is most prevalent. In parts of the Philippines where feuding norms are less common, this has become the most common term for such violence, though other ethnicities often have different local words for feuds (Torres 2014, p. 4).

<sup>11</sup> Modern *rido* fighting can involve heavy weaponry, digging secured foxholes, and guerilla tactics comparable to those used in the country's insurgencies (Durante et al. 2014 p. 91). Clans will often rely on established belligerent groups to aid them in these familial conflicts, such as by allying with military units or paramilitary militias to balance against a rival family with ties to a Moro rebel organization such as the MILF (Lingga 2014 p. 61).

<sup>12</sup> It is taboo, for example, to intentionally target women or children in a *rido* (Matuan 2014 p. 77). It was almost certainly for this reason that Mangudadatu sent female relatives in his place to file paperwork. The brutality with

country beyond Mindanao, both feuding and political violence are generally far less pervasive. But the prevalence of entrenched dynasties possessing powerful patronage networks and the corresponding weakness of democratic and security institutions nonetheless ensures that long-lasting kinship-based violence among some of the country's most powerful families remains a regular occurrence.<sup>13</sup>

While I argued in the previous chapter that the dynastic and kinship ties between the monarchies of early modern Europe offered important insights into why and when conflicts emerged between great powers, it is not necessarily clear that these insights continue to be relevant in modern politics. The Philippines, with its highly visible dynasties and the relatively open manner in which they compete for elected offices, serves as an ideal case for testing whether dynasticism continues to impact political security in measurable ways.<sup>14</sup> Is there evidence to suggest that competition and feuding between powerful Philippine dynasties may have an influence on the broader large-scale insurgencies that continue to plague the country? Or are reports of dynastic feuding a merely peripheral phenomenon, without large-scale implications for the security of the country or for the broader political impact of dynasticism in other developing countries?<sup>15</sup> In this chapter, I seek to analyze these questions as follows: I begin my analysis with an overview of Philippine dynastic politics and the prevalence of dynastic feuding in different parts of the country and different levels of society. Based on my argument in prior chapters that dynasticism tends to generate persistent and intense rivalries, I explain why we should expect that areas where dynasticism and dynastic competition are strongest are likely to be more vulnerable to weakened security and greater vulnerability to outbreaks of large-scale political violence.<sup>16</sup> I then present a series of statistical models designed to test this hypothesis. I

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which these women were subsequently attacked and murdered by Ampatuan forces served as a revealing demonstration of how unreliable such rules of warfare are among feuding clans.

<sup>13</sup> Illustrative reporting of similar rivalries and their violent consequences include Branigin 1990's description of electoral violence in Nueva Ecija and Parades 2011's description of a political killing in Abra and its consequences. Electoral reporting routinely makes note of the high levels of dynasticism and electoral violence that both seem pervasive in Philippine democracy (for example, Orosa 2013). Both characteristics are typically the subject of fierce criticism from many quarters but remain endemic to the political system.

<sup>14</sup> Canuday 2014 presents a highly informative account that complements the argument I present in this chapter. The qualitative analysis in his work provides abundant further examples of ways in which small-scale vendettas potentially influence the large-scale civil war campaigns within the Philippines. For another resource that similarly emphasizes the interconnectedness between civil war violence and clan-based conflicts, see Kreuzer 2005.

<sup>15</sup> If the phenomena of electoral violence and dynastic politics are unrelated to one another, after all, then it is plausible that any anecdotally reported incidents of apparent feuding between dynasties are merely a product of the high rates of both dynasticism and violence in Philippine politics. Dynasticism is so pervasive in Philippine elected offices that it may be difficult to separate out the effects of dynastic rivalries from the "normal" rates of political violence that would occur even in the absence of dynasties. The statistical analysis I present in this chapter is intended to address this problem and examine whether it is possible to identify a specifically dynastic element in political violence in the country.

<sup>16</sup> In keeping with my conclusions in the previous chapter, I assume that dynastic politics in the Philippines is primarily driven by constructivist mechanisms and discount alternate explanations relying on essentialist evolutionary loyalties and purely instrumental calculations. Some anecdotal accounts support this view. Intense adherence to norms surrounding family honor, for example, clearly play some role in many local kinship-based conflicts. Moreover, the ways in which conflict often emerges out of competing claims to legitimacy are highly comparable to the types of inheritance disputes analyzed in the previous chapter. Indeed, the addition of new democratic forms of legitimacy and formal legal rules of inheritance has arguably increased the potential for fierce conflict over ancestral legitimacy and its implications. Lingga 2014 p. 52 offers an illustrative account of a deadly conflict that emerged when the traditional elites of a village named after one of their ancestors launched a *rido* against a member of a more recently arrived family who had decided to run for election as the village's mayor. As

disaggregate the country down to the province level and rely on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) to assemble an estimate of conflict onsets for each province-year. I combine this data with an estimate of the level of dynasticism for a given province-year based on whether or not that province's governor or congressmembers come from dynastic families. I define dynastic officeholders as those that share a family name with any other previous or current officeholders in the same province. Because Philippine naming conventions are relatively standardized, typically reflect both patrilineal and matrilineal family ties, and show fewer spurious family name duplications than exist in most societies, this matching of family names is a reasonably reliable method of identifying shared family ties.<sup>17</sup> Through these tests, I demonstrate that political violence does correlate with dynasticism, but not in a clear linear manner. Using several alternative methods of estimating the level and distribution of dynasticism in a province, I find that violence does not rise consistently as dynasticism increases, but instead reaches its apex when provincial offices are polarized between a few equally powerful dynasties. I conclude that this evidence is consistent with the hypothesis that dynastic competition is a driver of large-scale civil war violence in the Philippines. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of several further questions raised by my analysis – including whether these results are primarily associated with Mindanao's intense feuding culture or are more universally associated with dynasticism throughout the country.

### ***Section I*** ***Dynastic Democracy and Rido Warfare***

To outside observers, it may not be immediately apparent how presumably small-scale feuds fought between individual families could have a determinative impact on the sprawling, decades-old insurgent movements that continue to vex the Philippine state. The two major sources of political violence in the country – a fight between state forces and communist rebels throughout poorer regions of the country, and a more geographically limited secessionist conflict with the ethnically and religiously distinct Moro population of Western Mindanao – both have clear, widespread constituencies and a strong ideological foundation.<sup>18</sup> It thus presumably makes

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with the Maguindanao Massacre, the norms of democratic competition in this incident clashed directly with perceived rights of dynastic inheritance and generated a violent backlash.

It should nonetheless be noted that the statistical analysis in this chapter is not precise enough to distinguish these mechanisms from one another, and it is admittedly problematic to assume that conclusions drawn from the case of early modern Europe are necessarily pertinent to modern Philippine politics. The relatively common incidents of deadly violence between members of the same kin group suggest that an essentialist interpretation is of limited value, though it still may offer insights in some situations. But it is potentially more plausible that instrumentalist logic might be applied to the dynastic conflicts analyzed in this chapter. Certainly, it would be unsurprising to discover that many political actors are at least partially strategic in deciding which other groups to attack and view as threats. But in the absence of compelling evidence that rido and dynastic rivalries in the Philippines are primarily driven by such rational thinking, my account here focuses on the sociological and psychological drivers toward violence associated with dynastic authority.

<sup>17</sup> This method of analysis, along with a longer description of the history surrounding Philippine naming conventions, is discussed in greater detail in Querubin 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Indeed, while the bulk of this chapter focuses on the smaller, dynasty-level drivers of conflict, my argument should not be read as being dismissive of these broader ideological motivations. Particularly in the case of the Moro insurgency, regional inequalities and local disputes are often conceptually linked by belligerents to long histories of colonial grievances. Elites and combatants thus tend to conflate and integrate broader ideological commitments to more immediate interests and personal priorities (McKenna 1998).

sense to treat belligerents in these conflicts as rational political actors with coherent military goals unlikely to be derailed by prosaic and localized family disputes. But such a viewpoint fails to account for the central political role played by clans and dynasties at every level of Philippine politics, and the consequent intense personalization of political disputes and strategies throughout the country. Despite its ethnic and religious diversity, the Philippines is largely united in the importance placed on the family and clan as a core social network and source of support and patronage.<sup>19</sup> The Philippines has been described as “an anarchy of families,”<sup>20</sup> – a society in which family loyalties and connections transcend the private sphere to the point that they often become inextricably intertwined with elites’ political power and goals. For both state officials and rebel leaders, informal patronage through kinship ties typically plays a critical role in maintaining one’s political influence, and so the dynastic capture of political power to enhance the status and prestige of one’s clan is extremely widespread.<sup>21</sup> Patrimonialism regularly redirects political and insurgent institutions away from their nominal overarching goals toward the more personalistic interests of their leading figures. For example, the rivalry between the two main secessionist groups among the Moro – the MNLF and MILF – has been persistently exacerbated since their split by the tendency of soldiers and commanders to direct resources into local family feuds, thereby generating further animosities and the polarization of local families into resentment of one group or the other.<sup>22</sup> Influential clans, in turn, often welcome closer ties to

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<sup>19</sup> A *clan*, as used in local discourse, refers to an extended kin network comprising interrelated families, often including cousins as well as lineages closely tied through affinal marriage links. The importance of kinship in Philippine society means that for many individuals even relatively distant kin on both the mother’s and father’s side of the family will often interact and rely on one another for economic and social security. Green 1987 describes “familism” as a central value in Philippine society: “The extended family is the unit for support and loyalty, rather than impersonal institutions. *Utang na loob* (reciprocity) and *hiya* (shame) are the social cement that bind group members,” (p. 269). This dynamic exists across socio-economic classes. Among poorer populations, practices such as pooling resources or sending international remittances back to family members bind families in a complex web of interdependence and mutual aid (Lauby & Stark 1988, Rodriguez & Tiongson 2001, Fafchamps & Lund 2003, and Yang & Choi 2007). And among the most powerful elites, powerful dynasties often build up around a successful patriarch or matriarch to create a network of allied kin in the worlds of business and politics. Further works explaining the profound importance of such dynasties to Philippine politics include Coronel 2004 and Purdey et al. 2016.

<sup>20</sup> A term first coined by the anthropologist Robert Fox and elaborated on in McCoy 1993a.

<sup>21</sup> Sidel 1999 offers a detailed analysis of the ways in which many Philippine elected officials translate political authority into personal influence through bossism, corruption, criminal enterprises, and political violence. An account detailing how leaders of insurgent groups such as the MILF similarly channel organizational resources into personal patronage networks can be found in Franco 2016. Perhaps the most prominent recent family to blur the lines between insurgent violence and personal influence have been the Maute brothers, who have successfully positioned their family at the center of the country’s largest affiliate of the Islamic State (Gopalakrishnan & Mogato 2017).

<sup>22</sup> The MILF split from the MNLF in the 1970’s following the MNLF’s decision to engage in peace talks with the Philippine government. The driving force for this split was largely a genuine ideological opposition to these negotiations. However, the division was exacerbated by the personal rivalries between the MNLF leader Nur Misuari, who successfully parleyed the talks into an official position as the first governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, and rival personalities such as Hashim Salamat (Majul 1988). Since then, the leadership of each group has gradually pushed the organizations to favor different ethnic constituencies, further blurring the ideological differences between them (Özdem & Podder 2012). Personalistic agendas regularly result in different factions or groups using organizational resources to carry out violence on behalf of the personal interests of commanders. Clashes between the MNLF and MILF inspired originally by vendettas or rivalries between the families of commanding officers or allies are a fairly regular occurrence (Fernandez 2014 and 2018, Unson 2018). These incidents conform to a broader trend noted in many insurgencies and rebellions, where groups that nominally

various insurgent, state, or paramilitary factions in the hopes that combat-trained family members or allies with access to weapons can deter enemies or be used to promote family interests.<sup>23</sup> These accounts should not be read to suggest family loyalties supersede all other ideological or political loyalties for Philippine actors. Instead, they reflect the degree to which the pervasive dynastic capture of institutions has erased any clear line between private kinship networks and public political institutions.<sup>24</sup>

The central importance of extended family clans in Philippine society dates back to before the country's modern history, but the entrenchment of this family structure into the Philippines' economic and political institutions was in large part a byproduct of its colonial history.<sup>25</sup> The Spanish, during their colonization of the archipelago, built the first national administrative institutions largely through coopting and rewarding indigenous elites and tribal elders willing to ally with colonial authorities. Benedict Anderson, viewing a continuity between this colonial strategy in the Philippines and in the Spanish Americas, characterized this pattern as the foundation of the Philippines' "cacique democracy."<sup>26</sup> In Christian portions of the country, these historical elites are generally referred to as the *principalía* class, while in Muslim areas of the country these historical elites are generally referred to by the more traditional indigenous term *datu*. For both segments of the colonial aristocracy, the transfer of territorial ownership from Spain to the United States did little to upset most families' wealth and influence. The United States' period of control was characterized by a deep ambiguity regarding the purpose of its colonial project and the amount of investment Americans were willing to commit toward reshaping and controlling Philippine society. After an initial period of violent suppression and domination, American authorities rapidly became more ambivalent about any long-term plans for ruling the archipelago. As a result, the American colonial mission eventually transformed into a half-hearted effort to set up democratic governing institutions for the country.<sup>27</sup> But this effort came without a substantial accompanying investment in democratizing or equalizing Philippine society save, perhaps, for the substantial investment in local schools by American authorities, missionary groups, and charities. For Christian portions of the country, the *principalía* land-

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share the same ultimate goals routinely fall into violence against one another for ideological or material reasons (Fjelde & Nilsson 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Clan members with ties to insurgent groups, criminal organization, or police, military, and militia units all have the potential to serve as "hit men," who can be called on to fight for their kin when necessary (Constantino 2014 pp. 385-386). Some families in Moro communities even encourage young men to join belligerent groups as child soldiers to more quickly entrench their positions and develop fighting skills that can be used to aid the clan (Özerdem et al. 2010). The consequence of this pattern is a highly unpredictable conflict environment, where fighters and commanders suffer from conflicted loyalties and can suddenly change behavior in response to unanticipated local concerns (Loesch 2017).

<sup>24</sup> While it is accurate to note that a certain proportion of civil war and insurgent violence "masks" what is effectively sustained feuding between rival clans (Kreuzer 2005 p. 13), it is also clear that the country's ongoing political conflicts also operate on a variety of other dimensions. Clan loyalty is one reason individuals join belligerent groups and steer them toward particular priorities, but others also fight because of ideology, personal interest, or due to a lack of alternative options. Indeed, a substantial number of fighters join not because of their close ties to their clan, but instead because they have run away from abusive or neglectful families and thus lack any kin support networks (Maria 2006).

<sup>25</sup> For much more detailed overviews of Philippine social and political history, see Hedman & Sidel 2000, Teehankee 2002, and Abinales & Amoroso 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Anderson 1988. Further analysis of the Spanish colonial legacy's impact on later family patterns can be found in Santiago 1990.

<sup>27</sup> For more on the profound role American colonialism played in shaping the political institutions of the Philippines, see Karnow 1990, Sidel 1999, and Hutchcroft 2000a.



owning class became the foundation for some of the nascent Philippine democracy's earliest political dynasties. Over time, substantial numbers of new elites would emerge out of the Philippines' modernizing economy and most prestigious educational institutions, but these newer leaders largely followed the pattern of their aristocratic forebears in relying heavily on their extended kinship networks to cement their authority, prestige, and political alliances.<sup>28</sup> In the Muslim portions of the country, which were never as fully penetrated by colonial authorities, the *datu* class retained even more of their traditional aristocratic status. Even into the present day, *datu* lineages form not only the basis for many of the region's most powerful political dynasties, but also often retain their centuries-old informal roles as community mediators and symbolic nobility.<sup>29</sup> Some of the most prestigious family lines adopt the title of sultan, claiming direct continuity with the precolonial sultanates that once ruled various portions of Mindanao.<sup>30</sup>

In keeping with this history, dynastic capture of nominally competitive political institutions has been a ubiquitous part of modern Philippine politics. In provinces, cities, and *barangays*,<sup>31</sup> dynastic politicians operate as political bosses by extracting enormous wealth through rent-seeking agreements that favor allied businesses, securing patrimonial alliances with weaker client families and stronger patron dynasties, and securing influential government and private-sector positions for their family members.<sup>32</sup> Powerful families thus often become synonymous with particular provinces or cities in which they have built up local political machines. Examples include the Marcos of Ilocos Norte, Aquinos and Cojuangcos of Tarlac, Singsons of Ilocos Sur, and Ampatuans of Maguindanao.<sup>33</sup> By contrast, more formal political institutions such as political parties and the government bureaucracy are comparatively weak and heavily suborned by the dynastic interests of elite members.<sup>34</sup> When Ferdinand Marcos rose to power in the 1960's, he effectively succeeded by translating this local pattern of bossism to a national scale by showering benefits on allied families and cannily dividing rival dynasties against one another. It was only after Marcos' assassination of the equally prominent dynast Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. that opposition forces succeeded in rallying behind the senator's

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<sup>28</sup> A representative account of an old landholding family that remains influential in contemporary politics can be found in Parades 1993. For accounts of dynasties that have arisen in more recent times, see Teehankee 2001. One recurring pattern in Philippine politics is the regular emergence of candidates running on an anti-dynastic platform, only to begin establishing their own dynasties once they achieve power (Mukherjee 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Further detail on the *datu* class and how they have integrated themselves into electoral politics can be found in Beckett 1993.

<sup>30</sup> Maulana 2014. As noted in Abanes 2014, "the *datu* or *sultan* system has merged and corresponded with the mainstream government political and governance system..." of Mindanao, so that "many *datu*s/*sultans* like Dimaporo and Ampatuan have become government officials and political leaders who generally dispense the public goods as their own private goods to command of their followers," (p. 22, *sic*).

<sup>31</sup> Typically the smallest level of Philippine political administration, consisting of a neighborhood or village.

<sup>32</sup> Research on rent-seeking, bossism, patrimonialism, and crony capitalism in the Philippines is extensive, and accounts of their economic and political impact can be found in Hutchcroft 1998 and 2000b, Sidel 1999, Khan 2000, Kang 2002, and Labonne 2016.

<sup>33</sup> For much more extensive listings of prominent dynasties and the provinces that constitute their primary bases of operation, see Hedman & Sidel 2000 pp. 88-118, Caronan 2016, Managhas et al. 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Parties in the country tend to be weak, short-lived, and of limited value for informing voters about the policy preferences of candidates. Reporting and voter opinions tend instead to focus on the families of candidates, seeing elections as a referendum on which families and factions are winning or losing and viewing shared party coalitions as primarily reflecting which powerful individuals are currently allied with one another. Research on this weak party system includes Landé 1965, Hutchcroft & Rocamora 2003, Manacsa & Tan 2005.

widow, Corazon Aquino, to sweep Marcos from national power.<sup>35</sup> In the decades since this People Power movement returned democracy to the Philippines, efforts at genuine political reform have been mixed. In many respects, the Philippines have become even more dynastic and oligarchic over time.<sup>36</sup> Regulatory rent seeking opportunities and the government's "pork barrel" funding system, which gives members of Congress direct control over funds for their district, have created massive opportunities for bribery and favor trading.<sup>37</sup> In rural and peripheral polities, law enforcement is lax enough to allow for blatant vote manipulation, giving local officials significant power through vote buying schemes.<sup>38</sup> Efforts to reform this system have generally failed. The national imposition of term limits, rather than fostering new entrants, instead has encouraged dynasties to engage in complex systems of office-trading between family members.<sup>39</sup> But at the same time, Philippine politics has also seen a flowering of genuinely democratic and popular political movements.<sup>40</sup> Politicians from initially non-dynastic families do regularly arise, often after gaining wealth through alternative means.<sup>41</sup> Joseph Estrada, the only modern Philippine president not to come from a dynastic family, initially gained fame as a movie star.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the widespread and highly decentralized dynastic elites are far from a unified aristocracy. Elections in most locations are competitive enough that dynastic candidates are forced to adapt and respond to popular pressures, which has generated a mechanism for more versatile dynasties to outcompete more complacent oligarchs.<sup>43</sup> Rodrigo Duterte, while portrayed

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<sup>35</sup> Despite the end of Ferdinand Marcos' authoritarian rule, his family remains an entrenched political force in their home province of Ilocos Norte. Indeed, Hutchcroft 1991 argues that understanding both the Marcos era and the post-Marcos government requires first acknowledging the profound level of continuity between both oligarchic systems. Analyses of dynasticism in the post-Marcos era have estimated that sixty to eighty percent of congressmembers are from dynastic families (Coronel 2004 p. 19, Mendoza et al. 2012). Teehankee 2007 calculates that 160 families have sent more than one member to serve in Congress between 1907 and 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Nathan Quimpo has evocatively described the post-Marcos era as one of "wild oligarchy" (2015) and a "predatory state" (2009).

<sup>37</sup> Discretionary cash transfer systems like the Priority Development Assistance Fund are popularly known as "pork barrel" funds in the Philippines, with many of the same connotations that term has in American politics. As one might expect, funding schemes that delegate disbursement decisions to individual politicians in this way are extremely prone to patrimonialism and corrupt deals, as noted in Yilmaz & Venugopal 2010. In the most abusive cases, political authorities effectively treat such funding sources as personal income or disperse them out to reward loyal clients (Managhas 2010).

<sup>38</sup> Hutchcroft 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Office trading also sometimes happens across families, as when a patron is term limited and relies on a trusted client to hold the office in his place, but family members are more trusted and better preferred when feasible. The perennial trading of offices can result in bizarre dynamics, as when Abdusakur Tan was barred from running again as governor of Sulu, and so instead ran for vice governor under his own son, Abdusakur Tan Jr (Pareño 2013).

<sup>40</sup> The paradoxical nature of Philippine politics, which routinely sees the clash of genuine democratic reformist movements against an extremely entrenched oligarchy, is often remarked on. See, for example, Thompson 1995, Roces 2000, Eaton 2003, and Dressel 2011. Indeed, some commentaries have critiqued the standard view of Philippine politics for being far too elite-focused and have argued that excessive focus on the ruling class ignores critical political processes that have been driven primarily by lower classes (Kerkvliet 1995, Putzel 1999, and Thompson 2010). This hybridization of dynastic and democratic political tendencies has parallels in several other Asian countries (Thompson 2012). Their apparent success might be at least partially explained by their ability to link their family fortunes to certain limited reformist efforts – perhaps most notably through the degree to which female representation in government has tended to expand in dynastic regimes in Asia (Derichs & Thompson 2013).

<sup>41</sup> For further information on the rise of a new wave of family dynasties in the wake of the People Power revolution, see Teehankee 2012.

<sup>42</sup> An account of Estrada's political rise can be found in Hedman 2001.

<sup>43</sup> While many dynasties have persisted and succeeded in shifting their strategic behavior over time, changing conditions have unquestionably led to some families falling from influence and new dynasties arising in their place.

in foreign media as a radical outsider and populist, in fact rose to the presidency from a well-entrenched Mindanaoan dynasty, and used his status as a reformer from far outside Manila's mainstream to promote himself. Competitive diversity among dynasties is also reflected in the different strategies they adopt. Dynasties can be distinguished, for example, by whether they follow a "skinny" path in which they focus on a single office, trading it between family members to avoid term limits, or instead adopt a "fat" path of trying to simultaneously fill a wide variety of different offices with family members.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, while some families scrupulously avoid violent suppression of rivals, other dynasties cultivate a reputation for their connection to organized crime and willingness to engage in electoral violence to keep themselves in power.<sup>45</sup>

The high stakes and rich rewards associated with dynastic dominance over political offices, along with the persistent weakness of the central state, create obvious incentives for violent confrontation between rival elite families.<sup>46</sup> These material incentives in turn combine with a broader cultural tendency in parts of Philippine society to resort to violence in defense of one's kin network. Philippine stereotypes tend to associate feuding culture overwhelmingly with the Muslim Moro minority of western Mindanao. This stereotype stems from the cultural adherence of many Moro to rido traditions. Rido vendettas are driven by ruthless vengeance norms that create extreme sensitivity to any perceived slander, injury, or disrespect that might threaten family honor (*maratabat*).<sup>47</sup> Individuals who feel that this family honor has been insulted are often driven to exact lethal revenge on the offender and their family. Rido feuds tend to be a self-perpetuating problem, since intended or collateral murders often spark further reprisals, creating a perpetual fear that a community will be torn apart by explosive violence. A series of studies investigating the phenomenon found that it was possible to attribute at least 5,500 deaths since the 1930's to rido violence, and that a substantially larger number were displaced from fear of further vengeance killings.<sup>48</sup>

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This history of gradual change within a socio-economic system that nonetheless retains a highly stratified structure is analyzed in greater depth in Timberman 2016.

<sup>44</sup> The terms "thin" and "fat" dynasties were coined by Ronal Mendoza (Tubeza 2018). One of the quintessential examples of a fat dynasty has been the Ampatuans, who in 2010 were estimated by Mendoza to hold 32 elected offices in Maguindanao – roughly 37 percent of all major elected offices in that province (Rimban 2016).

<sup>45</sup> Electoral violence is often attributed to the more aggressive dynasties (see, for example, Coronel 2010). But Mojares 1993 p. 312 contrasts the stereotypical warlord dynasties who possess hordes of weapons and their own private armies with other dynasties that maintain their dominance through less direct means. In many cases, dynasties are content to cooperate and carve out distinct familial spheres of influence – sometimes using their political influence to create new districts or political units to avoid having to compete directly with rival dynastic politicians (Tiongson-Mayrina 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Electoral violence is a pervasive problem in the Philippines, particularly in more peripheral regions where law enforcement is comparatively weak and undermined by local patronage networks (Conde 2007a, Traywick 2013).

<sup>47</sup> As with *rido*, *maratabat* is one of several terms used by different ethnic groups in Mindanao who ascribe to similar honor codes (Torres 2014, p. 11). The most common causes of offense to one's *maratabat*, and thus of subsequent rido feuds, include electoral competition, disputes over land and property, perceived inappropriate, nonconsensual, or offensive sexual relations with one's kin, or insults and mockery (Ibid p. 8). Wealthier and more powerful families in these communities will often feel a particularly strong pressure to launch devastating rido campaigns, since status and regard are so crucial to elite members of society (Matuan 2014 p. 78).

<sup>48</sup> Torres 2014 p. 8. Torres note that roughly half of recorded rido appear to have been satisfactorily resolved. In the other half of cases, rido persist and fester generating tremendous fear and anxiety on both sides that violence might return at any moment. The estimates described by Torres likely underestimate the true extent of the issue – accounts suggest that many families avoid publicizing their rido disputes out of fear of implicating family members in crimes perpetrated during fighting, while police avoid investigating such feuds lest police officers' own families become targets in the rido. Survey reports suggest that in many parts of Mindanao individuals are more afraid of rido-based violence than of political violence perpetrated by belligerent organizations (Villafranca 2009, Kamlian 2014 p. 40).

The exclusive association of feuding with the Moro is at least somewhat misleading. Violent familial disputes lead to some loss of life in every part of the country, and at all different social levels.<sup>49</sup> Explicit vengeance norms appear in a number of the Philippine indigenous ethnicities who carry on cultural traditions that preceded the arrival of Christianity and Islam to the archipelago, including not only the Lumad of Mindanao but also among some of the Igorot peoples of the North.<sup>50</sup> The rido tradition among Moro populations appears to similarly date back to indigenous, pre-Islamic roots, and different ethnicities among the Moro appear to vary widely with respect to how commonly such feuds are practiced.<sup>51</sup> It is also true that none of the Christian populations in Mindanao share explicit vendetta norms comparable to rido, but this is at least partly because most Christian populations on the island descend from settlers who moved from the North as part of a government effort to Christianize the island.<sup>52</sup> The rido tradition should thus be seen as clearly an outlier practice, but it is also one that may shed light on broader patterns of violence in Philippine society. First, because rido traditions are most common in precisely the same regions in which the Philippines' most persistent civil war violence takes place – a correlation which may suggest a deeper connection. And second, because while rido themselves are not necessarily practiced outside of Mindanao, they nonetheless offer a particularly overt and visible example of the types of tensions and violence that may emerge in subtler forms when families in the Philippines compete for prestige and status.

Rido have repeatedly been acknowledged as a destabilizing force in Mindanaoan society, and they often combine with the ethnic and political tensions of the region in ways that perpetuate violence.<sup>53</sup> Rido at times emerge in disputes between Christian and Muslim families, or between families that support different sides in the civil war.<sup>54</sup> When rido become pervasive,

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<sup>49</sup> For examples outside Mindanao, see Ballesta 2009, White pp. 31 to 39 & 44, Rixhon 2014 p. 308, and Sidel 2018. Among ethnic groups where familial vengeance traditions are less formalized, it can admittedly be difficult to ascertain whether attacks intentionally go out of their way to target kinship ties, or whether such targeting is merely a side effect of other social patterns. Is violence between two rival dynasties, for example, driven by dynasticism itself, or is it simply a manifestation of “normal” political violence that that manifests along familial lines simply because kin tend to be given power and influence in the Philippines' heavily dynastic political arena?

<sup>50</sup> The term *Lumad* is a general term used to refer to all practitioners of indigenous religions in Mindanao. For detailed accounts of rido practices among these Mindanaoans, see Montillo-Burton et al. 2014. Similar indigenous vengeance traditions in the northern Luzon region of the Philippines are analyzed in Barton 1971.

<sup>51</sup> The pre-Islamic origins of rido traditions are briefly noted in Torres 2014 p. 8, while ethnic discrepancies in adherence to the practice are analyzed in Kamlian 2014 p. 38.

<sup>52</sup> This recent history of settlement underlies much of the apparent sectarian tensions in Mindanao, since the influx of new Christian populations with government backing has created a wealth of cultural resentments and lingering property disputes. For a brief overview of this settlement history, see Neumann 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Kreuzer 2005, Orendain 2011a, Cabalza 2017, Monsod 2018 p. 219. Rido feuds are viewed by the national police as being destabilizing enough to merit partnering with the Asia Foundation to develop a policy manual for presenting and resolving such feuds (see Philippine National Police & The Asia Foundation 2013). The largest and longest-lasting rido can be tenacious and devastating enough to merit national news when they're finally resolved (Unson 2017).

<sup>54</sup> As previously noted, Christian populations in Mindanao don't typically engage in formal rido among themselves. They are, however, often drawn into rido disputes with their Muslim or Lumad neighbors, and of course less explicitly codified vendettas and feuds can also appear between Christian clans. Rido between Christians and Muslims can be especially tense because of their tendency to activate broader sectarian resentments as the feud progresses. Disputes that appear to fit into a pattern of animosity between Christians and Muslims can often be traced back to more prosaic micro-level conflicts oriented toward specific property disputes or personal grievances (Vellema et al. 2011). Both Christian and Muslim elites have become adept at stoking these family-level grievances and tying them into narratives of ethnic and religious resentments that entrench these elites' position at the cost of increased division in society as a whole (Kaufman 2011). Adam 2013, for example, describes the influence of the

formal institutions degrade and informal violent networks take their place – in some cities, for example, police membership can drop dramatically because even legally permissible killing or capturing of criminals can prompt rido retribution.<sup>55</sup> There is a broad understanding within these communities that unchecked violence cannot be maintained forever, but paths to de-escalation are often difficult. The Manobo, for example, have a tradition of planting a tree at the start of a rido to remind themselves of the perpetual need to continue fighting.<sup>56</sup> Among the most commonly relied on sources of mediation are female relatives of belligerents. Because wives and female family members in Moro society are expected to preserve family honor through sexual purity rather than violence, they face no personal dishonor in calling for an end to vengeance and return to peace. Moreover, because it is seen as dishonorable and cowardly to attack women, they are often able to travel more easily as mediators.<sup>57</sup> Most often, however, resolution of rido also requires the intervention of respected outsiders such as a datu, government official, insurgent group officer, or religious authority.<sup>58</sup> While these authorities are expected to violently defend their own honor and that of their close allies, they also receive renown and prestige for intervening as third parties and helping other groups find reconciliation.<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately, the combination of persistent rido and political violence have had mutually deleterious effects, since the presence of multiple competing authorities increases the opportunity for belligerents to forum-shop and try to cultivate allies who can make fighting continue to appear more appealing than negotiation.<sup>60</sup>

Of course, the mere presence of a broad relationship between clan feuds and political instability in at least some parts of the Philippines does not necessarily mean that the presence or absence of dynastic political leaders inherently influences the likely level of civil war violence. Feuds are, after all, privatized conflicts between a relatively small number of individuals. Even if we assume that competition between dynastic elites may be more prone to descend into violence than those between officials that have less kinship-based investment in their position, that does not necessarily suggest that these conflicts will have reverberations at the scale of civil war violence. But there is some reason to speculate that such a relationship may exist. First, there is ample evidence to suggest that many politicians in war-torn regions of the Philippines often have direct ties to major local belligerent groups, and that political elites can thus at times exercise a

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Baldonado family in the village of Kibla, who built up a network of loyal Christian allies through distribution of land purchased under duress from Muslim locals. The rival Montawil family, for their part, has used its ties to the MNLF to proactively reward loyal Muslim families through aid in helping these families regain their customary land. Other Muslim clans that are excluded from this patronage have, in turn, sought support from the MILF to avoid being marginalized by more powerful factions.

<sup>55</sup> Doro 2014 p. 191.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid p. 170.

<sup>57</sup> Macabuac-Ferolin & Constantino 2014 and Doro p. 184. Similar norms have been noted in other societies, with potentially important implications for the value of including women among peacekeeping forces (Karim & Beardsley 2013). However, as the Maguindanao Massacre demonstrates, such norms are only sporadically honored when passions flare.

<sup>58</sup> Kamlan 2014 estimates that 86% of rido resolution efforts rely on government or law enforcement entities, either exclusively or as part of a broader strategy involving multiple mediating parties (p. 40). On the other hand, Matuan 2014 counters that “not a single rido was solely resolved by the Philippine legal system,” (p. 86) and argues that formal legal sanctions have had to work in conjunction with informal mediation processes to bring an end to feuds.

<sup>59</sup> Torres 2014 p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> The issue of forum-shopping as an impediment to a speedy resolution of conflicts is noted in Lingga 2014 p. 61.

moderating or aggravating influence on the overall degree of violence experienced locally.<sup>61</sup> Second, other scholars have noted that in the Philippines a general correlation appears to exist between the ubiquity of dynasticism of its elected officials and various indicators of governance failures, including higher poverty, greater economic inequality, and poorer administration.<sup>62</sup> Third, the tendency of dynastic authorities to erode government offices in favor of personalistic patronage networks risks eroding the reliability and predictability of public institutions that might otherwise offer non-violent avenues for dispute resolution. In less institutionalized environments, conflicts are likely to last longer and escalate to the point where larger actors such as insurgent groups or government forces become involved.<sup>63</sup> And finally, the more deeply dynastic politics becomes entrenched in a given province or region, the more likely it is that elites at the highest levels of government will begin to channel significant resources into their own kinship-based conflicts or those of their allies.<sup>64</sup> In Mindanao in particular, large-scale rido fighting can involve the mobilization of private armies and use of expensive weapons of war, and there is thus a tendency to seek aid from increasingly wealthy powerbrokers.<sup>65</sup> When dynastic

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<sup>61</sup> It is a cliché that gaining and retaining political power in many regions of the Philippines necessitates amassing “guns, goons, and gold” (Linantud 1998). Anson 2007 quotes a military intelligence officer in Basilan who likened running for office without guns to being “a garlic waiting to get crushed.” The importance of wealth and weaponry in politics inevitably draw politicians into the orbits of combatant groups operating in their territories. Lingga 2014 notes that powerful clans have been known to seed family members into state military and paramilitary institutions or insurgent groups to gain influence and access to militarily powerful allies (p. 61). President Duterte has even spoken openly about members of his large politically influential clan who have joined with the MNLF, MILF, and ISIL, though he has disavowed their actions (Ranada 2017).

<sup>62</sup> Labonne 2013, Tusalem & Pe-Aguirre 2013, Mendoza et al. 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Many civil war conflagrations can be traced back to the unreliability of legal enforcement in peripheral regions – especially property ownership (see Franco & Borrás 2007). Liow 2016 describes clashes between MNLF and MILF sparked by a land ownership dispute between commanders of the two rival organizations (p. 95). Similarly, a negotiation between the government and MILF was slowed considerably by the need to resolve a 40-year old property dispute over two families’ rival claims to a coconut grove (Orendain 2011b). But other forms of conflict can similarly escalate and draw in belligerent forces when police resources prove incapable of quickly and reliably enforcing order. Canuday 2014 describes one incident, for example, where an argument during a youth basketball game eventually cascaded into a MILF occupation of the entire town (p. 238).

<sup>64</sup> Indeed, electoral and political disputes are one of the most frequent causes of rido feuds. Patrimonialism and dynasticism ensure that Philippine politics is intensely personal, and that there is frequent blurring between official authority with personal status and resources (see White pp. 45-49). Barter 2016 describes one rido generated by an electoral dispute between an uncle and his nephew which eventually dragged in both the MILF and official armed forces through allies of the two disputants (p. 187). Durante et al. 2014 recount the story of a vice-mayor who sparked a rido after accusing his mayor of withholding salary payments, ultimately resulting in the death of 19 people (p. 101). Rido culture encourages escalation of normal disputes into violence because it valorizes those who fight for their family’s honor. Black sheep and lower status members of a clan will even proactively escalate disputes into violent rido in the hopes that it will increase their internal standing within the family (Matuan 2014 p. 86).

<sup>65</sup> It has been frequently suggested that traditional feuds and rido disputes have become far deadlier and more disruptive in modern times due to the proliferation of devastating modern weaponry. Conflict between the powerful Tan and Arbison families in Sulu, for example, was reported to involve the mobilization of armored personnel carriers equipped with 50 caliber machine guns (International Crisis Group 2012 p. 13). Weapons, including military-grade equipment, have proliferated across Mindanao in particular, at least in part because of the government’s willingness to distribute firearms among informal militia groups and the private armies of favored local officials (Buchanan 2011). This has generated an enormous shadow economy centered around a vibrant arms market (Lara 2017). Guns are prevalent in Mindanao, but also expensive. This creates dilemmas for poorer Moro, who have come to view firearms as a symbol of masculinity and integral to their roles as defenders of their clans. Because of this, elaborate patronage networks have developed, where wealthy families loan or gift weapons to clients, but in turn expect them to fight on the patron’s behalf when called on (Husin 2014). The result is a complex

capture blurs the lines between official institutions and kinship networks, it is reasonable to ask whether the observed tendency in some parts of the Philippines toward clan feuding may have an impact on these institutions' ability to manage the country's broader intrastate wars.

Civil war violence in the Philippines is certainly not solely, or even primarily, instigated by local dynastic conflicts and clan feuding. But it is plausible that such conflict may be an exacerbating factor comparable to the influence of economic motivators or terrain on the likelihood of conflict.<sup>66</sup> Conditions in the country make it an ideal case to test whether the violent consequences of dynasticism that I have identified in prior chapters do indeed have a noticeable impact in contemporary intrastate conflict. Dynasticism is extremely widespread in the Philippines, but it shows enough variation to observe clear discrepancies in how politically dominant dynasties are and how centralized regional power is under a single family.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, reports on feuding culture in some of the most vulnerable regions of the country are consistent with the mechanisms through which I expect dynasticism to foster vendettas and prolonged disputes over legitimate claims to power and property. This does not necessarily mean that violence in the Philippines will always break down along dynastic lines or that different families will be naturally hostile to one another – as in my analysis of Europe, it is likely that a large proportion of fierce competition will emerge out of intra-kin conflicts when dynasties grow too large and split into factions.<sup>68</sup> But I do predict that in polities where political competition and authority are more inextricably bound up in kin relationships, this unstable basis for governing is likely to contribute to violence and institutional breakdown, up to and including at the level of large civil war incidents.

## **Section II** **Methodology**

### ***Dependent and Independent Variables***

In this chapter, I seek to test whether dynastic competition is an underlying driver of political violence in the Philippines. I consequently hypothesize that regions of the country

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social web of obligations, privilege, and honor that is deeply bound into firearms and their availability at different levels of wealth and status.

<sup>66</sup> For a review of some of the most commonly suggested underlying promoters of civil war conflict, see Hegre & Sambanis 2006.

<sup>67</sup> For general descriptions regarding which regions of the Philippines are regarded as particularly dynastic or are seen as exhibiting unusual dynamics such as extreme domination by specific families, see Caronan 2016, Rivera 2016 p. 62, Tamayo 2018.

<sup>68</sup> Intra-kin competition is certainly widespread in the Philippines, and it's not unusual for these internal feuds to escalate into violence. Rido between different branches of a family are relatively common (especially from disputes over the division of inherited land, as in Lingga 2014 pp. 52-53), and splits dividing large clans into competing factions are a regular occurrence. Coronel 2007, for example, describes how Luis Singson rose to power after allegedly killing his strongman uncle Floro Crisologo, and Rood 2012a describes the weakening of both the Duranos and Revillas due to internecine fighting in recent years. Where intra-kin conflict in the modern Philippines is likely to differ from that of early modern Europe is in the predictable splintering of loyalties along lineage lines. In aristocratic Europe, patrilineage was heavily emphasized, and it was thus expected that loyalty to all relatives outside the patriline tended to be weaker and more likely to fade. By contrast, the Philippines is a historically bilateral society, where relationships with both paternal and maternal kin tend to be equally prioritized (Turner 2013). I thus expect that when Philippine clans splinter, they will tend to divide in more idiosyncratic ways rather than along the consistent clear-cut patrilineal lines described in the previous chapter. Testing this hypothesis is not possible in the current chapter, but I briefly discuss the value of further research into such intra-kin competition in my final section.

where powerful dynasties more thoroughly dominate electoral politics are likely to experience greater levels of political violence. To test this hypothesis, I first constructed a province-level dataset documenting annual levels of political violence throughout the Philippines.<sup>69</sup> For this dataset, I relied on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's Georeferenced Event Dataset. This UCDDP dataset endeavors to catalogue all instances of intrastate political violence in a disaggregated form, allowing for analysis down to a provincial or even municipal level when detailed attack information was available.<sup>70</sup> Event details are collected through systematic collection of media reports, with careful documentation of sources and methods accessible on the program's website. Attacks are included in the dataset when they involve at least one group of armed political actors, such as a state or rebel organization, and when the incident can be credibly estimated to have directly caused at least one fatality. The Georeferenced Event Dataset is a widely referenced resource with well-established coding practices, greatly enhancing the replicability and comparative value of analyses that rely on it.<sup>71</sup> For this analysis, I focus solely on attacks that took place within the Philippines. Initial investigation suggested that the vast majority of documented attacks were reliably coded down to the provincial level, but often could not be isolated with further precision. I thus limit my political disaggregation to the province level, of which there are 81 at present, along with a National Capital Region.<sup>72</sup> As in the previous chapter, I focus primarily on the presence or absence of political violence – while it is conceivable that dynasticism also has an impact on the average lethality of attacks, the duration of conflict, or the intensity and number of attacks, any tests on these dimensions would be largely speculative and would lack a strong theoretical basis for hypothesis-building at present. My primary method of operationalizing political violence in this study is thus through the creation of a simple binary variable demarcating whether or not at least one violent incident was recorded in a given province-year.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> For the analytic value in disaggregating civil war geography below the state level, see Buhaug & Gates 2002, Buhaug & Lujala 2005, Cederman & Gleditsch 2009, and Raleigh & Hegre 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Sundberg & Melander 2013 and Croicu & Sundberg 2017. The analysis in this chapter currently relies on the 5.0 edition of the dataset, which extends to 2015. More recent versions have moderately restructured the coding of conflicts and further disaggregated several of them. I have not yet performed updated analysis on this new coding, but the most likely effect will be to further increase the number of observed conflict onsets associated with the Moro ethnic separatism movement. Determining whether this change increases or decreases the observed correlation between dynasticism and civil war onset will require further analysis. If my hypothesis is correct, this change in coding should not substantially reduce the significance of this correlation.

<sup>71</sup> Notable prior works to rely on the dataset include Fjelde & von Uexkull 2012 and Fjelde & Hultman 2013. On the other hand, Eck 2012 offers an informative critique of this and similar datasets and provides a note of caution regarding some of their limitations.

<sup>72</sup> Province administration in the Philippines can be somewhat complex. Most notably, several major cities are geographically located within a province but for administrative or political reasons are sometimes counted as being distinct from those provinces. When the province of a city is ambiguous in this way, I rely on geographic proximity to determine which province a city should be associated with. My analysis does not account for the short-lived Shariff Kabunsuan province, which only briefly existed before being dissolved by court order.

<sup>73</sup> Special attention should be given to the National Capital Region, the sprawling territory that encompasses not only Manila itself but also 15 other adjacent cities. This region has no governor but has a sprawling population that gives it enormous congressional representation. In 2015, the NPR held 32 congressional seats, while the next largest province held nine. Rather than condense this enormous polity into a single set of observations, separate city-year observations were created for each of the 16 individual cities. This approach also lowers the risk that I falsely identify unrelated politicians with the same last name as dynasts – while such name-sharing is relatively rare in the Philippines, the sheer size of the NPR elected representative pool increases the likelihood of false positives. At present, all cities are large enough to have at least one representative, but in earlier periods some of the smaller cities had to share a congressman. During such periods, my analysis treated the congressional district as the unit of



As described in the previous chapter, it is insufficient to simply observe every year of violence because extended conflicts often result in extended periods of uninterrupted violence in which there is heavy temporal correlation between observations. As such, and in keeping with standard practices in the statistical analysis of civil wars, my main dependent variable is the appearance of a conflict onset. Political violence in the modern Philippines tends to be associated with three broad conflict fronts: the communist guerilla insurrection led by the New People's Army, the ethno-religious separatist movement for the Moro people of western Mindanao (in which the Moro National Liberation Front, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the Abu Sayyaf group, and local chapters of the Islamic State are all involved), and one-sided attacks enacted by elements within the armed forces or paramilitary militias.<sup>74</sup> UCDP coding conventions further disaggregate these conflicts along broadly dyadic lines, so that, for example, violence between a government and a rebel group is assigned a different conflict ID than an attack by that rebel group against a civilian population. I relied on UCDP's conflict coding to separate out observed attacks into different ongoing conflicts, and I then used these data to code for province-years in which a conflict either emerged or reemerged after at least one year of quiescence in the province. As in the previous chapter, I also introduced a peace year count variable reflecting the number of years of uninterrupted peace in a province, thereby controlling for the parallel temporal interdependence that exists between consecutive peaceful observations.<sup>75</sup> I depart from the previous chapter, however, in adding a further temporal control counting the number of consecutive years of prior ongoing violence. Because my observation of European wars was dyadic, it was impossible for a new conflict to emerge in the midst of an ongoing conflict. By contrast, it is often the case that a new conflict will emerge in a Philippine province even as a separate ongoing conflict continues to rage. Since it is likely that extended periods of political violence heavily influence the likelihood of further violence emerging,<sup>76</sup> I include a prior war

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observation. My approach potentially results in the NCR having outsized weight in my analysis, since its constituent cities contribute to distinct observations. Insofar as this may bias my results, it's likely that any overrepresentation will weaken the observed correlation between dynasticism and violence. This is because dynastic feuds and lethal political vendettas are anecdotally reported to be more associated with peripheral regions and are less pronounced around the capital (McCoy 1993a p. 21). It should be noted that my approach leads to some small congressional districts in the NPR having only a single elected official associated with them in my analysis (one congressman) whereas all provinces automatically have at least two (one congressman and one governor). As a result, I omit these observations from a handful of models when particular variables (most importantly, the "shared dynasty" and "rival dynasty" dummy variables) rest on the assumption that there are at least two elected officials tied to the province-year observations.

<sup>74</sup> In addition to sources cited elsewhere in this chapter, a variety of other analyses exist detailing the history of contemporary political violence in the Philippines. Insightful resources regarding the Moro conflict and major combatants such as the MNLF and MILF include Buendia 2005, Schiavo-Campo & Judd 2005, and Rood 2012b. Perhaps the most prominent small organization associated with this conflict has been Abu Sayyaf, discussed in greater depth in Turner 2003, Abuzza 2005, and Ugarte 2007. More recently, this conflict has also sparked the rise of ISIL affiliates, as discussed in Franco 2017. Alongside this ethnonationalist separatist conflict, a parallel civil war has long persisted with communist NPA forces (see Jones 1989). Civilians in war-torn areas are also regularly subjected to abuse by paramilitary and militia forces, which are described in greater detail in Van der Kroef 1988 and Hedman 2000.

<sup>75</sup> In the prior chapter, peace year count was split into cubic splines to capture potential curvilinear effects. The peace year count in this analysis did not show sufficient variation to similarly split into splines, and so was included as a simple linear count.

<sup>76</sup> The precise direction of influence is likely to vary depending on the specific zone of contestation in a given conflict. On the one hand, extended periods of conflict are likely to weaken the state and prompt retaliation and rebel recruitment, thus making further violence in subsequent years more likely. On the other hand, an entrenched conflict may harden the lines of contestation and make it less likely that an entirely new conflict will emerge. Since my

year count that measures the length of uninterrupted years of prior war that took place before a given observation.<sup>77</sup> Provinces split into new units with some frequency in the Philippines, and for temporally continuous variables such as prior year counts or tallies of established dynasties (see below) these new provinces incorporate the information from their originating province prior to their split.

The 5.0 version of the Georeferenced dataset extends to 2015, but the start date for this study's observations was determined by my independent variable of interest – dynastic capture of local electoral institutions. Dynasties have been extremely influential throughout the Philippines' political history, but my analysis and hypotheses focus specifically on the modern role dynasties play in the country's democratically contested political environment. In the Marcos years, for example, dynastic influence primarily operated as a large-scale patronage hierarchy, with families gaining influence based on their perceived loyalty to the ruling regime. Conversely, even deeply entrenched and highly influential dynasties – including, most notably, the Aquino family led by Marcos' chief domestic rival Benigno Aquino Jr. – risked seeing their influence constrained and marginalized in favor of more loyalist families.<sup>78</sup> The post-Marcos era of competitive elections, by contrast, has created the conditions for a much more direct and public competition between politicians and their dynastic and non-dynastic rivals.<sup>79</sup> I thus begin observations in 1989, after the entrenchment of relatively democratic government through the 1986 People Power Movement, the establishment of the 1987 constitution, and the completion of open congressional elections in 1987 and gubernatorial elections in 1988.

Comparing levels of institutional capture by dynastic networks across different province-years first necessitated a method of operationalizing dynasticism. To do so, I primarily follow Querubín 2016 in examining the inherited names of elected officials.<sup>80</sup> As Querubín explains, Philippine naming conventions make name comparisons relatively more reliable for establishing relatedness in the Philippines than is often the case for many societies.<sup>81</sup> First, full names in the Philippines tend to follow a standardized structure, wherein a personal given name is followed by the mother's maiden name, followed in turn by the father's patronym. An individual's full name thus identifies both their patrilineal and matrilineal origins, roughly doubling the amount of genealogical information when compared to naming conventions that only include a patronym. Moreover, married women traditionally keep their maiden name as an additional middle name, further increasing the amount of kinship links that can be gleaned from officials'

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variable of interest is conflict onset, extended periods of conflict may reduce the likelihood of a new conflict emerging simply because all major conflicts were already active in the previous year.

<sup>77</sup> As with the peace year count, this variable did not show sufficient variation to split into distinct splines and so was included as a simple linear count.

<sup>78</sup> The Marcos government is often viewed as an archetypal historical example of a sultanistic regime (Chehabi & Linz 1998). In the early stages of rule, local dynasticism offered a clear template for how the dictator could centralize power around his family and close allies, and many residents doubtless saw little difference in Marcos' rule and the power of local dynasties who similarly personalized control of cities or provinces. This national strategy of personalistic rule, however, necessarily meant that Marcos was increasingly compelled to challenge and subordinate rival entrenched political dynasties and ensure that power was fully centralized around his rule. Further details on Marcos' use of patrimonialism and personalistic networks to maintain power can be found in Celozza 1997.

<sup>79</sup> McGeown 2012 aptly describes modern Philippine democracy as "a family affair."

<sup>80</sup> Mendoza et al. 2012 developed a similar approach to comparing dynasticism across provinces through name comparison.

<sup>81</sup> See also Fafchamps & Labonne 2017.

names.<sup>82</sup> Perhaps most importantly, the relatively artificial process by which family names were initially assigned to Philippine families by Spanish colonial authorities greatly reduces the incidences of repeated family names among unrelated individuals. When family names were standardized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the colonial government did so through a top-down process of assigning different lists of potential names to different administrative zones, and then tasking local officials to assign these predetermined names to distinct heads of households.<sup>83</sup> While this hasn't entirely eliminated repetition of names among families without clear kinship ties to one another, this history does make such misleading duplication relatively rare in the Philippines compared to most societies. Some individuals also possess further personalized middle names, such as christening names, but these are often common personal names and easy to distinguish from family names.<sup>84</sup>

The process of identifying dynastic elected officials thus began through assembling a list of past and present officeholders and comparing inherited names across this list.<sup>85</sup> Because observations were to be performed at the province level of analysis, my analysis was based on two of the offices that tended to be most influential at this level of politics – governor and congressperson.<sup>86</sup> Lists of prior officeholders were separated by province, both to lower the risk

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<sup>82</sup> To be sure, this approach still fails to capture an extensive set of kinship ties. Links through either of an individual's grandmothers, for example, will not be reflected in naming conventions. Nor will the link to a son-in-law or other men who marry into a dynasty. Nonetheless, in the absence of more detailed kinship data, these naming conventions still considerably increase the amount of kinship links that can be gleaned when compared to societies where individuals routinely only carry a single lineage name.

<sup>83</sup> Gealogo 2009 and Querubín 2016.

<sup>84</sup> Another possible source of misidentification might come from politicians who change their name or avoid using middle names that too closely tie them to a prominent dynasty from which they originate. However, in practice politicians usually emphasize their dynastic ties and embrace the name recognition that comes from a prominent family name. In the absence of robust political parties, such names are key to developing trust and recognition in the political sphere. As McCoy 1993b notes on page 433: "For an informed Philippine audience, however, each family name – Soriano, Yulo, Lopez – is encoded with layers of meaning, and their mere recitation evokes convincing resonance of shared knowledge."

<sup>85</sup> Data on electoral winners of gubernatorial and congressional seats were drawn initially from Querubín 2016, and then checked and expanded on when possible through archival research, local media reports, and information drawn from the national COMELEC Commission on Elections. It should be noted that for the purposes of this analysis, I assume that all elected officials sit for the entirety of their (typically three-year) term of office. In reality, this is not always the case. Some elected officials die during their term of office, and in some cases election results are eventually overturned in subsequent court cases. However, these instances are relatively rare occurrences. Official congressional records show that during my period of observation, 20 out of 409 total terms saw the office become vacant before the term ended. Records on gubernatorial terms aren't as centralized, but data collected from Mindanews suggests that in the period from 1987 to 2013, 10 gubernatorial terms (out of 194 total terms in Mindanao) witnessed the death or departure of the governor mid-term. These two cases suggest that roughly 5% of terms aren't completed by the victor of an election. In many of these cases, even the death of an officeholder does not necessarily release their district from the power of their dynastic machine, as many officials will have entrenched family members in positions of influence throughout their district or province (see Conde 2007b).

<sup>86</sup> All provinces contain at least one congressional district, a governor, and a vice-governor, and these seats tend to be key to dynasties' ability to shore up local powerbases. Lower local offices such as mayors or counselors for barangays also play a crucial role in maintaining influence and patrimonial networks. Of these, only the names of governors and congressmembers could be easily verified throughout the country. In contrast to the House, the Senate is elected at-large through a single national vote. Senators, along with Presidents, and Vice-Presidents, all typically come from dynastic families as well, but these are all elected nationally and so cannot be divided according to province. In practice, dynasties that ascend to these prominent positions typically already have a robust local machine that has already raised family members to the rank of congressman or governor in these officials' home provinces. The ARMM has a unique further layer of offices in the form of a governor and vice-governor. As with

of false positives arising through comparing names across the entire country and to reflect the fact that Philippine political dynasties tend to rely heavily on localized geographic bases of support. For each province, a list of every individual elected to either of these offices was assembled dating back to the republic's 1946 independence. Beginning in 1989, officials' names were checked to determine whether they shared a last name or non-personal middle name with a prior or contemporary elected official from the same province.<sup>87</sup> Through this process, all elected officials for my period of observation from 1989 to 2015 were categorized through a dichotomous variable designating them as either a dynastic or non-dynastic politician.<sup>88</sup> To be certain, this process does not capture all the ways in which kinship intersects with Philippine political structures. Notably, it doesn't extend more granularly into the mayoral and barangay levels of politics, where many political dynasties build up influence and develop extensive patronage ties. This method also doesn't capture the heavy reliance of non-dynastic politicians on non-political kin resources, including wealth from family-owned businesses or special inherited status among *datus* and similar elite families. But insofar as successful dynasties are likely to eventually translate their informal political influence into positions of authority as governors or congressional representatives of a province, my approach here identifies these successfully entrenched dynasties and the candidates that spring from them.<sup>89</sup>

Having distinguished dynastic from non-dynastic politicians, the final phase of operationalization involved aggregating these officeholder attributes to the broader province-year. This aggregation could be achieved through a number of different approaches, but methods of aggregation each had potentially different implications regarding dynasticism's precise relationship with political violence.<sup>90</sup> I thus tested a number of different forms of aggregation to better isolate precisely how dynasticism and the Philippines' ongoing civil war conflicts might intersect. By far the simplest approach was the creation of a *dynasty dummy* – a dichotomous variable reflecting whether any of the offices were held by a dynastic variable. However, such a dummy is likely to be highly correlated to province size: whereas the smallest political units (a single city or congressional district in the National Capital Region) possessed only one congressperson and no governor, the largest province in the sample (Cebu) has a governor and

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the Senate and Executive Branch offices, I do not account for these pan-province offices in my identification of influential dynasties in a province.

<sup>87</sup> Elections take place mid-year in election years, and new officials ascend to their position roughly one month later. To minimize endogeneity issues and avoid ahistorical attribution of effects, I lag all officials by one year. Thus, an official who was elected and assumed office in 1992 is recorded as beginning their term in 1993.

<sup>88</sup> While heavily influenced by the methodology described in Querubín 2016, my analysis relied on a different population of politicians that did not include unelected candidates. Because of this, and because of some unclear coding decisions presented in that earlier work, I opted to independently assemble my own list of dynastic politicians rather than simply relying on Querubín's coding.

<sup>89</sup> It should be noted that my analysis here assumes that dynasties generally operate as a coherent bloc, with members working together and balancing against the influence of other dynastic candidates. In the majority of cases, this is a reasonable assumption – leading members of clans try to ensure that families operate strategically and try to avoid internal bickering that might signal weakness or division to outsiders. However, tensions and divisions do regularly occur within large political clans (see, for example, Sotelo 2018). My treatment of families as monolithic alliances is thus a necessary oversimplification in the absence of more detailed data. Insofar as this simplification is likely to bias results, infighting within families would be expected to decrease the observed correlation between inter-dynastic competition and incidents of broader political violence. It's thus unlikely that my simplification of dynastic alliances in Philippine politics will erroneously generate false confirmation of my hypothesis.

<sup>90</sup> Writing on ethnic inequalities and their impact on civil wars, Buhaug et al. 2014 provide a detailed methodological explanation regarding why relying on only one method of operationalizing a concept may lead to false conclusions.

10 congressional representatives. Unsurprisingly, larger provinces are significantly more likely to have at least one dynastic official at any given time, making this dummy highly unreliable. An estimator that better takes varying size into account is an estimate of *average dynasticism* – the number of dynastic officeholders in any given province year divided by the total number of offices.

This estimate of average dynasticism may reflect the general importance of dynastic power structures in a given province but it also fails to account for the distribution of power between different dynasties. It is highly likely, for example, that a province thoroughly dominated by a single dynasty will experience very different levels of stability and contestation when compared to a province that is equivalently dynastic, but in which multiple entrenched families compete for power. Once again, this distribution of dynastic power could be most easily estimated through dichotomous dummy variables. A *rival dynasties dummy*, for example, was generated to identify those province-years in which two or more officials from distinct established dynasties held office simultaneously.<sup>91</sup> I similarly created a complementary dummy that identified province-years in which a single dynasty held two or more offices simultaneously, which I dubbed a “*fat*” *dynasty dummy*.<sup>92</sup> For both dichotomous variables, observations were dropped for those few cases in which only one elected official was associated with the province.<sup>93</sup> As with the prior dummy variable, these indicators provide a foundation for comparison but are also relatively blunt and heavily impacted by the varying number of total elected officials. As such, more complex estimates were also created. To test the impact of greater rivalry and competition between different dynasties, I generated an estimate of the *proportional number of dynasties*, which I generated by counting the number of distinct dynasties to hold office in a given province-year and then divided this count by the total number of offices available at that time.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, a *dynastic dominance* estimator was created to more

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<sup>91</sup> “Rival” here refers to any unrelated dynasties holding the political office in the same province simultaneously. In practice, some such dynasties actually have longstanding alliances with one another, including intermarriage between members. My analysis here generally does not attempt to take such connections into account – if two dynasts operating in the same province do not share any names in common, they are classified as rivals. The sole exception is the handful of cases in which a third individual bridging both families also serves simultaneously in the same office. Thus, for example, in a hypothetical year in which a Cojuangco, and Aquino, and a Cojuangco-Aquino all served simultaneously in the same province, my approach would classify all three as operating as a single unified dynastic bloc.

<sup>92</sup> This is in contrast to “thin” dynasties, where only one member of the family tends to serve in politics at one time, and offices tend to be passed down like inheritance from one member to the next. My focus on only congressional and gubernatorial offices means that I necessarily underestimate the extent and size of fat dynasties, which tend to sprawl and fill out local offices and positions. Ronald Mendoza, who coined this terminology, estimated in 2010 that the Ampatuan clan of Maguindanao was the fattest dynasty at the time, and calculated that this family held 16 out of the 54 total major elected positions in the province (Lingao 2013b).

<sup>93</sup> All standard provinces in the Philippines have at least one governor and one congressional representative. The only exception are cities in the National Capital Region, which lack governors. Larger cities in the NCR possess multiple congressmembers, so the only observations dropped in this way were those from the less populated cities in the capital area.

<sup>94</sup> Estimates thus ranged from 0, if there were no dynasties holding office in the province-year, to 1 in cases where every single office was held by a politician from a distinct dynasty. In the case where only a single dynasty holds any or all elected offices in a province, this estimate results in a score of  $1/n$ , where  $n$  is the number of elected offices available in the province-year. This estimator thus strongly emphasizes the importance of competition between dynasties – it implicitly suggests that a province thoroughly dominated by a single dynast ( $1/n$ ) is generally more similar to a province without any dynasties in power ( $0/n$ ) than it is to one in which every office is held by a politician from a distinct dynasty ( $n/n$ ).

precisely estimate the unitary dominance of a single dynasty: this estimator was calculated by counting the number of seats held by the largest dynasty in power at the time, and dividing this number by the total number of available offices.<sup>95</sup>

One final variable was created that potentially represents a more parsimonious means of estimating and conceptualizing the distribution of political power between rival dynasties: an estimate of *dynastic polarization*. Inspired by the related concept used in the study of ethnic violence,<sup>96</sup> this variable is designed to estimate how closely a given distribution of groups within a population comes to emulating a perfectly polarized split between two equal groups. This measure thus reflects the intuition that violence and conflict may be comparatively low when a population is split between a wide variety of groups who are forced to cooperate with each other, but the competition is fiercer when the population is largely comprised of two equally powerful groups who are competing to gain political dominance.<sup>97</sup> Polarization in a population can be estimated using the following equation:

$$RQ = 4 \sum_{i=1}^N \pi_i^2 (1 - \pi_i)$$

Where “n” represents the number of distinct groups (in this case, the number of distinct families represented in elected office in a given province-year) and  $\pi_i$  represents the proportion of the population contained in each group (the number of offices held by a given family divided by the total number of available offices in a province-year). It should be noted that, since this equation depends on inclusion of all groups represented in the population, it does not make as clear a distinction between well-established dynasties and politicians who come from non-dynastic backgrounds.<sup>98</sup> But particularly for larger provinces, polarization captures the important distinction between a multipolar vs. a bipolar rivalry across political families. Potentially the largest concern surrounding use of this estimator in the current study is that it is primarily effective for comparisons across large populations, and in cases such as in this analysis where the population of elected offices is routinely on the order of one, two, three, or four offices, the total population may inordinately influence the range of available polarization estimates.<sup>99</sup> To control

<sup>95</sup> In this case, a score of 0 is produced when there are no dynasties holding power at the time, and a score of 1 is produced when a single dynasty holds all seats in the province-year. In a province-year where no dynasty holds more than one seat simultaneously, this estimate produces a score of  $1/n$ , where  $n$  is the total number of elected offices available in the province-year.

<sup>96</sup> Montalvo & Reynal-Querol 2005.

<sup>97</sup> This intuition is compatible with my constructivist conclusions in the previous chapter. When two rival families are arrayed against each other, it is reasonable to hypothesize that tensions and fears will grow, and that mutual alienation will set in. But this intuition can also be understood in more rationalist terms if one assumes that a perfectly polarized environment incentivizes both parties to fight rather than achieve peaceful compromises over power. For more on polarization and the likelihood of conflict, see Esteban & Schneider 2008.

<sup>98</sup> According to my operationalization in this chapter, any family with more than one member holding office simultaneously in the same province is necessarily a dynasty. But in cases where a single member of a family holds office, the polarization formula cannot distinguish between a lone scion of a long-established dynasty versus an individual whose family has never held office in the past.

<sup>99</sup> In single-district NCR cities, the lone congressman will invariably produce a polarization score of zero. In a two-official province-year, the only possible scores are zero or one. And in a three-official province-year, the polarization score will always be either  $8/9$  or zero. As this suggests, polarization scores can thus be heavily influenced by the specific number of total offices available in a province. Since these effects are particularly pronounced among smaller districts, there is some reason for concern that province size may inadvertently bias any attempts to measure the impact of family polarization across office

for the effect of small population size, tests also include the use of an *equidistant polarization control*, which simply calculates the polarization output for given population size wherein every elected official is part of a distinct and singular group. Regressions that include this control effectively measure the effect of distributions of offices between families that are distinctly more or less polarized than the inherent baseline level of polarization that is simply a product of the number offices possessed by that province.

### ***Control Variables***

As described in Chapter One, a wide variety of underlying factors have been shown to correlate with higher incidents of civil war violence, and it is likely that similar social and political variations contribute to uneven levels of political violence within the Philippines. Indeed, certain regions of the country – most notably the separatist region of western Mindanao – have well-established reputations for being persistently more violence-prone than the country as a whole. While it is plausible that some of this variation may be the result of geographic disparities in the power of local dynasties,<sup>100</sup> dynasticism's impact is almost certainly a weaker driver of violence than more fundamental local demographic and economic variations. It is thus crucial to control for these large-scale drivers of conflict before ascertaining how much dynasticism may also be linked to localized incidents of violence. Controlling for these alternative explanations is complicated by the relative lack of detailed province-level data on many crucial economic and political indicators, but there are nonetheless a number of indicators that can be included to increase the precision of statistical analysis.

I began the assembly of local control variables by focusing on temporal variations across the period of observations, building off of the year splines, peace year splines, and war year count described earlier in this section. First, because my analysis focuses on conflict onset, there is likely to be a bias toward increased incidents at the start of any observation when all ongoing conflicts will be coded as beginning. Even in the case of new provinces created after 1989, which I treat as the continuation of prior observations from the parent province, it is likely that a newly created political unit may activate previously dormant rivalries and spur on increased likelihood of violence. I thus include a dummy for the first observation of each province. The Philippines has also long been observed to experience persistently high levels of election-related violence,<sup>101</sup> which should be disaggregated from specifically dynastic violence effects. To control for cyclical election violence, I also include a dummy variable for major election years.<sup>102</sup> While winners' entry into political offices were lagged to account for mid-year swearing in, I did not similarly lag this election year dummy because electoral violence is presumed to be more contemporaneous with elections themselves. As a result, the final year of any elected incumbent's term of office takes place in one of these election years.

Philippine provinces exhibit wide-ranging variation in economic, political, and demographic conditions, and the lack of precise province-level data can make it difficult to control for these varying conditions. Conveniently, however, the Philippine government groups

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<sup>100</sup> Mendoza 2013 describes some of the variation in dynasticism across provinces and estimates that the most thoroughly dynastic at his time of writing were Siquijor, Maguindanao, Ilocos Sur, and the Dinagat Islands.

<sup>101</sup> Traywick 2013.

<sup>102</sup> Since 1992, most elections in the Philippines have operated on a consistent three-year cycle, with senatorial, congressional, and gubernatorial elections all occurring in the same year and presidential elections occurring every two cycles. Some local government elections take place outside this schedule, but these are not coded as election years in this analysis.

its provinces into 17 different regions based on geographic proximity as well as economic and demographic similarity. For example, the Muslim majority regions of southern Mindanao, where the vast majority of ethnic separatist violence takes place, are grouped together in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. The central, highly urbanized core of the country where much of the nation's wealth is concentrated is comprised of the cities of the National Capital Region. Thus, while linear estimates of demographic and social variation by province are often impossible to reliably construct, a basic control for geographic variation can be developed through the inclusion of a series of dummy variables for each of these multi-province regions.<sup>103</sup> Since the Philippine regions were designed to roughly reflect geographic, cultural, demographic, and economic similarities in groups of provinces, this series of dichotomous variables offers at least a basic control for cross-province variation.

While regional dummies created a baseline control to account for geographical variations, enough within-country data existed to derive several other controls for factors that may influence political violence. First, it is reasonable to assume that larger, more populated provinces are likely to experience higher likelihood of political violence. Philippine government census data was thus used to estimate the population of each province, with estimates linearly interpolated for periods between census years and extended forward and backward when interpolation was not possible.<sup>104</sup> These population estimates were logged to account for the likely diminishing effect of increased population at high levels. Initially, controls for the number of elected officials in a given province-year were also included, since several variables I introduce to estimate levels of dynasticism are likely to rise with higher numbers of concurrent elected offices. But presumably because Philippine political representation is generally proportionate to the population, the effects of this control were wiped out when it was included alongside the logged population. Census data also differentiated between the population of the province as a whole and populations living in Highly Urbanized Cities – a specific political designation for the country's largest metropolis. Dividing the urban population from the total population allowed for a rough estimate for levels of urbanization in each province. Since much of the political violence in the country is reportedly concentrated in more rural and outlying areas where state penetration is reduced, this control was predicted to correlate with lower incidents of violence as urbanization increased. Relatedly, it has often been proposed that rough terrain similarly reduces state penetration and increases the viability of political conflicts.<sup>105</sup> A secondary control variable was thus derived from government estimates of the percent of forested land in each province.<sup>106</sup> This variable would be expected to have the converse effect of urbanization, demonstrating increased likelihood of violence in provinces that are heavily forested.

Finally, it is often suggested that economic factors are likely to demonstrate a close correlation with political violence – in most situations, we would expect that poverty tends to both increase the discontent of the population and to decrease the effectiveness of the state in

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<sup>103</sup> An alternative approach would be to include individual dummies for each province to more precisely control for inter-provincial variations. But because not all provinces have recorded conflict onsets during the period of observation, this would necessarily mean dropping some observations. The region-level dummies thus offer the best balance between capturing key variations without excluding any observations entirely.

<sup>104</sup> Census data are available through the Philippine Statistics Authority.

<sup>105</sup> See Rustad et al. 2008.

<sup>106</sup> Total Forest Land as a proportion of overall province land area was estimated using land classification data from the Philippine National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, accessible online at [openstat.psa.gov.ph](http://openstat.psa.gov.ph).



repressing rebellion.<sup>107</sup> However, this relationship may not be entirely linear, since rebellion may only be profitable in certain types of economic environments.<sup>108</sup> I include two controls for economic factors. First, the general economic condition of the country and the resources available to the central government are proxied through a lagged estimate of the annual GDP of the Philippines as a whole.<sup>109</sup> This variable accounts for temporal variation between observations. Distinguishing between wealthy and poor provinces within the country, however, is more difficult. While radical variation in wealth levels are known to exist,<sup>110</sup> publicly available Philippine economic data generally do not provide detailed annual economic data at the province level.<sup>111</sup> Among the few detailed sources of estimates was a Philippine government study measuring province-level variations in average family household income level.<sup>112</sup> In the absence of more applicable data, I rely on these estimates to proxy for economic inequalities between provinces. For most provinces, observations were linearly interpolated for missing years and extended backwards and forwards to account for time periods beyond the range of the study.<sup>113</sup> In the few cases of provinces where family income data were not collected, I matched these provinces to comparable provinces in the same region with roughly analogous size and physical geography.

### *Section III* *Results*

Unless stated otherwise, all regressions presented in the tables below are cross-sectional time series logistical regressions with clustered standard errors and random effects. As hypothesized the tests I present in this section suggest that dynasticism does positively correlate with higher incidents of civil war violence. However, this correlation does not appear to be a simple linear relationship in which more heavily dynastic provinces consistently coincide with increased conflict. To the contrary, the results presented below are more consistent with an interpretation wherein it is specifically dynastic competition and polarization, rather than dynasticism more generally, that contributes most heavily to civil war attacks in the Philippines. Thus, comparatively speaking, both provinces with minimal dynastic capture and those fully

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<sup>107</sup> Crost et al. 2016, for example, find that randomly assigned cash transfer programs do appear to lower the prevalence of conflict and insurgency at the village level, though they caution that this effect may simply displace violence into surrounding communities.

<sup>108</sup> Regional wealth from natural resources, for example, may create substantially different conflict dynamics than wealth from trade or labor (Ross 2004, Holden & Jacobson 2007).

<sup>109</sup> Annual national GDP per capita data were assembled from the World Bank's World Development Indicators. I operationalize GDP per capita as a linear estimate in this chapter. While GDP is sometimes log-transformed in cross-national analyses to account for widely divergent international wealth levels, this step isn't necessary for a single-country case study.

<sup>110</sup> Some of the most conflict-prone regions of the Philippines, such as many of the Mindanao provinces, are also among the country's poorest. See Ringuet 2002 and Balisacan 2003.

<sup>111</sup> Instead, economic data collected by the Philippine government tends to be aggregated to the regional level.

<sup>112</sup> Longitudinal data from Family Income and Expenditures surveys are available through the Philippines Statistics Authority.

<sup>113</sup> During the period of observation, some larger provinces were split into several smaller provinces. This process doesn't generally create radical shifts in estimated income of the subdivisions. In the absence of more detailed sub-province data on income disparities prior to a province's split, I simply relied on linear interpolation to calculate a gradual shift from a parent-province's average income to the new province's first recorded average income.

dominated by a single dynasty appear to be less prone to violence than are dynasties where a handful of powerful dynasties compete for power. While more complex than initially hypothesized, these results are highly consistent with my theory that dynastic politics contributes to broader civil war violence in the Philippines. Indeed, in many ways the apparent dynamic reflected in the results below, where violence peaks when several dynasties become entrenched rivals for the same territories and offices, is highly consistent with my conclusions in the previous chapter that dynastic violence is driven in large part by overlapping claims to dynastic legitimacy and by entrenched vendettas between rival families.

I begin my analysis with a simple plausibility test. In Model 1, I operationalize dynasticism as a simple dummy variable reflecting whether the governor or any congressmembers from the province are members of a dynasty in a given province-year. I omit any further control variables and include only temporal controls. Because this initial test does not include crucial controls for crucial factors such as population size or regional effects, the results in this first model should be interpreted with extreme skepticism. Nonetheless, the results of the test (displayed in Table 4.1) show results that generally correspond with expectations. Dynasticism does indeed appear initially to correspond to higher likelihood of conflict onset at the 0.05 level of significance. Among the temporal variables, the first observation dummy behaves as expected in showing extremely significant correlation to new onsets – presumably at least partly because all ongoing conflicts extending from 1988 are coded as beginning with my first observations in 1989. Interestingly, both the prior peace year count and war year count initially show a negative correlation with conflict onset – suggesting that the onset of a new and distinct conflict is comparatively less likely after both long periods of peace and after extended periods of violence between already-entrenched belligerents. This relationship will remain consistent for the war year count in subsequent models, whereas peace year count will show inconsistent direction of effect and prove generally insignificant. I present a similar plausibility test in Model 2 using a dummy representing the simultaneous presence of two distinct dynasties in a province’s elected offices. This estimate shows slightly higher levels of significance, offering some indication that the relative distribution of power across multiple dynasties may be particularly relevant for estimating the likelihood of violent onsets.<sup>114</sup>

These initial univariate dummy estimates were not, however, robust to the addition of a full set of control variables and failed to achieve significance in these more complex models. Similarly, estimators more complex than simple dummies typically failed to achieve significant results. A review of the distribution of conflict onsets soon suggested that this may be due to the presence of a roughly curvilinear relationship between civil war and dynasticism in the Philippines. The relationship between onset years and the General Dynasticism Level of a province-year, for example, suggested that violence may peak when roughly 50% of elected officials were dynasts and declined thereafter (see Figure 4.1, below).<sup>115</sup> Further tests reveal the apparent cause of these discrepancies – by disaggregating dynastic estimators, it became clear

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<sup>114</sup> For Models 2-4, I drop all single-member polities, since the dummies tested in those models assume the existence of at least two elected officials. These dropped observations all come from cities in the National Capital Region, since provinces outside the NCR always have a governor and at least one member of Congress.

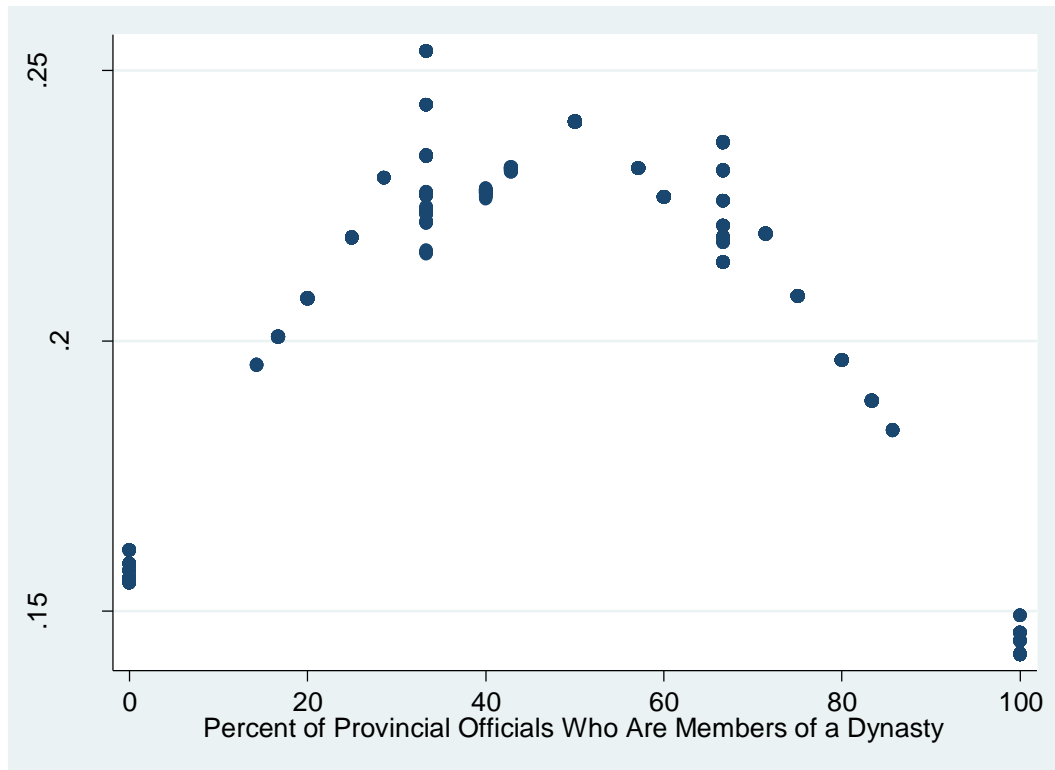
<sup>115</sup> It should be noted that while Figure 4.1 illustrates the general curvilinear distribution of conflict onsets, a curvilinear squared estimate of General Dynasticism Level is not significantly correlated to conflict onset once other control variables are included. The impact of dynasticism on civil war onset thus appears more complex than a simple curvilinear relationship and requires the type of alternate estimators I describe in subsequent models.

**Table 4.1: Dynasticism and Conflict Onset by Province**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>	<u>Model 5</u>	<u>Model 6</u>
Dynasty Dummy: One or More Offices Held By a Member of a Dynasty	0.328* (0.156)					
Rival Dynasties Dummy: Distinct Dynasties Hold Office Simultaneously		0.427** (0.142)	0.322* (0.144)			
“Fat” Dynasty Dummy: Single Dynasty Holds Multiple Offices at Once			-0.296* (0.142)	-0.472** (0.162)		
General Dynasticism Level: Percent of Offices Held by Officials of Any Dynasty				0.516* (0.218)	0.944** (0.326)	
Dynastic Dominance: Percent of Offices Held by Largest Dynastic Family					-1.216*** (0.367)	-0.807** (0.255)
Proportional # of Dynasties: Ratio of # Dynasties in Office to # Offices						0.921*** (0.258)
Lagged Log of Province Population			2.13*** (0.357)	2.326*** (0.356)	1.94*** (0.319)	1.986*** (0.317)
Lagged Log of Average Family Income in Province			1.573*** (0.494)	1.587*** (0.484)	1.573*** (0.475)	1.628*** (0.478)
Lagged Log of National GDP			-2.72*** (0.636)	-2.804*** (0.61)	-2.737*** (0.606)	-2.772*** (0.602)
Election Year Dummy			-0.613*** (0.147)	-0.614*** (0.147)	-0.609*** (0.144)	-0.611*** (0.144)
Percent Forest Land Area			0.031*** (0.006)	0.031*** (0.006)	0.029*** (0.006)	0.03*** (0.006)
Lagged Percent Residing in Highly Urban Cities			-1.527** (0.567)	-1.604** (0.574)	-1.573** (0.502)	-1.587** (0.519)
Prior Peace Year Count	-0.072*** (0.019)	-0.029 (0.021)	0.006 (0.019)	0.004 (0.018)	-0.017 (0.016)	-0.017 (0.016)
Prior War Year Count	-0.079*** (0.031)	-0.082** (0.031)	-0.096*** (0.026)	-0.093*** (0.027)	-0.094*** (0.026)	-0.092*** (0.026)
First Observation Dummy	1.924*** (0.247)	1.977*** (0.272)	1.869*** (0.287)	1.877*** (0.285)	1.893*** (0.274)	1.923*** (0.275)
Year Splines	X	X	X	X	X	X
Administrative Region Dummies			X	X	X	X
Constant	16.297 (22.291)	10.478 (22.494)	-75.633 (47.554)	75.784 (46.772)	69.756 (44.554)	71.984 (44.9)
Observations	2491	2221	2221	2221	2491	2491

† p ≤ 0.1, \* p ≤ 0.05, \*\* p ≤ 0.01, \*\*\* p ≤ 0.001 ; Clustered Robust Standard Errors in parentheses  
“X” signifies control variables included in the model but omitted from table for space

**Figure 4.1**  
**LOESS of General Dynasticism Level and**  
**Estimated Probability of Civil War Onset**



that two competing trends were at play. On the one hand, higher dynasticism and the presence of more successful dynastic candidates appear in general to correlate to higher rates of conflict onset, but this is counteracted by reductions in violence as a single dynasty becomes increasingly dominant across the entire province.

Model 3 offers an illustrative example of these competing dynastic dynamics. Here, I include two simple dummies reflecting these two competing trends. Alongside the earlier rival dynasties dummy, I also include a dummy for province-years in which multiple members of the same dynasty hold political office simultaneously – described in Philippine political reporting as “fat dynasties.” The two dummy variables display a correlation consistent with the theory that dynastic rivalries promote civil war violence: the presence of two or more rival dynasties corresponds to higher likelihood of violence, while a single dynasty’s successful control over more than one office is tied to a reduction in likelihood.<sup>116</sup> Model 3 also offers the first opportunity to explore controls beyond temporal effects. Though not depicted in detail, the addition of regional dummies appears to control for substantial variation, with multiple regional dummies achieving significance to the 0.001 level. The lagged log of population, which both controls for population size itself and indirectly controls for proportional variations in the

<sup>116</sup> If tested without their counteracting variable, both the “fat dynasty” and “rival dynasties” are significant or extremely close to the significance threshold. A version of Model 3 that omits the “rival dynasty” shows the “fat dynasty” dummy significant to the 0.051 level, while omitting the “fat dynasty” dummy yields a p-value of 0.03 for the “rival dynasty” dummy.

number of elected offices in a province, behaves as expected with high-population provinces showing a significantly increased vulnerability to conflict onset. Economic indicators, by contrast, diverge somewhat from initial expectations. On the one hand, a rise in national GDP correlates to lower conflict onset, which is consistent with both the theory that individuals resort to violence when economic conditions worsen and that the state has more resources to suppress violence during times of prosperity. On the other hand, local province-level family income shows the opposite relationship – province-years with higher family income are correlated to higher conflict onset.<sup>117</sup> This might plausibly be the result of dislocation or local variations in the comparative advantage of violent acts – accounts do, for example, suggest that organized violent actors sometimes travel to wealthier provinces to seize resources.<sup>118</sup> Alternatively, this relationship might suggest that reporting bias may favor wealthier provinces and discount attacks in poorer regions.<sup>119</sup> Another variable that behaves unexpectedly in Model 3 is the election year dummy, which shows a significant drop in civil war violence during election years.<sup>120</sup> This appears highly at odds with anecdotal reports concerning the ubiquity of electoral violence and the political impact of such attacks. At present, two theories seem plausible as explanations for this observed relationship. First, it is conceivable that UCDP coding practices have an underlying bias that undercounts or discounts electoral violence incidents, resulting in an apparent dip in attacks during election years. Second, this apparent drop may actually be a product of the Philippine's electoral schedule – because the country runs on a fixed three-year cycle for all offices, every non-election year in modern times is necessarily either the year immediately before or immediately after another election. While violence at the polls and during voting are well reported, it is nonetheless plausible that much of the electoral impact on violence tends instead to occur during off-years, when candidates are either beginning to assemble support and register for elections or when newly elected officials attempt to cement their own influence and patronage systems at the expense of those built by prior officials.<sup>121</sup> In contrast to economic and electoral controls, my final controls for urbanization and terrain are much more consistent with expectations. High urbanization correlates to reduced violence, suggesting that conflicts tend to

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<sup>117</sup> Berman et al. 2011, using the Philippines as one of several cases, found similarly counterintuitive results regarding the lack of impact for unemployment rates on violence. Their study offers further analysis regarding possible explanations.

<sup>118</sup> Kidnapping groups have regularly made use of speedboats to traverse significant distances and seize foreign tourists from popular resorts. These groups then ferry their hostages back to ungoverned regions where they can more easily be held for ransom (Fonbuena 2017).

<sup>119</sup> See Weidmann 2015. If there is substantial recording bias which causes violence in some regions to be underreported, this could have substantial impact on the reliability of conclusions drawn from datasets based on these reports. But without further information on the accuracy of attack reporting, there is little that researchers of political violence can do beyond urging caution regarding all conclusions and results.

<sup>120</sup> Though not depicted, I also tested for interaction effects between the election year dummy and various dynasticism estimators. I found no significant relationship between any interaction effects and conflict onset. This may hint at problems with the mechanisms I have proposed in this chapter. After all, if dynastic competition drives increased civil war violence, it would seem plausible that this relationship would become stronger closer to election time. I suspect that this isn't the case because the Philippines' relatively short three-year election cycle means that competition between those holding office or considering a campaign is relatively continuous. But further research regarding this timing issue and the lack of increased civil war or dynastic violence in election years may merit greater scrutiny.

<sup>121</sup> Daniele & Dipoppa 2017 found precisely such a delayed effect when studying electoral violence in mafia-dominated regions of Italy. In subsequent analysis of my Philippines data, I have found that the year before an election shows no significant correlation with conflict onset, but the year after an election is indeed correlated to higher likelihood of conflict onset at the  $p=0.01$  level.

be in rural and less accessible region and this conclusion is reinforced by the positive correlation between forested terrain and conflict onset. The control variables described for Model 3 remain relatively consistent across subsequent tests and will thus be discussed only when patterns substantially diverge from these trends.

In Models 4 through 6 present variations of the dynamic tested in the previous model, using alternate approaches to estimate the divergent effects of high dynasticism in general and the specific political dominance of a single dynasty. The majority of these dynastic variables are not significant on their own without a second variable capturing the countervailing trend.<sup>122</sup> In Model 4, I retain the dummy signifying simultaneous occupation of different offices by a single dynasty but replace my “rival dynasty” dummy with an estimate of the percent of offices in a given province-year occupied. Effectively, I test for the general impact of dynasticism while controlling for the fact that in some cases higher dynasticism reflects greater dominance by a single dynasty. Framing the model in this way raises the significance of the “fat dynasty” simultaneous offices dummy to the 0.01 level, while the general level of dynasticism correlates to higher conflict onset at the 0.05 level. In Model 5, I similarly replace the “fat dynasty” dummy with a more comprehensive estimator – now, alongside a general estimate of the percent of officeholders that are dynasts, I also include a control for dynastic dominance based on the percentage of offices held by the largest dynasty in the province-year.<sup>123</sup> In keeping with the prior model, dynasticism in general correlates to higher likelihood of conflict onset (this time at the 0.01 level of significance), but this effect is counteracted by lower violence (at the 0.001 level of significance) in provinces where a single dynasty holds a high percentage of elected offices. Model 6 presents one final test reflecting these same dynamics. Here, I retain my dynastic dominance estimate, but more specifically estimate the degree of competition between dynasties by estimating the number of distinct and separate dynasties that hold office in a given province year (this number is expressed as a ratio of dynasties to the number of elected offices to control for the fact that more offices allow for more families to simultaneously be in power).<sup>124</sup> As in the previous model, higher dominance by the largest dynasty correlates to lower violence (though this time only to the 0.01 level), while more simultaneous dynasties in power correlates to higher conflict onset at the 0.001 level.

The results presented in Table 4.1 show a consistent pattern – dynasticism and competition between dynasties and political clans tend in general to correlate with increased violent conflict, but this relationship must control for those situations in which a single dynasty comes to control most offices. Perhaps the most parsimonious way to quantitatively model this

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<sup>122</sup> The primary exception is Proportional Number of Dynasties, which remains significant to the 0.05 level when included on its own with control variables.

<sup>123</sup> Unlike dynastic estimators, Dynastic Dominance does display a significant curvilinear relationship with conflict onset. If a square term is added and no other dynastic estimators are included, the linear estimator correlates to higher likelihood of conflict onset at the 0.05 level, while the squared term correlates with reduced likelihood at the 0.01 level. Once again, this is consistent with the hypothesis that dynasticism at low levels is associated with rising violence, but as a single dynasty approaches a monopoly over power, this risk of violence begins to wane.

<sup>124</sup> My Proportional Number of Dynasties estimator assumes that there’s a substantial difference between entrenched dynasties and the families of non-dynastic politicians. To test this assumption, I also ran a series of supplemental tests using an alternative *Proportional Number of Families* variable which counted every non-dynastic family as a “1” in calculations, thus treating them identically to dynasties. Using this in place of the proportional estimate of dynasticism in Model 6 leads to Dynastic Dominance losing all significance and the Proportional Number of Families Estimate begins significantly associated with higher conflict at the 0.05 level. I interpret these results to suggest that my intuition is correct and that established dynasties are substantially more tied to conflict than are families of politicians in general.

**Table 4.2: Dynastic Polarization and Conflict Onset by Province**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Model 7</u>	<u>Model 8</u>	<u>Model 9</u>	<u>Model 10</u>
Dynastic Polarization: Polarization of Offices Between Two Families	1.03*** (0.203)	0.612* (0.244)	0.917** (0.29)	0.937* (0.398)
Lagged Log of Province Population		2.22*** (0.332)	2.088*** (0.352)	-0.3 (1.918)
Lagged Log of Average Family Income in Province		1.625*** (0.468)	1.631*** (0.472)	2.948*** (0.754)
Lagged Log of National GDP		-2.783*** (0.616)	-2.772*** (0.623)	-3.424*** (0.703)
Election Year Dummy		-0.613*** (0.143)	-0.615*** (0.143)	-0.593*** (0.132)
Percent Forest Land Area		0.028*** (0.006)	0.029*** (0.006)	
Lagged Percent Residing in Highly Urban Cities		-1.474** (0.56)	-1.583** (0.563)	-2.168 (4.17)
Prior Peace Year Count	-0.067*** (0.018)	-0.015 (0.017)	-0.013 (0.017)	0.092*** (0.024)
Prior War Year Count	-0.08** (0.031)	-0.092*** (0.026)	-0.094*** (0.026)	-0.121*** (0.028)
First Observation Dummy	1.967*** (0.249)	1.946*** (0.283)	1.937*** (0.281)	2.333*** (0.302)
Equidistant Polarization Control			-0.726 (0.487)	-2.753** (1.023)
Year Splines	X	X	X	X
Administrative Region Dummies		X	X	
Province Conditional Fixed Effects				X
Constant	23.953 (22.902)	72.978 (46.56)	75.029 (46.742)	
Observations	2491	2491	2491	2172

†  $p \leq 0.1$ , \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$  ; Clustered Robust Standard Errors in parentheses  
 “X” signifies control variables included in the model but omitted from table for space

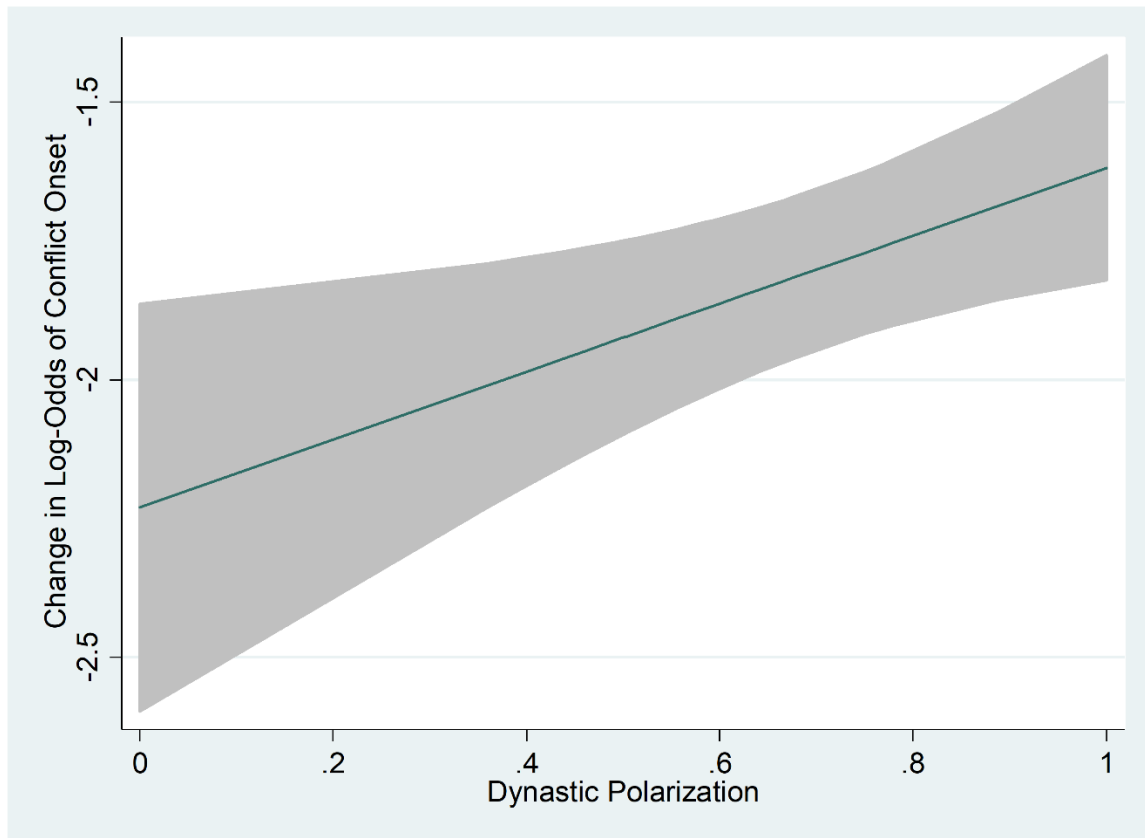
dynamic is through a measure of the polarization of political offices between different competing families. Since dynasticism’s relationship with conflict onset appears to be rooted in the competition between distinct rival dynasties, we might expect violence to be most likely when two rival dynasties can each credibly hope to amass overwhelming power by defeating the other.<sup>125</sup> To test this possibility, I first apply the estimate of dynastic polarization I described earlier and subject it to a simple plausibility test without other control variables. Model 7 presents the results of this test, showing a strong correlation between dynastic polarization and conflict onset at the 0.001 level of significance. Of course, this test fails to account for important

<sup>125</sup> It should be noted that this isn’t necessarily the only reasonable outcome from a polarized dynastic polity. International relations scholarship, for example, has long been shaped by neorealist theories contending that a polarized security environment can be remarkably stable (Waltz 1993). But literature on polarity in the context of intrastate ethnic relations has generally focused on the negative consequences of polarization between two equally large groups (Montalvo & Reynal-Querol 2005), and it’s thus reasonable to assume that the similar phenomenon of dynastic conflict follows similar patterns.

alternate explanations, and so a more complete test is presented in Model 8 with a full set of control variables. As hypothesized, polarization continues to correlate with higher conflict (albeit at the weaker 0.05 level of significance). These results suggest that polarization is indeed a reliable way to model the dual impact of dynasticism on conflict – an impact that depends not only on the absolute amount of dynasticism in a polity, but also how dynastic power is distributed among family units. Figure 4.2, below, depicts this relationship graphically while controlling for other variables included in Model 8.

Polarization, however, is a potentially problematic variable to include for polities with small sample populations. Elected offices in a given province-year are often very small, consisting of three, two, or even a single elected office. In such situations, the range of possible polarization scores is extremely constrained in ways that may impact results. For example, since a single-official district always has a score of zero regardless of who occupies the office, a large number of such small districts may bias results in a certain direction. To control for this, Model 9 includes a control for the hypothetical equidistant polarization score for a given number of officials – the score that would occur in a province year if all candidates were from distinct and different dynasties. By including this control, my primary estimate of polarization effectively acts as an estimate of the effect of having offices that are more polarized than the baseline for the

**Figure 4.2**  
**Estimated Dynastic Polarization versus**  
**Likelihood of Civil War Onset**





district. Model 9 shows that this control does appear to measurably increase dynastic polarization's apparent impact, raising the significance to 0.01 level.

In Model 10, I examine the effects of moving from a random effects model to one using fixed province effects, thereby controlling for inter-province variations. A fixed effect model has substantial benefits insofar as it eliminates a substantial range of omitted variables and possible alternative explanations, but also comes with costs. First, a fixed effect model drops observations from provinces that never experienced a conflict onset, lowering the observed sample of case. Second, in focusing only on variation over time within each province, fixed effect analyses do not incorporate the substantial between-case variation. Anecdotal reports suggest that we should often expect to see relatively low temporal variation, and that the most salient and stark variation tends to be between different provinces. Even when excluded from top offices, after all, many dynasties will still exercise influence through less prestigious local offices, patronage networks, and allied families.<sup>126</sup> In keeping with this speculation, I find that polarization has weaker significance under a fixed effect model, though the direction of its effect remains consistent. Model 10 presents a variation of Model 9 showing that, with the proper control attached, polarization retains significance at the 0.05 level.<sup>127</sup> This fixed effect model drops the forested terrain estimate due to lack of temporal variation and finds no significant effect of changes in population or urbanization in a province over time. Once again, rises in local income are positively correlated to violence, while rises in the national GDP correlate to lower violence.

Polarization thus appears to be a relatively parsimonious measure for conceptualizing the impact of dynasticism and the critical role that inter-family competition appears to play in generating violence in a dynastic political environment. However, polarization is still unlikely to fully capture the impact of dynasticism – most notably because the method I use here for estimating rates of polarization makes no distinction between deeply entrenched historical dynasties and the families of new politicians without a dynastic background. A province with two elected offices, for example, would display a score of “1” if two entrenched, long-established dynasties each held office, but it would display the same score for a province where neither official had any dynastic background and came from humble family roots.<sup>128</sup> Returning to random effects tests, Models 11 and 12 use previously described alternative variables to test for additional elements of dynastic conflict that are not fully captured by a polarization score.

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<sup>126</sup> Political families build up sprawling patronage networks (Teehankee 2012), and while political influence is an invaluable source of wealth and power, these networks can nonetheless persist for long periods of time even if a dynasty temporarily loses influence in Congress or the governorship. In one recent example, two of the most powerful dynasties in Basilan province – the Hatamans and the Akbars – organized a large reconciliation meeting between the winners and losers of 2016 elections among their families (Rosalado 2016). Even election losers potentially retained substantial family resources to carry out vendettas against the rivals, and it was thus decided that both families should meet and negotiate avenues for cooperation between their various patronage networks.

<sup>127</sup> If the Equidistant Polarization Control is omitted, then Dynastic Polarization loses significance in the fixed effects model. Of the variables tested in Table 5.1, testing under the conditions of fixed effects also results in weakened results. The combination of “dynastic dominance” and “general dynasticism percentage” shown in Model 5 results in both variables displaying suggestive trends in the expected direction at the 0.1 level. Similarly, the combination of “dynastic dominance” and “proportional number of dynasties” presented in Model 6 results in the proportional dynasty count showing significance at the 0.05 level and “dynastic dominance” displaying a suggestive pattern at the 0.1 level. When tested on their own in the fixed effect model, the only dynastic variable that attains even the 0.1 level is the “rival dynasties” dummy.

<sup>128</sup> Of course, I automatically define any family with two or more members serving in the same province simultaneously as a dynasty, so my concern here is focused on distinguishing between individual politicians who come from a historically entrenched dynasty versus those from a non-political family.

**Table 4.3: Polarization, Other Dynastic Indicators, and Mindanao as an Epicenter of Dynastic Conflict**

Variables	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15
Dynastic Polarization: Polarization of Offices Between Two Families	0.796** (0.289)	0.647** (0.244)	0.548 † (0.286)	1.469*** (0.45)	0.285 (0.257)
Lagged Log of Province Population	2.327*** (0.396)	2.183*** (0.327)	1.801*** (0.302)	2.756*** (0.602)	2.265*** (0.461)
Lagged Log of Average Family Income in Province	1.531** (0.49)	1.651*** (0.466)	0.89 † (0.512)	2.163* (1.0)	1.415** (0.53)
Lagged Log of National GDP	-2.7*** (0.621)	-2.807*** (0.589)	-2.653*** (0.653)	-2.817** (0.895)	-3.073*** (0.935)
Election Year Dummy	-0.61*** (0.583)	-0.608*** (0.143)	-0.614*** (0.142)	-0.744*** (0.217)	-0.535** (0.187)
Percent Forest Land Area	0.031*** (0.006)	0.028*** (0.006)	0.017** (0.006)	0.028* (0.014)	0.027** (0.009)
Lagged Percent Residing in Highly Urban Cities	-1.61*** (0.146)	-1.518** (0.547)	-0.007 † (0.004)	-1.203 † (0.637)	-3.645*** (0.778)
Prior Peace Year Count	0.012 (0.02)	-0.016 (0.017)	-0.018 (0.018)	0.088* (0.039)	-0.054* (0.023)
Prior War Year Count	-0.097*** (0.026)	-0.089*** (0.027)	-0.078** (0.03)	-0.055* (0.025)	-0.388** (0.142)
First Observation Dummy	1.878*** (0.289)	1.96*** (0.285)	1.929*** (0.285)	1.67** (0.556)	1.851*** (0.335)
Rival Dynasties Dummy: Distinct Dynasties Hold Office Simultaneously	0.291* (0.145)				
Proportional # of Dynasties: Ratio of # Dynasties in Office to # Offices		0.507* (0.209)			
Mindanao Dummy			0.228 (0.438)		
Polarization x Mindanao Dummy			0.985* (0.493)		
Year Splines	X	X	X	X	X
Administrative Region Dummies	X	X		X	X
Constant	68.49 (47.465)	67.604 (45.148)	103.322 † (53.778)	36.088 (64.662)	470.921*** (112.328)
Observations	2221	2491	2491	656	1835

†  $p \leq 0.1$ , \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$  ; Clustered Robust Standard Errors in parentheses  
 “X” signifies control variables included in the model but omitted from table for space

Specifically, I test the effect of adding a rival dynasty dummy (Model 11) or an estimate of the proportional number of distinct office-holding dynasties (Model 12) – both of which make a distinction between historically established dynasties and families without a dynastic history. Both models show that their respective additional dynastic variables correlate to higher levels of

conflict at the 0.05 level of significance.<sup>129</sup> This may suggest that, even when controlling for the general effect of polarization of offices between families, there still appears to be an additional conflict effect that emerges when the families that hold power have deeply entrenched dynastic roots.<sup>130</sup> This might be seen as evidence of the type of constructivist rivalries and vendettas that I describe in earlier chapters and may imply that dynastic officials are more prone to react with violence to long-established family rivals than to new challengers who come from families without long political histories. Alternately, a more rationalist interpretation might suggest that dynasties tend to hold greater informal power than do non-dynasties, and that this additional impact is evident in the apparent disproportionately higher violence emerging out of more political violence.

In my final Models (13, 14, and 15), I examine the distinction between the Mindanao region and the rest of the Philippines through variations of the core polarization test shown in Model 8. Anecdotal reports suggest that, while dynasticism is persistent throughout the country, political killings may be particularly pronounced in Mindanao compared to the rest of the country, with the most persistent violence associated with the intense *rido* feuds of Western Mindanao. The region dummies included in prior tests have controlled for individual sub-regions of the country (including the ethnically and religiously distinctive Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao), but these dummies do not fully control for the possibility that the Mindanao area as a whole (which comprises six separate regions) is disproportionately driving results. Model 13 first examines this possibility by including a dummy for Mindanao as a whole, and then testing the interaction effect between this dummy and polarization. The results of this test show this interaction effect significantly correlated to higher violence at the 0.05 level, while dynastic polarization itself drops to the suggestive 0.1 level. This is consistent with the interpretation that the violent consequences are particularly acute in Mindanao, but that there is still weaker evidence of dynastic violence in other parts of the country.<sup>131</sup> Models 14 and 15 show even stronger effects by testing samples drawn only from Mindanao (Model 14) or only from the provinces outside of Mindanao (Model 15). I find that in the Mindanao sample the correlation between dynastic polarization and conflict onset rises to the 0.001 level of significance. By contrast, despite having a larger sample size and greater statistical power, this correlation shows the same directional effect in the non-Mindanao sample but fails to reach standard cutoffs for significant or suggestive results.<sup>132</sup> Taking these three models together, I find

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<sup>129</sup> An alternate test of Model 12 was also performed that used the Proportional Number of Families, a variable previously described for Model 6. Unlike in that prior case, here the number of families fails to reach significance at all. This appears to provide further evidence that, after controlling for polarization, it is specifically the number of competing dynasties, rather than the number of families of any type, that correlates with higher conflict.

<sup>130</sup> In Models 11 and 12, if an Equidistant Dynastic Control is added, polarization retains the same level of significance, but the Rival Dynasty Dummy falls to the merely suggestive 0.1 threshold, while the Proportional Number of Dynasties retains significance at the 0.05 level.

<sup>131</sup> Along with the listed models, I also attempted to ascertain whether there was any compelling evidence for interaction effects between dynastic estimates such as polarization and the various control variables described above. At present, I find no strong evidence for any consistent interaction effects beyond that associated with the Mindanao region. At present, there is thus no strong evidence to suggest that the effect of dynasticism varies markedly with respect to urbanization, wealth, or terrain.

<sup>132</sup> The same broad trend – Mindanao as the primary driver of dynastic effects – is evident in my other dynastic estimators. In Models 3 through 6, dynastic effects show the same general direction in both Mindanaoan and non-Mindanaoan samples, but the effects tend to achieve high levels of significance in the Mindanao case only. It's possible that much of this discrepancy is driven by the presence of NCR cities in the non-Mindanao sample. As a region with low incidents of violence and many small districts, it may be substantially influencing results. A variant

credible evidence to conclude that the dynasticism appears to correlate with greater violence throughout the country, but that this effect is primarily driven by the extremely strong relationship between the two variables in the southern Mindanao regions of the country.

#### *Section IV* *Discussion and Conclusion*

Taken as a whole, the results presented in the previous section offer strong and consistent evidence supporting the hypothesis that dynasticism is a contributor to outbreaks of civil war violence in the Philippines. Intriguingly, a variety of different estimators generate a consistent non-linear pattern. Rather than rising with greater dynasticism in all cases, violence appears to rise primarily when there is greater competition between dynasties operating in the same political environment. By contrast, dominance by a single dynasty potentially mitigates some of the bellicosity of dynastic politics, at least so long as a single political family retains its political dominance.<sup>133</sup> I suggest in this chapter that the simplest way to understand this dynamic may be to conceptualize political violence as being exacerbated specifically by dynastic polarization – with violence peaking when a handful of dynasties have the power and resources to threaten one another and a credible opportunity to dominate the local political system by eliminating their primary rival families.<sup>134</sup> Somewhat weaker evidence further suggests that violence is not solely

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of Model 15 that drops all NCR observations, for examples, shows polarization to correlate with conflict onset at the 0.05 level of significance.

<sup>133</sup> I frame these conclusions as a causal relationship, with dynasticism directly influencing the likelihood of civil war violence. But it is worth noting the plausibility of either a reversed or more indirect causal explanation. It can certainly be argued that any causal relationship between dynasticism and violence instead runs in the opposite direction – that regions beset by civil wars and insurgencies tend to experience a breakdown in democratic governance and to deteriorate into patronage networks dominated by a few elite families. Certainly, anecdotal evidence suggests that the prevalence of violence in some parts of the Philippines forces vulnerable populations to rely on elite families for arms and income, which in turn further cements those elite dynasties' hold on power. I have attempted to control for this alternative explanation by lagging the terms of elected officials by one year, but this approach only offers limited protection against endogeneity problems. Violence and dynasticism are likely to generate long-lasting and deeply embedded patterns in local political structures, and thus lagging by short time intervals offers only limited analytic protection. Indeed, it is almost certain that causal relationships run in both directions over time, with dynasticism promoting violent conflicts, and these conflicts further entrenching the power of elite dynasties.

There is some limited anecdotal evidence, however, to suggest that dynasticism is more consistently a precursor to violence than the reverse. The incident with which I began my analysis, the Maguindanao Massacre, was a particularly prominent example of inter-dynastic conflict – and one that ultimately led to serious backlash against its perpetrators. Thanks in large part to persistent reporting about the Ampatuans' vicious attack on their Mangudadatu rivals, voters in Maguindanao ultimately unseated the Ampatuan dynasty from the governorship and replaced them with Esmael Mangudadatu's rule. Rather than doubling-down on entrenched dynastic elites when violence emerges, this incident suggests that Philippine voters may react to widespread violence with increased willingness to reject entrenched dynasties. Moreover, there is a widespread sentiment that violent conflicts ironically represent one of the few means through which non-dynasts can rise to power in the Philippines, especially in regions where other avenues such as celebrity or educational opportunities are rare (Fegan 1993, Gutierrez 2012). As one Basilan public official noted, "The old people want to hang on, and the new people believe that the only way to get in is by using guns and goons. It becomes a cycle..." (Anson 2007). While these observations don't necessarily refute the hypothesis that violence may drive increased dynasticism, they do suggest that such a hypothesis may require a more complex causal explanation than the alternative hypothesis of dynasticism incentivizing violence.

<sup>134</sup> My conclusion that dynasticism exacerbates violence primarily in periods where a single dynasty does not hold monopolistic control over a province fits with several prior observations made regarding Philippine politics. Noted Philippine political scientist Ronald Mendoza, for example, has previously predicted that institutional changes that

influenced by the distribution of power across official political offices, but that violence also tends to be especially high when power is held by historically entrenched dynasties. These results are consistent with the theory that political violence is at least partially exacerbated by long-running feuds and animosities that build up among powerful rival families.<sup>135</sup>

The results of these tests support the conclusion that the pervasive dynastic capture of electoral institutions in the Philippines has serious consequences for political stability and national security in the country. The apparent correlation between dynastic polarization and the onset of civil war incidents runs counter to the straightforward expectation that violence on the part of insurgent groups and the national government is driven by large-scale political and ideological goals rather than more prosaic local interests. Furthermore, the lack of a clear-cut linear correlation between dynasticism and violence is also not consistent with an expectation that any violence resulting from dynasticism is simply the result of less competent governance and greater political restlessness, since the dominance of a single family is in some situations associated with relatively greater peace and security in a province. Instead, the observed results are most consistent with the theory that civil war violence in the Philippines is partly stoked, shaped, and directed by dynastic actors and powerful clans competing against each other to enhance their family influence. This suggests that, alongside the possible negative democratic and economic externalities of dynasticism in the Philippines, the dominance of kinship politics should also be viewed as an impediment to the country's domestic national security. At the same time, the correlation between political violence and dynastic competition suggests that any reform efforts to reduce political families' tight hold on elected offices should be pursued with caution.<sup>136</sup> Poorly designed efforts to weaken the dominance of some dynasties may perversely enhance the power of rival families in ways that increase the dynastic competition and the political violence that appears to coincide with it.<sup>137</sup>

The statistical tests presented in this chapter raise a number of questions that present possible avenues of future research exploring the security implications of dynasticism in the

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promote power vacuums or sudden competition between rival dynasties may present a greater risk for violence (Ordinario 2017). On a more positive note, Solon et al. 2009 find evidence suggesting that dynastic officials in the Philippines also tend to increase development expenditures when presented with credible challengers, thus distributing more resources to the populace. Allowing a dynasty to retain an unchallenged role dominating a given polity thus appears to lower the risk of violent confrontation, but doing so also risks allowing this dominant dynasty to redirect substantial public resources toward its own enrichment.

<sup>135</sup> Alternatively, a more rational instrumentalist hypothesis for this dynamic might rely on the likelihood that previously entrenched dynasties are more likely to have informal patrimonial networks that extend beyond their formal political office. If so, an old established dynasty might be more powerful, and consequently more likely to threaten rivals into conflict, even if it holds an identical number of seats as a newly political family without the same wealth of informal dynastic connections.

<sup>136</sup> Because violence appears to correlate with dynastic competition and to decrease with hegemonic dominance by a single dynasty, there is substantial risk that reforms designed to increase competition or open up electoral access may prompt increased violent confrontations between dynasties and their allies. Nevertheless, the stability granted through the hegemony of a single dynasty is likely to be short-lived and highly problematic. Powerful dynasties are likely to weaken formal institutions over time, and even the most cohesive is likely to gradually dissolve into rival factions as the family grows and intermarries with other prominent families. As with the marriage pacts described in the previous chapter, dynastic power appears to create a dilemma for those desiring to promote stability in the country – the short-term stability offered by leaving a dynasty unchallenged potentially comes at the risk of further embedding dynastic rivalries and conflict-prone power structures throughout the political system over the long-term.

<sup>137</sup> This dilemma between short- and long-term peaceful intentions might be likened to the unintended consequences that can arise from poorly planned intervention by peacekeeping forces in civil wars. See Sambanis & Elbadawi 2000 and Hironaka 2009.

Philippines. For example, the final models of the previous section suggest that while dynasticism is correlated with greater violence across the country, this relationship is much stronger in the war-torn southern island of Mindanao than it is in the rest of the country. These results match anecdotal reports that political competition and rivalries tend to be more lethal in some regions at the country's periphery.<sup>138</sup> This apparent divergence doesn't appear to be a direct result of a single ethnic or religious discrepancy, since the Mindanao region includes a wide range of different ethnic groups and contains provinces with widely varying distributions of Christians, Muslims, and Lumad. Instead, the most plausible explanation for the especially violent consequences of dynasticism in Mindanao lies in the combination of fragile state sovereignty over the island as a whole and the prevalence of formalized norms of family vendettas and feuding, particularly in western provinces of the island. If accurate, this conclusion may have important future implications for our understanding of dynasticism's relationship with political violence. While I have heretofore theorized a close causal linkage between these two issues, the varying degree to which pervasive dynasticism correlates to violence in different parts of the Philippines may suggest that dynasticism on its own may not always be a direct instigator of violence. Future research comparing dynasticism in different parts of the country in greater depth may offer evidence that it is only when dynasticism is combined with other cultural practices, such as vendetta norms, or with preexisting state fragility that kinship politics becomes strongly associated with violence. With its widely varying demographics and well-attested history of both kinship-based feuds and political dynasties, the Philippines represents an ideal case for further research to isolate and test possible alternative hypotheses regarding the precise relationship between kinship and political violence.

Similarly, future studies might build on my analysis by further examining and deconstructing the impact of kinship ties between political actors. The statistical models presented here assume a relatively simple conception of kin alliances, where politicians sharing a lineage are expected to act cohesively against those outside their kin network.<sup>139</sup> But as shown in the previous chapter, intra-kin rivalries and conflict are often a critical facet of dynastic politics. Future studies might attempt to uncover how effective different types of kinship ties have been in facilitating cooperation within a dynasty – for example, contrasting the level of cooperation based on cognatic kinship links reflected in shared middle names versus those with agnatic kinship links as expressed through a shared patrilineal last name.<sup>140</sup> This might be accomplished

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<sup>138</sup> McCoy 1993 describes the difference in cultures of violence across different parts of the country as follows: “Unlike the Manila elites who operate within a culture of metropolitan civility, provincial families are forced to engage in systemic political violence either as agents or opponents... Provincial politics involves a zero-sum struggle for hegemony over an electoral or commercial territory that encourages organized violence.” By contrast, politicians who operate primarily in the capital “must compete within Manila’s courtier society with its complex of palace intrigues, legislative coalitions, ideological debate, and bureaucratic regulations...” (p. 21). See also Rocamora 2007.

<sup>139</sup> My analysis here might also be criticized for its exclusive focus on dynasties at the top of the Philippine political hierarchy. In doing so, I ignore a vast arena of contestation and negotiation that extends throughout the country’s class structure. There is thus ample room for more extensive analysis examining more local dynasties or the interactions among lower classes. For further discussion on the importance of avoiding an overly top-down conception of Philippine patrimonial politics, see Kerkvliet 1995 and Quimpo 2005.

<sup>140</sup> Indeed, intra-kin conflicts within Philippine political dynasties may represent an extremely promising topic for further research, albeit one that may require more qualitative methods than those presented in this chapter. In general, dynasties make significant efforts to coordinate and avoid competing against one another, even to the point

by analyzing the common practice of coordinating political campaigns to avoid having members of the same dynasty compete against one another and to ensure that term limits don't cut the dynasty off from political power.<sup>141</sup> Alternatively, future research might instead offer deeper insights into the relationship between distinct dynasties. While I assume here that dynasties inherently treat one another as rivals, many Philippine political families appear to maintain long-lasting intergenerational alliances with comparably powerful families and promote a wide variety of patron-client relationships with less prestigious families.<sup>142</sup> Future research might explore such inter-kin cooperation and examine how sustainable such alliances tend to be. Finally, dynasticism itself might be further disaggregated by categorizing different political families according to their divergent histories, sources of economic and political power, or institutional age. These approaches would likely all benefit from more in-depth analysis, whether in the form of qualitative comparison between dynasties or through the use of more complex social network data.<sup>143</sup> Given the unquestionable importance of dynasticism to Philippine political contestation, the country presents ample opportunities for deeper analysis into the impact of kinship politics on a wide variety of political processes.

The statistical results presented in this chapter lend credence to the hypothesis that dynastic competition in the Philippines is linked to the widespread incidents of political violence experienced in many regions of the country. I theorize that this relationship is largely a unidirectional causal pattern, with increased dynastic competition encouraging increased political violence. But caution is nonetheless still merited in accepting this causal claim, especially since I do not directly demonstrate that dynastic politicians themselves are directly involved in encouraging most of the observed violence. Anecdotal accounts suggest that some Philippine politicians do indeed have close ties to violent political actors in their provinces, but it is difficult

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of negotiating spheres of influence and dividing them between family members (as exemplified in the Gilbert Teodoro quote that began this chapter). But these efforts regularly fail and lead to competition (and sometimes bloodshed) within the kin network. In one particularly memorable incident, a congressman's wife entered into a mayoral election in the hopes of defeating her husband's mistress, whom he had been supporting for the seat (Serrano 2015). Perhaps the most prominent recent example of such a split has been that within the powerful Cojuangco family, with different branches headed by former President Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino and her powerful cousin, former Governor Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. Rumors persist that Danding, a Marcos-loyalist, was involved in the assassination of Corazon's husband Benigno Aquino Jr., and their divergent factions persisted in feuding long after the rise of democratic politics in the country (Branigin 1992, Grande 2018).

<sup>141</sup> One valuable topic for future research would be analysis into how and why specific family members are selected as "heirs" for political positions, along with research into why these efforts at passing on power are only sometimes successful at preventing rival family members from launching their own campaigns to inherit a dynasty's vacant political offices.

<sup>142</sup> Alliances between powerful families are a regular occurrence in Philippine politics, allowing families with different powerbases to offer each other patronage opportunities and to help secure one another against threats from rivals. But these alliances are often impermanent and tend to breakdown as family fortunes wane or as both dynasties grow powerful enough to threaten one another's bases of support (Adriano 2017). The most distinctively dynastic form such alliances take are, of course, marriage unions. Marriages among the Philippines' elite political and business families are a regular occurrence, one that Coronel 2007 characterizes as a "merger" of dynastic assets to increase the power and influence of both families. But perhaps most common are the alliances that form between families at different political tiers, such as patronage ties between national families with powerbases in Manila and more localized elites who can coordinate vote buying schemes or favorable local conditions in their home province or barangay (Lingao 2013c, Howard 2015). These clientelistic arrangements often play a determinative role in shaping electoral success and the allocation of government resources and are thus a critical aspect of dynastic governance in the Philippines that my analysis here largely overlooks.

<sup>143</sup> An impressive recent example of an extremely in-depth analysis of Philippine kinship social networks and their political impact can be found in Cruz et al. 2017.

to assess how widespread these ties between elected officials and civil war belligerents are throughout the country as a whole.<sup>144</sup> It may perhaps be just at least as credible to instead conceptualize the ties between dynastic competition and civil war violence as a complex self-reinforcing pattern, wherein violence discourages political entry of non-dynastic candidates, and the dominance of dynastic officials in turn further exacerbates internal security problems. Nonetheless, the pattern observed in this chapter at least suggests that the prevalence of dynastic politicians in the Philippines is significantly intertwined with the country's serious internal security problems.

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<sup>144</sup> One conceptual link deserving of further scrutiny is the association between dynasticism and electoral, rather than civil war, violence. My analysis here focuses explicitly on civil war incidents and does not delve into violence primarily devoted to influencing the electoral process itself. This approach was chosen both because of concerns that electoral violence incidents are likely to be less consistently reported than are civil war attacks, and because my aim in this dissertation is to demonstrate the broad impact of dynasticism on major security threats to the state as a whole. Nevertheless, my analysis here certainly suggests that dynasticism should have a comparable effect through exacerbating and encouraging electoral violence. Future research testing whether or not this is the case would offer valuable insights into whether my analysis here is correct in claiming that competition between dynasties generates endemic security problems.



## Chapter 5 Consanguinity and Civil War: The Impact of Marriage Practices on Global Civil War Onset Rates

*“Every family cultivates its vendetta; every clan, its feud...  
Nothing is ever forgotten, and very few debts are left unpaid.”*

*Winston Churchill, My Early Life<sup>1</sup>*

*“Corsican vendetta or Kentucky feud – what are language and race against  
age-long isolation and an environment that keeps humanity feral to the core?”*

*Horace Kephart, Our Southern Highlanders<sup>2</sup>*

**Abstract:** Consanguineous marriage, a wedding between members of the same extended family, represents a common practice across many contemporary societies – one that is often heavily interlinked with dynastic politics, intra-familial feuding, and the type of endogamous marriage practices characteristic of tribal and kinship-dominated societies. This chapter takes advantage of existing data on consanguineous marriage rates across the world to test the generalizability of my thesis that patterns in kin relationships can influence a country’s vulnerability to civil war. By using consanguineous marriage rates as a proxy for a culture of dynasticism, I will show that dynastic violence isn’t merely limited to a handful of outlier countries, but instead that family-based feuds and conflicts are potentially a contributing factor to civil wars in a wide variety of countries across the contemporary world. To demonstrate this, I build on the premiere global database on consanguinity rates, further expanding and updating these data to include a greater number of countries and to ensure that estimates are demographically representative. Through a series of logistic regressions, I demonstrate that high levels of consanguineous marriage are significantly correlated to greater prevalence of civil war violence. Subsequent tests show that this correlation is unlikely to be the result of other potential confounding variables such as regional disparities, gender inequalities, or the presence of a Muslim majority. I conclude that high rates of consanguinity – and by inference, the prevalence of the dynastic social systems that tend to coincide with widespread consanguineous marriage – play an important role in contributing to civil wars across the world today. This conclusion illustrates the critical importance of studying the impact of dynasticism and other kinship practices for those seeking to fully understand the nature of civil war and related global security issues.

### Introduction

Conflicts between powerful families were once a prime instigator of major wars and political conflicts. My analysis of the Philippines in the previous chapter – along with the more

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<sup>1</sup> Churchill 2010, recounting his time spent in the Pashtun territories of the United Kingdom’s India colony.

<sup>2</sup> Kephart 1922 p. 226. This quote appears after an account of a Kentucky feud first reported in Munsey’s Magazine in 1903. In that piece, the widow of a slain victim was asked why she did not take her children away to spare them from continued vendetta killings. Her response was as follows: “I have twelve sons. It will be the chief aim of my life to bring them up to avenge their father’s death. Each day I shall show my boys the handkerchief stained with his blood and tell them who murdered him.”

cursory example of the ongoing Yemeni Civil War that I will discuss in the following chapter – suggest that similar dynastic forces may continue to shape political conflicts in at least some contemporary states. But how widespread is this type of dynastic violence in the modern world? Yemen and the Philippines, after all, are states widely noted for the exceptionally powerful institutional role played by families and tribes within their domestic politics, as well as the frequency with which those dynastic vendettas and feuds have become embroiled in larger political tensions.<sup>3</sup> Can one reasonably extrapolate from these potentially atypical cases and conclude that dynastic politics in other countries are playing a similar role as catalysts for civil war violence? Or are the country cases I’ve examined merely aberrations, unrepresentative of any broader international trends?<sup>4</sup>

To answer these questions and test whether my theory of dynastic violence is generalizable outside of potential outlier states, this chapter is devoted to investigating global trends in the relationship between familial network structures and civil war violence. To accomplish this, I have opted to transition away from country-specific case studies, and to instead analyze this posited relationship through a cross-national statistical analysis. While a compelling argument could potentially be advanced based solely on further deep investigation into other carefully selected cases that display varying levels of dynasticism and civil war violence,<sup>5</sup> a large-N cross-country analysis has several additional benefits at this stage in my argument that can help expand our understanding of dynastic violence. First, sampling from a wide variety of states offers a chance to more fully grasp the breadth and extent of dynasticism’s influence, and to unearth clues regarding how systematically the phenomenon may or may not vary across different regions or specific types of countries. Secondly, a large-N cross-country analysis offers an alternate form of confirmatory evidence for my hypothesis and provides a more systematic opportunity to test whether any observed correlation between dynasticism and political violence might be more appropriately explained through other variables and mechanisms. Finally, a broad statistical study serves to demonstrate the feasibility of taking a concept as complex and culturally entrenched as dynasticism and operationalizing it in a fashion that is amenable to large-scale quantitative analysis.<sup>6</sup> While there is still ample room for more qualitative and in-depth analysis into the political dynamics of dynasticism in particular countries and cultures, it is valuable at this stage to test how broadly we can conceptualize the consequences of dynastic violence, and how resilient my theoretical predictions are to alternative measurement designs. Having already used insights from specific countries like the Philippines

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Conde 2007b and Raghavan 2011a.

<sup>4</sup> If my inspirational cases like Yemen and the Philippines have been atypical, for example, it may well be that the vast majority of civil wars across the world manifest without any influence from dynasticism. Or, even more problematically for my theory, selection bias in my cases may prevent me from observing an equal or greater number of dynastic societies that aren’t prone to civil war violence. For more on this issue of selection bias, see Geddes 1990 and Collier & Mahoney 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Yemen and the Philippines, as potentially extreme cases, have generally informed this dissertation in the context of theory building (George & Bennett 2005), and to develop a better empirical understanding of how dynastic violence operates. Further individual country case selection would thus likely be better served by looking for greater variation along both the dependent and independent variables. In addition to previously cited works on research design and case selection, see also Collier 1995.

<sup>6</sup> While case study results do not necessarily need to be confirmed through large-N cross-case analysis, it is often productive to vary levels of analysis when feasible to help leverage the strengths of each approach. For more on the small-n/large-N and quantitative/qualitative divides in political science, and particularly within the sub-discipline of comparative politics, see Flyvbjerg 2006, Brady & Collier 2010 and Goertz & Mahoney 2012.

and Yemen to develop a foundational understanding of dynastic politics, a large-N comparison now offers the best opportunity to test both the generalizability and methodological robustness of my claim that dynasticism increases a country's vulnerability to civil war conflicts.<sup>7</sup>

I begin this chapter by discussing potential proxy measures that might be used to appropriately estimate the complex, multi-faceted phenomenon of dynasticism in a manner that can be applied across countries and recent decades. After comparing several different potential proxies, I conclude that proportional levels of *consanguineous marriage* represent the most promising measure for estimating the level of influence of dynasticism within a society, particularly as it pertains to kinship-based violence.<sup>8</sup> Consanguineous marriages are marriage bonds formed between two individuals that already have preexisting kinship ties prior to their union – examples common to multiple societies include uncle-niece marriages, marriages between first cousins, and unions with extended kin such as more distantly related cousins or members of a shared tribe or clan. Consanguineous marriage is often of interest to medical professionals operating in different geographical regions due to the higher instances of genetic disorders that can arise from populations where mates are frequently chosen from relatives. As a result, an extensive body of research has been devoted to cataloguing and analyzing the extent of the practice across a wide variety of different societies, as well as to the potential economic and social factors that may contribute to higher preferences for such marriages.<sup>9</sup>

In this chapter, I hypothesize that higher levels of dynasticism and consanguineous marriage in a society tend to reinforce one another, as dynasticism incentivizes the type of class- and kinship-based endogamy that produces consanguineous marriages, and consanguineous marriage customs in turn promote familial consolidation of wealth and political influence along dynastic lines. Dynasticism and consanguineous marriage thus tend to coincide, and in the absence of extremely strong taboos to disincentivize this dynamic, the prevalence of one factor encourages the emergence of the other. As exemplified by the high levels of interrelatedness among European aristocrats,<sup>10</sup> the entrenchment of a dynastic political system is likely to be

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<sup>7</sup> Large-N cross-country analyses, of course, can have weaknesses of their own that similarly reinforce the value of country cases for a robust argument. As we will see in this chapter, for example, the statistical analysis presented in this chapter provides further evidence supporting the first hypothesis I provided at the end of Chapter 2: that dynasticism (through its proxy, consanguineous marriage) does indeed appear to increase civil war violence. But the broad global analysis provided here is insufficiently detailed to support or reject my second hypothesis: that dynasticism doesn't merely increase political violence, but also shapes and directs it along kin-based lines. That evidence presented in this chapter can only demonstrate a general correlation between family structure and political violence and is insufficient to demonstrate the contours and direction of this violence. To examine where violence is directed and how this direction maps to local kinship practices, requires a level of granularity that is difficult to achieve in cross-country analysis. The cross-country analysis provided in this chapter can thus provide evidence that partially confirms my argument, but it is insufficient on its own to fully demonstrate the role of dynasticism in civil war violence without support through case studies such as those I provide for the Philippines and Yemen in the chapters that immediately precede and follow this one.

<sup>8</sup> Overviews of consanguineous marriage and its prevalence can be found in Modell & Darr 2002 and Bittles 2012.

<sup>9</sup> A thorough collection of most estimates for consanguinity rates by country can be found in the tables assembled at [consang.net](http://consang.net) (Bittles & Black 2015). This resource is widely used in scientific and medical literature on consanguinity rates, as in Denic & Nicholls 2007, Hoben et al. 2010, and Musante & Ropers 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the European aristocracy offers a strong example of dynasticism's ability to overcome significant obstacles in incentivizing consanguineous marriage. Christianity historically embraced strong taboos against inbreeding, and one might reasonably expect that consanguineous marriages would decline in Christian societies as a result. But after repeated intermarriage among ruling houses, monarchs experienced significant difficulty finding unrelated spouses without dipping into lower classes of society or the ruling families of increasingly distant and minor countries. This tension ultimately resulted in the emergence of routinized dispensations for consanguineous

associated with higher rates of consanguineous marriage – both intentionally through matches within a family designed to consolidate inheritance or avoid expensive dowry payments to rivals, but also more subtly as a result of reduced marriage options stemming from class-based constraints on acceptable marriage partners.<sup>11</sup> I will further argue in this chapter that there is reason to believe that consanguinity may not only be associated with dynasticism in general, but is also particularly likely to be associated with dynastic violence and feuding. Consanguineous marriage, by repeatedly reinforcing existing marriage ties rather than spreading kinship ties across a wider network of families, tends to both widen the divisions that promote inter-kin conflict while also heightening the type of overlapping claims to legitimate inheritance that promote intra-kin conflict. Consanguinity can thus be seen as not only a general indicator of dynastic tendencies within a society, but also as a catalyst exacerbating the tensions within dynastic systems and increasing the likelihood of dynastic violence. As in previous chapters, I argue here that the types of quotidian tensions and small-scale feuds promoted by these dynastic tensions are likely to manifest over time as a significant correlation with persistently higher vulnerability to civil war violence in a country.

Having described this hypothesized relationship between consanguineous marriage and dynasticism, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to testing whether a measurable correlation can in turn be observed between varying consanguinity rates and instances of civil war outbreaks in countries across the world. A series of regressions will be presented, with the dependent variable – civil war onset – estimated through the UCDP/PRIO civil war onset data previously discussed in my analysis of dynastic violence in the Philippines. I will combine these observations with an original collection of estimates for consanguineous marriage rates in 88 countries that I derived initially from the most extensively cited scholarly dataset on cross-country consanguinity rates, supplemented by my own further research to incorporate more country cases and to maximize the representativeness of population estimates. Substantial attention will be paid in my analysis to other possible explanatory variables that may co-vary alongside national consanguineous marriage rates, including economic indicators, urbanization rates, and women's rights indicators. In particular, I will address the prevalence of high rates of consanguineous marriage in many predominantly Muslim countries to ensure that results derived from consanguinity rates are not unintentionally reflecting a higher vulnerability to civil war among Muslim countries.

Ultimately, through a succession of logistic cross-sectional time series regressions, I will demonstrate the positive correlation between consanguineous marriage and higher risks of civil war onset.<sup>12</sup> I will further demonstrate that this correlation does not appear to be the result of any

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marriage among the ruling classes (Bouchard 1981). Such dispensations were themselves notably insecure and came with a risk that either family might reject the dispensation in the future and attempt to have the marriage annulled (d'Avray 2014). Nevertheless, despite the initial presence of strong taboos against the practice, the perceived benefits of marrying powerful relatives in a dynastic, hierarchical society were still strong enough to make the practice ubiquitous among Europe's ruling class.

<sup>11</sup> In other words, in societies where class and economic status are significantly determined by birth, we are likely to see significant assortative mating effects that reduce the effective pool of available mates. Over time, this is likely to result in more mates chosen among relatively close family members. For more on class and assortative mating, see (Kalmijn 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Though as I will demonstrate, some models and measures alternately suggest a more complex, curvilinear relationship between consanguineous marriage and civil war. While these results are generally compatible with linear results, particularly when comparing low-consanguinity Western countries to states with much higher rates of

of the proposed alternative explanations that were tested for significance. From this analysis, I will conclude that there is significant evidence supporting the claim that dynasticism and kinship-based conflict are a contributing factor increasing the likelihood of civil war emergence across the world and in a wide variety of different political, economic, and geographic settings. While statistical analysis cannot confirm a causal relationship, particularly in regard to phenomena as complex and multi-dimensional as kinship networks and political violence, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the same dynamics that I initially observed through fieldwork in Yemen and the Philippines are operating in a large selection of other states. This evidence suggests that the impact of dynastic violence isn't merely confined to a few outlier states, but in fact is intertwined civil wars across the globe today.

### *Section I* *Dynasticism, Consanguinity, and Civil War Conflict*

As the preceding chapter demonstrated, dynastic politics are not simply an issue consigned to the history books and irrelevant to contemporary governance and security concerns. In the Philippines, electoral competition is plagued by outbursts of violence between competing political dynasties, causing the traditional practice of *rido* blood feuds to bleed over and intersect with ethnic and ideological rebellions. In my concluding chapter, I will also briefly review the case of Yemen, where stereotypically modern institutions such as the military and the House of Representatives are permeated with elites who derive their power from traditional tribal institutions – and where, as a result, national politics and local tribal conflicts have become inextricably intertwined. These countries may be particularly notable examples of contemporary states plagued by dynastic tensions, but they are not alone in experiencing widespread destabilization and politically sensitive violence emerging out of kinship structures and the tensions surrounding competing family networks.

Modern observers rarely consider familial conflict to be a driving force for large-scale instability and rebellion. But anecdotal accounts in a diverse array of countries suggest that similar intersections between dynastic or familial interests and broader political violence may be far from unusual. Extensive analysis has been devoted to the tribal dimensions of insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq – conflicts which are beset by feuds and tensions that routinely reshape conflict in unpredictable ways and vex outside interveners unused to the intricacies of tribal kin relationships.<sup>13</sup> In his study of *La Violencia* period in Colombia, Roldan similarly notes that underlying the nominal Conservative/Liberal division there lay a society plagued by “nepotism and corruption,” and “cliquish, family-defined *roscas* (patronage networks),” that often manipulated violence in ways that “obeyed the logic of personal feuds,” rather than the strategic interests of the primary warring parties.<sup>14</sup> In South Sudan, a persistent source of violence is the practice of cattle-rustling, enacted by unmarried men seeking to pay the steep brideprice expected of new grooms.<sup>15</sup> ISIL recruiters similarly emphasize the availability of both pious brides and enslaved women as incentives to encourage disaffected young men to join their

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kin marriage, a curvilinear result potentially suggests that consanguineous marriage may have a diminishing impact, or even a stabilizing effect, when comparing different countries that all have relatively high rates.

<sup>13</sup> Johnson & Mason 2007, Schmeidl & Karokhail 2009, Ucko 2008, McCrary 2009, Benraad 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Roldán 2002 p. 251, 212.

<sup>15</sup> Page 2016 and Chamberlain 2017.

conflict.<sup>16</sup> And in Liberia and Sierra Leone, joining a rebel group is often perceived as the only option for men seeking to escape a stifling kinship hierarchy where family heads force bachelors into years of servitude for the promise of a marriage.<sup>17</sup> These examples potentially suggest that certain cultural practices surrounding kinship may contribute to a state's long-term vulnerability to political violence.

The goal of this chapter, then, is to evaluate whether available evidence supports the hypothesis that a general causal link ties powerful, entrenched family networks to higher incidence of large-scale violence such as civil wars, and to determine whether this link is consistently observable across a wide selection of modern states. For this purpose, I have opted to transition from the single-case analysis of the previous chapter, and to instead expand my analysis to a broad cross-country statistical design. Methodological debates persist among political scientists, and particularly within the comparative politics subfield, regarding the logical implications of quantitative versus qualitative and cross-country vs. single-country case study research designs. Among proponents of quantitative and large-N techniques, it is generally suggested that analyses encompassing large numbers of cases hold greater weight, since they are able to leverage higher numbers of observations to more systematically control for alternate explanations.<sup>18</sup> A more contingent stance prevalent among qualitative researchers claims instead that different methodologies each carry different strengths and weaknesses, and thus that large-N comparative analysis often represents a complementary addition to more case-specific studies.<sup>19</sup> From either perspective, the addition of a cross-national large-N test to the case-specific analysis presented in the prior chapter serves as a valuable opportunity to test the generalizability of my claims concerning dynastic violence and civil war.

For such an analysis, measuring the dependent variable of interest – civil war violence – is a relatively straightforward process. An extensive body of literature exists investigating the causes and correlates of civil war onset, duration, and severity, and multiple reliable civil war datasets have been produced and publicized to allow scholars to facilitate cross-study comparisons.<sup>20</sup> But greater difficulty arises concerning how to properly operationalize my independent variable of interest – dynasticism and powerful family networks. Dynasticism is a “thick” concept,<sup>21</sup> entailing multiple dimensions of formal and informal political power that can't be easily translated into a unidimensional variable. Readers will recall that in my analysis of early modern monarchies in Europe, where dynasticism was unambiguously present and relationships among elites were painstakingly detailed, I nonetheless found it necessary to include three distinct variables to model monarchs' relationships with one another. That level of detail, or even the simpler method of comparing province-level elected officials' names – as I did for the Philippines in Chapter Four – are both unfeasible for a large modern cross-state analysis. In the absence of a generalizable measure for dynasticism that could be practically applied to multiple countries simultaneously, it instead becomes necessary to find an appropriate proxy variable that might capture many of the dynamics present in dynastic societies.

Several possibilities were initially considered as potential proxies for estimating a country's level of dynasticism and the degree of power that family ties exert over political,

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<sup>16</sup> Speckhard & Yayla 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Richards 2005.

<sup>18</sup> King et al. 1994.

<sup>19</sup> Gerring 2004, Brady et al. 2006, and Ragin 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Discussion and comparison of some of the most commonly used conflict datasets can be found in Eck 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Coppedge 1999.

economic, and social institutions. The most direct approach might be to follow the example of my prior historical analysis and focus on heads of state – perhaps by researching leaders’ personal backgrounds to ascertain whether prior members of their family had previously held a major office. Extant datasets already exist to code national leaders for a given country-year, and prior researchers have argued that the personal characteristics and political origins of a head of state may impact the likelihood of political violence.<sup>22</sup> Classifying these leaders as either dynastic or non-dynastic could thus be accomplished through biographical research and a rigorous definition designating leaders as dynastic when they were preceded by sufficiently proximate family members holding a sufficiently powerful political position. But I ultimately rejected this approach out of concern that heads of state’s dynastic status may not be sufficiently reflective of the level of dynasticism throughout a society. As was evident in my study of the Philippines, much of the impact of dynasticism appears to operate at a relatively local level of authority, where regional bases of power and localized feuds can flourish outside the full attention of the state. While societies where local dynasties flourish might reasonably be expected to also generate more dynastic heads of state,<sup>23</sup> it’s not clear how consistently a ruler’s family reflects the country’s broader elite in practice. In non-democratic societies in particular, rulers may follow idiosyncratic paths to power that result in highly unrepresentative individuals coming to control their country. The dynastic history of heads of state is thus likely to be of use in testing the top-down impact of dynastic rule on governance, but this method of estimation is less likely to be successful in accurately estimating the pervasive low-level impact of widespread dynasticism throughout a society.

A second approach might instead focus on the economic impact of dynasticism through indicators of persistent economic inequalities and multi-generational class mobility across countries.<sup>24</sup> One of the central characteristics of dynastic societies, after all, is their tendency to concentrate political power and material wealth within relatively few family networks. We might thus expect that appropriate economic or institutional indicators can serve as a viable proxy reflecting the impact of dynastic political structures. And indeed, extensive prior literature has already been devoted to investigating how income inequality might exacerbate states’ vulnerabilities to civil wars.<sup>25</sup> The broad – though far from universal – consensus from this scholarship suggests that income inequality on its own is a poor predictor for civil war violence.

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<sup>22</sup> A dataset examining the dynastic origins of heads of state can take inspiration from extant leader datasets such as Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009). Such an approach would follow on prior observations that leader behavior and regime type can have a profound effect on the likelihood of civil war emergence (Mitchell 2004, Roessler 2011). It could also take valuable inspiration from similar studies of leaders’ impact on international security and other political outcomes (Jones & Olken 2005, Chiozza & Goemans 2011).

<sup>23</sup> For example, all modern presidents of the Philippines – including the flamboyantly populist Duterte – have arisen out of established political dynasties save for Joseph Estrada, who achieved his initial fame as an actor.

<sup>24</sup> For weaker states and developing economies, issues of inequality are often most destabilizing in the context of land rights. When powerful families control an inordinate proportion of agricultural land, changing economic and political incentives can lead to the breakdown of traditional land tenure practices to the severe detriment of less powerful groups. In the right circumstances, privatization of property rights may offer greater economic security for land owners. But rapid privatization and titling initiatives can perversely exacerbate inequalities, as when communally owned land is transformed into the property of local elites. Literature on these issues is extensive, but pertinent discussion of these issues and their relationship with political violence be found in Brockett 1992, Albertus & Kaplan 2013, and Boone 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Though rarely framed in explicitly dynastic terms, the relationship between economic inequality and internal political stability is a common topic of interest for researchers. See Cramer 2003, Besançon 2005, Esteban & Ray 2011, Nepal et al. 2011, Cedarman et al. 2013.

However, inequality associated with specific preexisting social schisms – most notably in cases where severe inequalities exist between different ethnic groups or regions of the country – is much more closely correlated to civil war emergence. The importance of such interaction effects with respect to ethnicity may suggest that inequality along familial lines is similarly destabilizing through its exacerbation of preexisting social divisions. One potentially promising line of research along these lines may lie in detailed examination of cross-country data on intergenerational mobility.<sup>26</sup> A country's current level of inequality is conceptually distinct from how entrenched and persistent inequality is across generations, and the latter problem potentially serves as a measurable link between dynasticism and economic hardships among lower classes. Unfortunately, it's unclear whether present-day economic inequality indicators are sufficiently detailed to sustain a relatively granular dynastic level of analysis. Data on economic inequality can be difficult to collect in war-torn states, and distinguishing dynasticism's impact from the other effects associated with economic inequality depends on observing family-level variations and measuring long-term intergenerational outcomes. This type of economic analysis might thus be more appropriate for country case studies than it is for the type of broad cross-national comparisons presented in this chapter.

A third possible approach – which might better capture kinship practices in the general population – is to instead investigate and record variation in cultural traditions, practices, and norms associated with dynasticism across countries. Different societies, after all, can have markedly different kin dynamics, and so measures delineating these differences may serve as a means of estimating dynastic characteristics of a country. A culture-focused approach can thus leverage variation in traditional family practices or legal institutions to estimate variation in dynasticism across society. We can liken this method to earlier social scientific efforts to compare cultural characteristics of different nations and peoples, from Max Weber's contrast between Protestant and Catholic societies to more recent works arguing that East Asian states may adhere to a set of "Asian values," that influence economic and political behavior in contrast to Western expectations.<sup>27</sup> Within this broad approach, a variety of specific measures might be used as possible indicators for varying familial and dynastic practices. Perhaps most directly, dynasticism and strong kinship ties might be estimated through an analysis of public opinion and reported levels of trust in family and non-family institutions across different states.<sup>28</sup> But such direct analysis of public opinion is potentially weakened by the universally high levels of trust individuals tend to invest in family members across societies – without careful survey design to parse out the different ways in which families tend to be relied upon in dynastic and non-dynastic societies, there is significant risk that responses across countries will lack substantive variation. Instead, researchers may find greater insight by focusing on legal and societal institutions that can serve as proxies for broader cultural variation.<sup>29</sup> A particularly prominent example of such

<sup>26</sup> See Solon 2002 and Blanden 2011.

<sup>27</sup> For discussion on the concept of "Asian values," see Dalton & Ong 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Other sources of inspiration for such comparisons might include relative measures of trust in kin vs. non-kin (Ostrom & Walker 2003, Morck & Yeung 2004, Alesina & Giuliano 2010) or in prior attempts to estimate the relative influence of kin networks in a community through a "familism scale," (Steidel & Contreras 2003, Schwartz 2007). The World Values Survey (Inglehart et al. 2014), used by several of the above studies, offers a variety of other potential points of comparison across countries.

<sup>29</sup> Extant ethnographic research may be of significant value for future research along these lines, whether as a primary source or as inspiration for further fieldwork analysis. See, for example, Durantón et al. 2015 which uses ethnographic data to examine the impact of varying family systems on development. Discussion on some data sources of potential value for political science researchers can be found in Ripma & Carmichael 2016.



research can already be found in the literature analyzing the impact of gender disparities on political violence. Past research in this vein has compared particular traditional practices across societies – including kinship-centered behavior such as polygamy, gender asymmetries, or of bridewealth and dowry traditions – to examine how these gendered traditions may exacerbate political and demographic tensions in ways that lead to higher levels of politicized violence.<sup>30</sup> Of particular note is the WomanStats Project, which seeks to systematize cross-cultural comparisons by assembling a wide variety of indicators of women’s rights in different states.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Hudson, Bowen, & Nielsen 2015 uses WomanStats data to present an analysis highly complementary with the research presented in this dissertation.<sup>32</sup> In this article, Hudson et al. assemble a multivariate scale based on a variety of kinship-centered variables, including the level of legal inequality between genders, the acceptability of privatized domestic violence, and the average age of marriage. The authors argue that their scale offers an estimate of “Clan-based Governance,” in a society, a concept comparable to my own attempts here to measure the level of dynasticism in a given state. As in this chapter, Hudson et al. test the relationship between family-level interactions and the prevalence of large-scale political violence and instability in a society, concluding that higher levels of clannishness do indeed appear to render societies more vulnerable to political violence. This conclusion is closely compatible with my thesis that dynasticism and kin-based violence may contribute to broader patterns in civil war onset, but the approach of Hudson et al. is also vulnerable to some fundamental critiques. Most notably, their decision to estimate clan-based authority through a multivariate scale of disparate cultural characteristics potentially makes their argument subject to ad hoc reasoning and internal validity concerns based on which characteristics they chose to include or exclude and how they chose to weight the importance of difference attributes to assemble a single scale.<sup>33</sup>

All the approaches described above offer potentially valuable contributions for understanding how dynasticism and civil war violence might relate to one another – and each of these approaches represent potential avenues for future research. For the purposes of this chapter, I determined that the third approach – cultural comparison – offered the most promising opportunity to compare countries at the level of broad, pervasive social interactions. My initial research in Yemen and the Philippines suggested that much of the political instability that ultimately contributed over time to larger conflicts originated at first in highly personal feuding and vendettas among a wide sample of distinct kin networks. A comparison of states along cultural dimensions, which potentially best captured such broad-based kin relationships across the entire population, thus appeared to represent the most appropriate method for testing the generalizability of my case-derived insights. Furthermore, as presented in Chapter 3, my research suggests that much of the political impact of dynasticism may operate through cultural and social

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<sup>30</sup> The relationship between gender inequality and intrastate violence is discussed in Caprioli 2005, while the economic and security implications of economic barriers to marriage are analyzed in Andeson 2007 and Hudson & Matfess 2017. Lagerlöf 2010 explores negative externalities of polygyny, though Gleditsch et al. 2011 argue that the oft-cited violent consequences of non-monogamous pairings tend to be the product of gender inequalities more generally, rather than polygynous practices in particular.

<sup>31</sup> Caprioli et al. 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Hudson et al. 2015.

<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, it might be argued that my own proposed indicator – consanguinity rates – may overemphasize one peripheral characteristic of some dynastic societies and may not accurately describe actual variation in dynasticism across societies. The question of which measure should be used is thus reminiscent of similar measurement debates for other important political concepts, as in Elkins 2000’s description of differing conceptions of democracy.

processes, making a cultural lens particularly suitable for testing dynasticism's influence. My initial fieldwork also pointed to one cultural practice in particular that may exhibit a notably strong association with highly dynastic and kin-focused societies and might play an outsized role in encouraging kin-based violence: the prevalence of consanguineous marriage.<sup>34</sup> The term *consanguineous marriage* denotes those marriages between individuals who have a preexisting kin relationship to one another – most stereotypically taking the form of marriage between cousins.<sup>35</sup> These types of marriage were notably widespread in both Yemen and the Mindanao region of the Philippines and appeared in both cases to exacerbate the deleterious effects of dynasticism and kin-based conflicts.<sup>36</sup> In both cases, byzantine networks of overlapping relationships and repeated intermarriages often seemed to entrench and reinforce kin hierarchies, while also drawing individuals into complex webs of kinship-based duties and resentments that contributed to instability and unintended escalation of disputes.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the phenomenon of consanguineous marriage possessed several characteristics that made it particularly well-suited for generalizability: the practice varies widely in popularity across different states and societies, and is often perceived as intertwined with other characteristics of dynasticism such as strong kin bond, rigid family hierarchies, and powerful honor cultures. Just as importantly, an unusual level of effort has been devoted to cross-cultural and cross-national analysis of varying consanguineous marriage rates – primarily among medical professionals interested in the deleterious physical effects of overly high inbreeding rates in a population.<sup>38</sup> Finally, testing the

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<sup>34</sup> In their amalgamated scale of clan governance indicators, Hudson et al. also include consanguineous marriage as a constituent element – although in their scale the indicator is simply treated dichotomously to indicate the relative prevalence of the practice rather than attempting to estimate a more precise rate.

<sup>35</sup> In keeping with my discussion of kinship in prior chapters, I define consanguineous marriage here in terms of the cultural perceptions of the participants in the practice, rather than the strict genetic relatedness of married individuals. In most societies, marriage between close relatives will be understood to be consanguineous, though it often will not have the negative associations often attached to it by contemporary Western audiences (hence my avoidance of the more charged term *incest*). But, in many cultures consanguineous marriages may also extend well beyond genetic ties. In medieval European society, remarriage to a brother's widow was considered incestuous, despite the lack of a genetic relationship between affinal kin (Kelly 2004). And in tribal societies, marriage within a tribe may be valued for its perceived consanguinity even if the familial ties between tribe members are largely fictive. In Chapter 3, I concluded that dynastic conflict is likely to be driven by cultural rather than genetic imperatives. Consequently, I assume here that the processes that tie consanguineous marriage to dynastic violence are primarily a product of the social dynamics associated with remarrying into one's own kin group. How a society defines who is or isn't kin is likely to have some impact on the direction of violence, but the precise dividing line between kin and non-kin should be understood as a social construct that varies between cultures.

<sup>36</sup> Anecdotal evidence based only on these cases is, of course, vulnerable to issues surrounding case selection bias and observation of spurious correlations. One of the main values inherent in combining case study analysis with larger N statistical tests is the ability to combine novel observations derived from case knowledge with broader tests that can either confirm or refute hypotheses derived from these observations (Lieberman 2005).

<sup>37</sup> See Chapters 4 and 6 of this dissertation for general analysis of dynastic conflicts in both countries. It's worth noting that in those two chapters I do not dwell overly long on the issue of consanguineous marriage specifically. Consanguineous marriage in both countries tends to function as an underlying layer of friction that exacerbates and generates conflict, but it is rarely apparent as the direct cause of a conflict. The practice can thus be compared to other socio-economic factors such as income and political inequality, poverty, and demographic transformations. It's rarely the case that any of these factors are directly identified as the cause of conflict by actors themselves. Instead, it is only through deep analysis, as in the detailed genealogical study of aristocratic Europe that I present in Chapter 3, that it grows increasingly apparent how bonds of repeatedly overlapping kinship ties begin to constrain and direct kin networks' strategies away from cooperation and toward confrontation.

<sup>38</sup> Medical literature on the effects of consanguineous marriage are extensive; see Jaber et al. 1998, Bittles et al. 1991, and Bittles 2001.

singular phenomenon of consanguineous marriage as a proxy for broader dynastic patterns of authority in a society potentially represents a more parsimonious and clear-cut test of generalizability than a more arbitrary multivariate scale such as the Clan Governance Index.

Consanguineous marriage is a widespread practice in a variety of countries and cultures, with particular prevalence in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.<sup>39</sup> Such marriages may at one point have been more common in cultures such as Europe where they are relatively rare today, but even in past centuries preferences for marriage within a kin network likely showed significant regional variation.<sup>40</sup> The tendency to prefer spouses drawn from within one's kin network varies not only between countries, but also within a given country based on factors such as geography, urbanization, class, religion, and ethnicity. Arguments vary regarding why the practice is substantially more popular in some communities than in others. Perhaps the strongest explanation lies in simple historical institutionalism – “tradition” and “custom” are often referenced as a primary motivator for such marriage, and the practice tends to persist for at least a few generations even when the material conditions of a community change.<sup>41</sup> Some have noted that these entrenched traditions of consanguineous marriage are particularly pronounced in many historically Muslim societies, though the precise causal mechanisms of this relationship remain subject to debate. Muslims may be more prone to marry relatives in emulation of the Arab traditions practiced by the prophet Muhammed or may embrace the practice as a result of the general gender segregation prevalent in many Muslim societies. On the other hand, many such communities show evidence of widespread consanguineous marriage long before the arrival of Islam, potentially suggesting deeper historical roots for the practice.<sup>42</sup> In contrast to those focusing on historical traditions, other researchers have examined more contemporaneous motivations surrounding the practice. In many societies, marriage within the family is notably common among poorer classes, particularly when local traditions surrounding bride prices and dowries force families with few resources to rely on relatives for affordable spouses.<sup>43</sup> Paradoxically, consanguineous marriages are also in some societies notably pronounced among elites, possibly because wealth and status in those societies are highly tied to inheritance, land

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<sup>39</sup> Bittles & Black 2010 estimate that roughly 10% of the world's population – likely heavily concentrated in certain regions of the world – are born from parents related at the level of 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins or closer.

<sup>40</sup> Persistent geographic variation has also been noted within regions. Southern Europe, for example, has been noted as having a higher rate of consanguineous marriage than the north of the continent, a trend that appears to have persisted for centuries (McCullough & O'Rourke 1986). This North-South divide roughly corresponds to the divide between relatively “weak” and “strong” family ties, respectively (Reher 2005). Intriguingly, this discrepancy in consanguineous marriages runs counter to religious taboos associated with each region. The Catholic Church long upheld strict rules against marriage between close kin, including marriages between affines that would not be considered explicitly incestuous in most modern Western cultures. Consanguineous marriage nonetheless persisted in many Catholic regions through either extensive dispensations offered by local clergy, or simply through a reticence to enforce the rule. Despite the relatively more relaxed theological beliefs concerning consanguineous marriage in Northern Protestant countries (Ottenheimer 1996 p. 68), the South of Europe's mild preference for consanguineous marriage in comparison to the North has persisted into the present day (Bittles 2003).

<sup>41</sup> Hussain 1999 reports that appeals to tradition were the most common explanation for a preference for consanguineous matches among Pakistanis. Traditional marriage patterns appear to persist for at least one or two generations following migration into non-consanguineous communities, as reflected in the practices of immigrant communities living in the West (Reniers 2001, Shaw 2001).

<sup>42</sup> For further analysis of the relationship between Islam and consanguineous marriage, see Korotayev 2000, Akrami & Osati 2007, and Bittles & Hamamy 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Shami et al. 1994, Saadat et al. 2004.

ownership, or kin connections.<sup>44</sup> Along with variation in wealth, reports across a variety of societies suggest that consanguineous marriages tends to be more prominent in rural rather than urban communities, though this relationship may vary substantially according to economic incentives. Rural populations have reduced access to marriage markets and may seek to avoid spreading out land ownership or tenure across different families, but urban populations may also prefer consanguineous marriages if family networks play a critical economic role and benefit from regular reinforcement.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps most intriguingly, some reports suggest that consanguineous marriage may be unusually popular in periods of development and economic transition. Multiple studies suggest that 18<sup>th</sup> and early-19<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, for example, experienced a marked increase in consanguineous marriages among the rising middle class when upwardly mobile families adapted to economic development by maintaining strong alliances with their kin.<sup>46</sup> Other authors have similarly argued that newly urbanizing communities and immigrant populations may tend to embrace intra-kin marriage at higher rates than do their communities of origin.<sup>47</sup>

Consanguineous marriage varies widely across societies and populations – but does this variation necessarily reflect a greater prevalence of dynasticism and kin-based authority structures in societies that demonstrate high levels of intra-kin marriage?<sup>48</sup> Certainly, it is

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<sup>44</sup> In some cases, these two trends may also converge. Weinreb 2008 finds that in Egypt, consanguineous marriage is most preferred by families that are poor in national terms, but have higher wealth than their local community. The peculiar dichotomy, wherein consanguineous marriage appears visibly pronounced among both elites and those in extreme poverty, was also repeatedly remarked upon in the West during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. In 1916, the *Journal of Heredity* published an editorial advancing a eugenics-based position arguing that endogamy among elites was to be praised, while the same practice among poorer individuals led to illness and reduced intelligence (*Journal of Heredity* Editorial 1916).

<sup>45</sup> Bildirici et al. 2010 offer an international analysis of consanguinity rates that adheres generally to standard development consensus, concluding that consanguinity is characteristic of countries that are less economically developed, more rural, and possess lower literacy. This trend is also reasonably common when comparing communities within a given country (see, for example, Hussain & Bittles 1998), but there is enough variation in reported results between different communities to make clear that socioeconomic indicators at the sub-state level do not fully explain why consanguineous marriage is embraced at different rates by different groups.

<sup>46</sup> The exact timing and precise contours of this trend in marriage preferences varied according to local traditions and economic factors, but it appears to have been a transition that occurred relatively consistently across Western Europe (Sabeen 2007). An increase in popularity of remarriage within one's kin network was witnessed in the United Kingdom (Morris 1991), Switzerland (Mathieu 2007), the Netherlands (Bras et al. 2009), and Italy (Merzario 1990). By the mid-nineteenth century, this trend began to reverse – apparently beginning in the United States, where marriage among relatives became stigmatized nominally for its medical drawbacks, but also in large part because it was seen as a deviant behavior practiced by the rural poor and by non-English immigrant populations (Kuper 2002, Paul & Spencer 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Gunaid et al. 2004, Shenk 2016.

<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that there have been periodic prior attempts to draw causal connections between international consanguineous marriage rates and geopolitical outcomes at the state level. Bildirici et al. 2010 illustrate the correlation between consanguineous marriages and low development indicators, while Woodley & Bell 2013 argue that a prevalence of such marriages leads to reduced levels of democratic representation. In a 2017 working paper, Akbari et al. similarly propose that consanguineous marriage is associated with higher rates of corruption. I differ from these prior works not only in my focus on political violence and through my independent calculations for consanguinity rates, but also in my intuition that consanguinity rates are primarily of interest as an indicator for broader dynastic social structures rather than a primary causal variable. All three of the previously mentioned works provide compelling analysis and describe correlations which seem highly plausible. Yet all three arguments rely in whole or in part on essentialist arguments which appear questionable to me in light of my analysis of aristocratic dynastic strategies in Chapter 3. Both Woodley & Bell and Akbari et al. rely primarily on the concept of inclusive fitness, postulating that consanguinity leads to higher genetic relatedness among relatives and therefore creates an

plausible to hypothesize scenarios in which consanguineous marriage is not inextricably interlinked with dynasticism. In some isolated communities, for example, the tendency to marry relatives may primarily be a product of small populations that cannot easily acquire mates without some level of kin ties. We can similarly speculate that even in a highly dynastic society, where strong incentives typically exist to repeatedly intermarry among a limited number of appropriate family lines, sufficiently strong incest taboos or a large enough pool of available families can minimize incentives for people to marry within their own kin group.<sup>49</sup> But in practice, there is compelling reason to hypothesize that consanguineous marriage and dynastic structures of authority tend to be convergent and self-reinforcing tendencies in a society.<sup>50</sup> At its core, the practice of marrying into lineages to which one is already related is a subset and byproduct of *endogamy* – a tendency within a society to select mates from the same relatively restricted population repeatedly over several generations. In dynastic societies, where power and privilege are firmly entrenched in family lineages, individuals are likely to experience substantial pressure toward class- and status-based endogamy that potentially makes intra-kin marriage relatively common after several generations.<sup>51</sup> Among elites, social status and expensive wedding traditions may severely restrict acceptable marriage options to the point where marriage between kin becomes increasingly likely. Poorer classes in a dynastic society may also tend to marry kin because class-based social expectations of wedding gifts and dowries price poorer

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evolutionary incentive to be even more loyal to relatives versus non-relatives than is the case in non-consanguineous societies. Bildirici et al. provide a more multi-causal explanation, tying consanguinity to clan- and tribe-based social structures that limit open economic cooperation, but also posit that the medical consequences of regularized consanguinity create an additional economic burden on communities. Such essentialist arguments should certainly not be dismissed out of hand, but my research to date has shown little reason to believe appeals to biological instinct or medical drawbacks offer particularly valuable or plausible explanations. I find it much more plausible that both consanguinity and political violence – and, likely, the other deleterious effects identified by these prior authors – all have their ultimate origins in a pattern of dynastic power relationships and strongly entrenched kinship-based social networks that can be seen in a wide variety of contemporary societies, and for which consanguinity merely serves as a conveniently measurable indicator.

<sup>49</sup> In North India, for example, reports suggest that marriage rules and taboos tend to be stricter and more frequently adhered to than in the south of the country. Consequently, marriages among Hindus there appear to be generally non-consanguineous despite the presence of a defined caste hierarchy that might otherwise contribute to a tendency to remarry repeatedly between the same family lines (Sanghvi 1966, Bittles 2002). On the other hand, as noted previously, similar taboos in Catholic regions of Europe appear to have had limited success at ending the practice of consanguineous marriages even into the twentieth century.

<sup>50</sup> Greif 2006 offers a comparable analysis to my argument here, tying Western economic institutions such as corporations to social networks that were shaped and formed out of specific family structures associated with European kin relationships.

<sup>51</sup> Darr & Modell 1988 (pp. 188-189) note that there's an intuitive link between reduced class mobility and higher marriage endogamy. Wolf 2013 pp. 5-6 similarly opines that “differential access to resources...” is “reflected in differential patterns of marriage,” illustrating this dynamic by contrasting the image of a tycoon and a beggar each seeking to marry a king's daughter. As described in Chapter 3, and in greater detail in Bouchard 1981, the relationship between class hierarchy and endogamy was one of the primary drivers of consanguineous marriage among the noble houses of Europe. When social status and resources became concentrated along certain lines of descent, elites across the continent were incentivized to limit their marriage matches to an extremely small pool of acceptable candidates. The critical role of inheritance for the maintenance of wealth in Europe's agricultural economy often influenced marriage patterns well below the level of the aristocracy – Abelson 1977, for example, found that village land owners in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Pyrenees married consanguineously at a rate 4.5 times higher than tenant farmers in the same community. Economic pressure to keep wealth within established family lines continues to be cited as a reason for maintaining the practice of consanguineous marriage among communities that still practice it today (Bener & Alali 2006).

individuals out of a wider marriage market.<sup>52</sup> A convergence between consanguineous marriage and dynasticism in the opposite direction is also eminently plausible. Societies where endogamous marriage is already present can be expected to have strong kinship ties, where resources and inheritances are regularly reconsolidated within the kin network. If families are accustomed to holding inherited resources within a narrow kin network across multiple generations in this fashion, those in power may have a reduced incentive to distribute opportunities and influence across a broader selection of rival families.<sup>53</sup> Both dynasticism and consanguineous marriage might thus be reasonably expected to represent a self-reinforcing set of cultural incentives, converging over time into a stable pattern that consolidates both social influence and marriage options within familial networks.

Beyond a hypothesized general correlation between consanguineous marriage and dynasticism, there is further reason to believe that consanguineous marriage may be particularly correlated with high levels of dynastic feuding and persistent kinship-based conflicts. Since I have proposed that feuding and vendetta cultures tend to be the primary means through which dynasticism promotes political instability and civil war, we might thus expect to observe correlation between consanguineous marriage and civil war outbreaks even if consanguineous marriage is an imperfect proxy for dynasticism more generally. Past scholars have noted that consanguineous and endogamous marriage practices tend to be associated with powerful honor cultures and with distinctively insular and hierarchical kinship networks.<sup>54</sup> Others have argued that repeated marriage within the same family makes inter-kin conflict more likely, since a lack of broad webs of marriage connections gives distinct kin networks reduced incentives to cooperate with one another.<sup>55</sup> Less intuitively, as we observed in Chapter 3's analysis of

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<sup>52</sup> Studies in societies with economic barriers to marriage markets, such as dowries and brideprices, have extensively documented how these traditions can stratify marriage options to a narrow band at the top and bottom of the class hierarchy. Marriages within a kin network often forego or defer such payments, making consanguineous marriage the only accessible option for destitute families in particular (Reddy 1987). Mobarak et al. 2013 offer particularly compelling evidence for this relationship through use of a quasi-experimental design studying changing rates of consanguineous marriage in different classes following a wealth shock.

<sup>53</sup> We can compare the way in which strong kinship networks reshape political institutions and patronage networks to the more extensively analyzed phenomenon of ethnic cleavages and identities, which have a similar tendency to become embedded in domestic political contestation (Nagel 1994, Berman 1998). As with ethnicity, strong kinship networks are likely to promote dynastic political dynamics both through directly influencing the perceived identity of political actors (Brown 2000) and by altering avenues of participation so that family networks play a central role in political decision-making (Singerman 1995). Strong informal kinship ties have been observed to reshape politics into more dynastic authority structures in both authoritarian (Collins 2006) and democratic (Kochanek 2000) regimes.

<sup>54</sup> Extensive discussion on the relationship between family honor, marriage traditions, and violence (both domestic and feuding) can be found in Tillion 2007. Payton 2015 offers a revised analysis, arguing that consanguineous marriage isn't so much a generator of violence in and of itself, but instead that both consanguinity and kinship-focused violence tend to be byproducts of coercive gender and intergenerational relationships. Eriksen and Horton 1992 present a complementary view, and find that feuding tends to be disproportionately centered on marriage or courtship disputes, and is most apparent in cultures where kin networks are fixated on sequestering female kin in order to preserve the family's honor and reputation. Schneider 1971 and Fukuyama (p. 235) both also observe that persistent feuding tends to depend on a particular type of family structure – generally, feuds are only sustainable when large family networks tend to live in close proximity and rely at least partly on shared resources. In societies where kinship is more atomistic and operates primarily in the form of nuclear families, reliance on one's kin network for security is generally impractical.

<sup>55</sup> Van Velzen and Van Wetering 1960 proposed a “fraternal interest” theory suggesting that feuding was primarily the result of social structures that encouraged large collections of related males to stay in close proximity and unite against perceived threats to their collective security (see also Otterbein & Otterbein 1965). Kang 1976 tests the

European monarchies, too much interbreeding also has the potential to promote intra-kin violence by creating increasingly complex and overlapping claims to inheritance and ancestral authority. To be sure, reinforcing existing kin relationships through repeated consanguineous marriage is often perceived as a means of maintaining alliances and ensuring that the kin group will stay united against outside threats – and in many circumstances, it’s reasonable to assume that consanguineous marriage has precisely this effect. But repeatedly reinforcing the same kinship ties may also introduce greater opportunity for overlapping inheritance or status claims between closely related rivals, potentially making these kinship networks more vulnerable to internal contestation and violent splits over time.<sup>56</sup>

To illustrate why consanguineous marriage itself might be structurally prone to exacerbating both inter-kin and intra-kin conflicts, examine the scenario presented in the kinship diagram in Figure 5.1. This figure presents a hypothetical interaction between three distinct families and assumes a culture that is generally patrilineal – reserving the majority of inheritance rights for an eldest male heir, but in which descendants through female lines might have some contested claim to either property or family authority. In this scenario, the White family at the center is considering two alternative marriage options – either the male scion of the Black family (Option A on the left) or a marriage to the Gray family (Option B on the right). In this case, a symmetric exchange of heirs is not immediately possible, since neither the Black nor Gray families have any other marriable children, and because the White family’s eldest son has already married into another lineage. The sole distinguishing characteristic between the choice of husbands is thus that the White bride’s aunt married into the Black family in the previous generation – making the Black family heir the girl’s patrilateral cross-cousin. Beginning with the non-consanguineous marriage first (Option B), we can note that a marriage between a White family daughter and a Gray family son creates a relatively stable balance of connections between each family’s sons in the subsequent generation. The White family heir, who is related to both the Gray and Black Family heirs, inhabits a relatively balanced position – if, for example, the Black family heir enters into a dispute with him over inheritance from their mutual great-grandparents, the Black heir must proceed with caution, lest his challenge accidentally result in the inheritance passing to the Gray family heir instead. In the language of the social network literature, the exogamous marriage of a White family daughter to a non-relative has helped the White family heir develop greater *betweenness*, providing both greater connections and a greater balance between different potential rivals.<sup>57</sup>

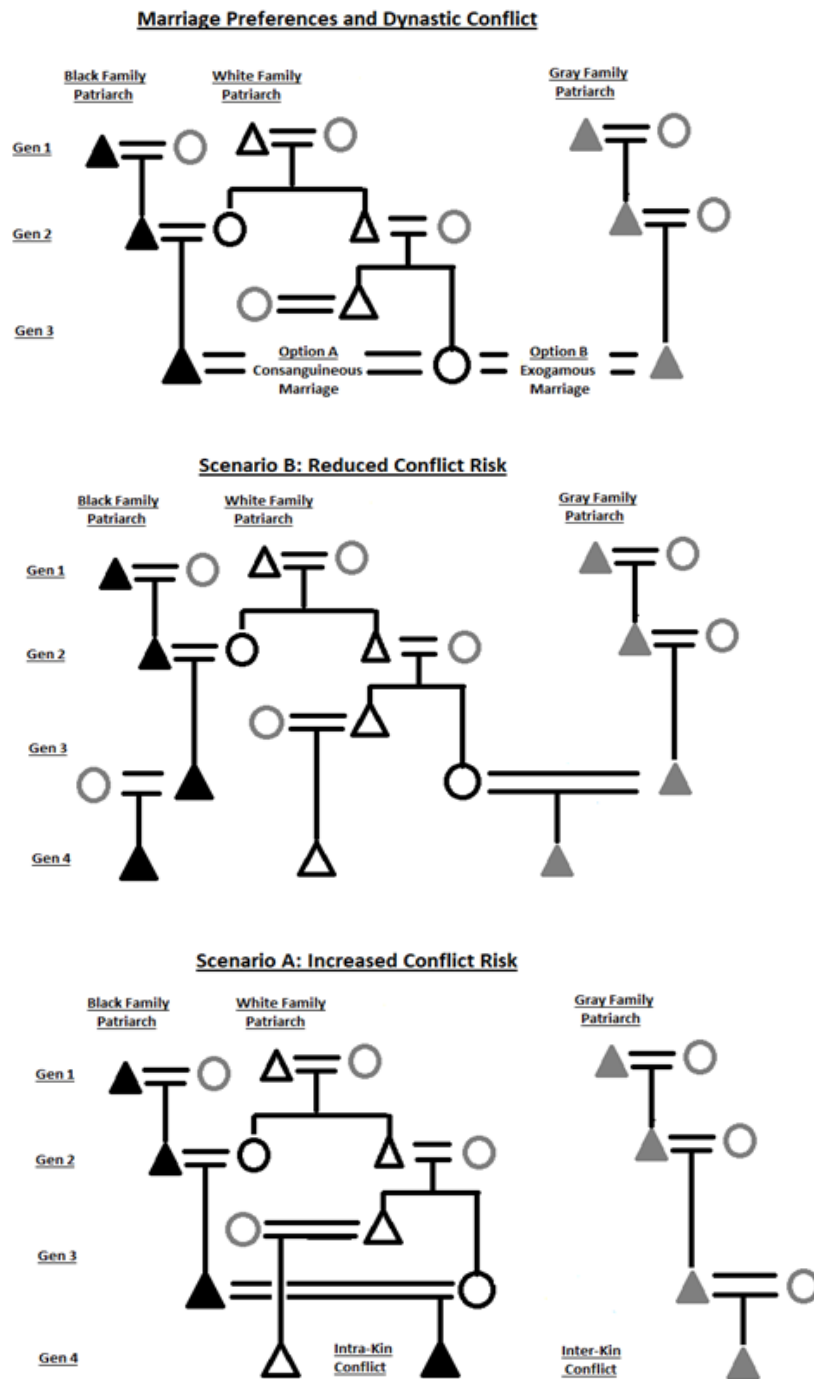
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similar “conflicting loyalties” theory which proposes that violence tends to be reduced when societies allow for a wide variety of cross-cutting ties and connections – embodied in kinship terms by a greater number of exogamous marriages into different family lines rather than repeated remarriage into the same lineage(s).

<sup>56</sup> In their study of feud accounts in Albania, Mustafa & Young 2008 report their surprise at the unexpectedly high number of feuds that took place between family members and within wards occupied by a single extended kin network. Pastner & Pastner 1972 similarly report that in spite of an often-touted tradition of mutual kin support in Baluchistan, they found instead that cleavages dividing kin networks were “the rule rather than the exception,” (p. 132). It is quite plausible that other societies tend to experience similar intra-kin cleavages, and that such violence tends to be less widely reported because of reticence to discuss divisions among kin, either out of shame or a rational desire to avoid signaling weakness.

<sup>57</sup> For the concept of “betweenness” and “centrality,” see Freeman 1978. The proposed stabilizing effect of a broad network that connects a diverse set of different kin networks is comparable to the peace dividends of complex interdependence as understood in international relations literature (Keohane & Nye 1987).

**Figure 5.1**



This outcome can be contrasted with the alternative scenario in which the White family daughter marries her cousin from the Black family.<sup>58</sup> Here, we see that there is now greater

<sup>58</sup> Those familiar with the work of Lévi-Strauss (1971) will note that the type of Mother's Brother's Daughter match I describe here is precisely the type of cousin pairing that he speculates to be a stabilizing rather than a destabilizing



social distance between the White and Gray families – and we might reasonably postulate that the continued lack of family ties might further alienate these families from one another and decrease the incentives the White and Gray families to interact peacefully. At first, we might also expect this tension to be balanced out by closer cooperation between the Black and White families, who have now reinforced their alliance with two marriages within two generations of one another. But when we examine the genealogical ties between the new sons of the White and Black families, the repeated overlapping of family lines also shows the potential to introduce new lines of contestation between the two interrelated families. Notably, the Black family heir is descended from the first generation of the White family through both his mother and his father – he is in fact more closely related to the White family patriarch than is the patrilineal White family heir. In situations where an inheritance dispute emerges between the Black and White family heirs, this discrepancy between one heir's stronger claims to patrilineality versus the other's claim through more extensive genealogical descent can potentially lay the foundation for a legitimacy crisis. Thus the White family's choice to double-down on its marriage ties through a consanguineous marriage to the Black family has not only increased the chances of an inter-kin conflict with families like the Grays, to whom they have no familial ties, but it may also perversely increase their vulnerability to intra-kin challenges from the Black family.<sup>59</sup> The scenario depicted in Figure 5.1 is obviously but one of an endless variety of possible marriage dilemmas emerging from uncertain reproductive outcomes, but the specific relationships depicted therein arrive in relatively few steps at an impasse that becomes increasingly likely as consanguineous marriages are pursued across multiple generations. Over time, the unreliability of human fertility, lifespan, and sex ratios combine to ensure that attempts to engineer multi-generational alliances based on repeated exchange of spouses will inevitably become uneven and asymmetrical. Repeated intermarriages within the same family lines – though often incentivized by dynastic systems that tie wealth and status to family lineage – thus create increased opportunities for the accumulation of tensions both across unrelated kin groups and within the same kin network.

To summarize the above paragraphs and return to the overarching purpose of this chapter: there is compelling reason to believe that consanguineous marriage is likely to correlate with dynasticism – and even stronger reason to believe that such marriages are particularly correlated with dynastic violence and feuding. Consanguineous marriage is thus a promising proxy variable for identifying those states where dynasticism and dynastic feuding are likely to

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influence. The fundamental discrepancy between Levi-Strauss' schema and the scenario I present is that the former assumes a regularized, symmetric exchange, whereas I here focus on a (far from unusual) scenario in which the vagaries of reproduction do not allow for a symmetrical exchange. Indeed, this scenario is far from hypothetical – in Chapter 3, three monarchs took wives from houses they shared with their mother but not their father: Frederick Wilhelm I of Prussia, William III of Orange-Nassau, and Louis XIV of France. In two of those three cases, the monarch ended up utterly supplanting their wives agnates. Fear of this type of unclear loyalty is one reason why Middle Eastern societies such as Arabs and Kurds tend instead to celebrate marriage to Father's Brother's Daughter, but such marriage traditions have long been regarded as destabilizing in their own right due to their tendency to fragment and atomize lineages (Barth 1986, Barakat 2005).

<sup>59</sup> Gartzke & Gleditsch 2006 propose a similar dynamic in ethnic conflict, showing that ethnicities which more fully overlap in terms of language, religion, and history tend to experience greater conflict rather than cooperation, even after controlling for higher geographical proximity. One can see examples of this principal in fighting between Abrahamic religions over the legitimate control of spaces considered sacred to all three religions. As the history of European succession wars illustrates, ancestral overlap can similarly generate a vulnerability to contestation and usurpation between heavily intermarried kin.

be particularly prominent. Researchers of dynasticism can consequently take advantage of the preexisting cross-national research on rates of consanguineous marriage to compensate for the difficulty of reliably estimating and comparing levels of dynasticism across states. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will take advantage of this hypothesized relationship to test the generalizability of my argument that dynasticism and localized kinship-based violence continue to play an understudied role in increasing states' vulnerability to outbreaks of large-scale civil war violence. Having already shown evidence of this relationship in the case of the Philippines, my tests in this chapter for a correlation between consanguineous marriage practices and civil war onsets across a wider set of countries will serve to test whether evidence exists to suggest that dynasticism's effect on civil war violence is widespread and measurable across a wide selection of contemporary states.

## *Section II* *Methodology*

### *Dependent and Independent Variables*

To test my hypothesis that higher levels of dynasticism and powerful kinship networks – as proxied by consanguineous marriage rates – are globally associated with greater likelihood of civil war violence, a series of logistic regressions were performed using relevant operationalized variables. For my dependent variable – civil war onset – I rely once again on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program for records of political conflicts at the country level. Instead of attempting to condense the georeferenced data used in the previous chapter for every state in the sample, for this chapter I use the aggregated country data provided by the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, v. 17.1.<sup>60</sup> This dataset and its precursors are among the most widely used scholarly sources for quantitative comparisons of political violence.<sup>61</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, tests relying on this widely used dataset enhance the replicability and generalizability of results, and make it simpler for subsequent research to compare results with those of other researchers. The UCDP data sorts observations of political violence by conflict-year and notes the state in which each conflict took place. It is somewhat more restrictive than the geo-referenced data, imposing a 25-fatality per year threshold for a given conflict-year to be included, and requires at least one party in the conflict to be a national government. This eliminates the type of small-scale terrorist-on-civilian attacks that were included in the georeferenced dataset, but also avoids the risk of including ambiguous cases that may be difficult to compare cross-nationally. For the sake of ease of comparison to other cross-national studies, my analysis here stays consistent with these coding decisions on the part of UCDP. My analysis only includes conflicts that are coded type 3 or 4 by UCDP – internal conflicts and internationalized internal conflicts. Theoretically, feuding dynasties and clans may also have had some impact on colonial wars – coded type 1 in the dataset – but in practice my observations only begin with the date of independence for a given state, and so such wars are almost entirely absent from the dataset.

For my analysis, I convert conflict-year data into observations of country-years and use a dummy variable to indicate the occurrence or lack thereof of a new civil war onset in each observation period. In-keeping with the coding guidelines used by the dataset, all *government*

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<sup>60</sup> Gleditsch et al. 2002b and Pettersson & Eck 2018.

<sup>61</sup> Many of the works cited in this and other chapters make use of the UCDP dataset. Other representative works that rely on these data include Miguel & Satyanath 2004 and Salehyan & Gleditsch 2006.

disputes in the same country are considered part of a single ongoing conflict, while different *territorial* conflicts within the same country are distinguished from one another. Thus, for example, a rebellion by one ethnic group is considered a new conflict onset, even if the country was previously in the midst of ongoing fighting with a separate ethnic group, or experiencing a centralized conflict over control of the national government.<sup>62</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all models use a one-year cut-off for inclusion as a new onset – thus, a conflict must experience at least one year of observed peace before reemerging if it is to be measured as a new onset.<sup>63</sup> As with prior statistical tests in this dissertation, the practice of observing only the onset of violence, and discounting subsequent years in violent incidents within the same continuing conflicts, is based on maintaining the assumption of independence of observations inherent in regression analysis. Because subsequent violent incidents in a civil war are heavily influenced by the prior years of conflict, attempting to incorporate every incident of conflict into an analysis is likely to heavily skew results. As such, each outbreak of civil war violence is measured only via its most recent onset, rather than every year of incidence. As in previous chapters, further controls to help assure temporal independence of observations include the use of a cross-sectional time series design for all models, as well as the inclusion of control for temporal effects in the form of a dummy denoting the first observation of a given country, year splines, peace year count splines, and a count of prior years of uninterrupted violence.<sup>64</sup>

Country-year observations were drawn from the period spanning 1946 to 2016. In a few cases, alternate measurement decisions by different datasets used for this analysis necessitated minor adjustments in how the UCDP data organized country-year observations. Most notably, several datasets utilize contemporary country divisions anachronistically, leading to differences in how countries have been listed if they underwent division (such as Czechoslovakia) or became unified (Yemen) over the period of observation. For Czechoslovakia, the historical division of the country is preserved in the data, since data on Slovakia and the Czech Republic can be easily merged into an estimate for the combined state by averaging the two states' attributes and weighting the average by the annual per capita population of each respective sub-state. By contrast, it is more difficult to confidently take data describing the historical characteristics of the modern unified Yemeni state and attempt to estimate the differences between the north and south in historical time periods. Therefore, unlike Czechoslovakia, Yemen is anachronistically listed as a unified country throughout the period of observation.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> This has the effect of slightly biasing observation in favor of civil war violence in countries with multiple different ethnic groups that each host violent insurrections. My intuition is that the effects of localized feuding are likely to be more pronounced in ethnic separatists conflicts than in government conflicts – though cases such as Yemen, discussed in the next chapter, show that even fights focused on control of the central government are not immune to dynastic tensions.

<sup>63</sup> Space here precludes a detailed analysis of onset thresholds, but preliminary tests using different definitions for a new onset did not offer substantial further insights. Initially, I suspected that consanguineous marriage rates might be more closely associated with the reemergence of a conflict – signaling that kinship-based feuding makes conflicts more intractable and likely to reemerge. However, tests did not provide strong evidence supporting this conclusion. A more systematic analysis testing consanguinity's influence on conflict reemergence and duration (Walter 2004, Collier et al. 2004) may represent a promising opportunity to test this hypothesis with greater precision.

<sup>64</sup> As in the previous chapter, this count of uninterrupted prior war years was not sufficiently large to generate independent splines, and so a single linear count was used on its own.

<sup>65</sup> A civil war outbreak in either North or South Yemen prior to unification was thus counted as an outbreak for the whole territory. In three of these years – 1972, 1978, and 1979 – interstate conflicts took place between North and South Yemen. Because my theoretical analysis focuses solely on the impact of consanguinity on intrastate conflicts, I chose not to include these in Yemen's list of conflict outbreaks. This constituted a cautious approach, since

For this analysis' independent variable, a consistent method was needed to operationalize and compare rates of consanguineous marriage across countries. I base my initial estimates on the Global Prevalence of Consanguinity (GPC) database maintained by Alan Bittles, which offers an extensive collection of research-based estimates of consanguinity rates in different countries.<sup>66</sup> This resource represents the most exhaustive source for cross-country estimates of consanguinity, including detailed supplementary information regarding the sample size and relevant populations of each survey. It is the primary source used among medical researchers investigating consanguineous marriage, and thus represents a useful facilitator for inter-study comparison of results. The variable of interest for my analysis was the GPC's Consanguinity Percentages variable, which represents each individual study's estimate of the percentage of marriages that were between two individuals who were relatively closely related to one another prior to their wedding.<sup>67</sup>

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Yemen's high level of consanguinity was already predicted to correlate to a high risk for civil war violence. For the same reason, an interstate conflict in 1948 between Hyderabad and India prior to their unification was also omitted from observed war onsets.

<sup>66</sup> Bittles & Black 2015, accessible at [consang.net](http://consang.net).

<sup>67</sup> As I argue at length in the prior section, I utilize consanguinity here as an indicator of a broader dynastic social structure that appeared from my initial research to contribute to overall violence in both Yemen and the Philippines. But while third-party researchers confirm consanguinity acceptance among Yemenis, the Philippine case is deserving of more scrutiny – despite serving as one of my two inspirational dynastic cases, estimates for consanguinity in the country range from extremely low (0.4%) to fairly high for a non-Muslim country (12.2%). The first estimate comes from the only figures for the Philippines included in Bittles & Black 2015, which sampled only from Manila. The second estimate (described in Hussain & Bittles 2004, but for unclear reasons omitted from the [consang.net](http://consang.net) data) samples from a wider range of provinces, included both predominantly Muslim provinces and a range of provinces from Christian areas. The data in Hussain & Bittles 2004 confirms a clear discrepancy between the two sects, with consanguinity among Christians described as being roughly 4% of marriages, while consanguineous marriages occur at a rate of 37% among Muslims.

While marriage to kin is substantially rarer among Christian Philippines, and officially illegal between first cousins, the practice still has some level of visibility. Jose Rizal, the revolutionary poet who is widely celebrated as the father of Philippine nationalism, had a famous and oft-romanticized relationship with his cousin. The democratic politician Benigno Aquino, scion of one of the country's most powerful dynasties and a politician whose assassination launched the revolt against Ferdinand Marcos and paved the way for both his wife and his son to become presidents, was the child of two Aquino cousins. More recently, Mikee Arroyo – son of President Gloria Arroyo – also had a famous wedding to his cousin. Study of the surviving indigenous communities of Philippines show that consanguineous marriage rates vary extensively by ethnicity but are in some communities quite common (Eggan 1941), which may imply some lingering Pre-Christian marriage patterns may persist in other areas in ways comparable to heightened consanguinity in southern Europe.

Nonetheless, the clear discrepancy between consanguinity in Muslim communities versus the rest of the country does shed some doubt on the theorized correlations between consanguinity and dynasticism – dynasticism in the Philippines, after all, is ubiquitous throughout the country, while consanguinity appears to be much more limited along sectarian lines. Instead, the case of the Philippines appears more consistent with the alternate hypothesis I briefly describe in the prior section – that consanguinity isn't necessarily correlated to all forms of dynastic social structures, but rather to a specific and extremely common subset of dynasticism defined by particularly insular and limited marriage choices and a greater propensity for feuding to defend family honor. Such a hypothesis is consistent with my findings in the previous chapter, where I concluded that dynasticism is generally correlated to political violence across the country, but that most of the power driving this correlation is derived from provinces in Mindanao. I avoid exploring this possibility in too much depth because of how limited the evidence is to distinguish these two rival hypotheses. But the Philippine case does raise questions regarding whether there is any evidence for a benign form of dynasticism, one that may be associated both with less endogamous marriage patterns and, more crucially, also associated with less feuding and fewer honor- and kinship-based killings.

While an invaluable starting point, the GPC dataset also illustrates many of the problems that currently plague comparative analysis of consanguinity rates. Because there is no systematic, global standard for estimating consanguinity rates, any attempt to compare the results of the disparate studies assembled in the dataset is necessarily hindered by several weaknesses, the largest of which are as follows: (1) lack of a universal cut-off point or definition of consanguinity, (2) non-representative sampling, especially of minority ethnic groups, and (3) missing country data from states that haven't yet been sampled. Addressing these issues in order, it is difficult to deny that the first weakness – the problem of different cut-off points – presents a potentially serious risk for comparative analysis. Without a universal definition of what level of relatedness constitutes consanguinity, there is unquestionably a risk of potential bias or false correlations when, for example, comparing studies that consider only first cousin and closer marriages to be consanguineous to those that consider consanguinity extending to the second cousin level.<sup>68</sup> At its core this problem typifies a fundamental conceptual issue surrounding any comparative analysis of kinship and how different cultures define relatedness. This issue is comparable to problems faced in the quantitative study of ethnic violence, where estimates of the size or characteristics of ethnic populations often have to rely on highly debatable assumptions and methods so that these socially constructed categories can be compared across widely different cultures and contexts.<sup>69</sup> In the case of kin groups, the very language used by different cultures can vary markedly in ways that can confuse subjects' conception of a cut-off point. In classificatory kin systems such as the Hawaiian type, for example, the same term is used to describe a brother, a male cousin, or a distant male peer of indeterminate relatedness – making it difficult to draw a conceptual line at which “relatedness” ends.<sup>70</sup> In many cases, different comparable kin institutions may not even exist across all societies – intra-tribal marriages in societies where tribes play a critical role in conceptions of kinship may have no direct equivalent in societies that lack tribes altogether. The Bittles dataset attempts to be as transparent as possible in describing precisely which types of relationships are categorized as consanguineous in each respective study, but because not all included authors provide a clear breakdown of the percentage of each type of consanguineous pairing in the sample, it is impossible to use a single universal cut-off without dropping a prohibitively large number of studies from the dataset. I attempt to resolve this issue in two ways. In my primary estimate, by taking as expansive a view as possible on kin relatedness, to approximate how respondents would react if simply asked if they and their spouse had familial ties prior to marriage. Conversely, I also present a second “best estimate” – discussed later in this section – that was designed to eliminate studies that appeared most likely to be substantially biasing estimates due to unusually expansive definitions of kinship. Even so, in the absence of a large-scale project to test consanguinity rates internationally using a consistent methodology, current research into the topic must largely accept this limitation and acknowledge the importance of caution in interpreting results.

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<sup>68</sup> Discrepancies may emerge in a number of other ways as well – notably regarding whether researchers have access to detailed genealogical information or instead rely on short surveys. Individuals in most societies often have difficulty describing precise genealogical relationships beyond the first-cousin level, potentially making precise cutoffs counterproductive in some circumstances.

<sup>69</sup> Posner & Laitin 2001 offer an informative overview of the conceptual pitfalls inherent in any effort to assign a simple numerical estimate to fundamentally socially constructed identities such as ethnicity – a pitfall inherent in the study of kinship as well.

<sup>70</sup> For more on the language and concepts surrounding kinship systems, see Radcliffe-Brown 1941.

However, it is important to note that while differing empirical definitions of consanguinity are a very valid concern, there is some reason to believe that this problem may not be as severe as it first appears. First, current research suggests that in most consanguineous societies, first cousin marriages represent the primary preferred form of consanguineous pairings,<sup>71</sup> and such marriages are nearly universally counted by researchers. Furthermore, while a clear empirical definition of consanguinity is obviously of significant importance to medical and biological researchers, among social scientists there is a strong case to be made for a more flexible definition of consanguinity that focuses primarily on the self-perceptions of subjects. As discussed in Chapters 1 through 3, the primary mechanisms through which dynasticism and kinship generate political conflicts appear to be constructivist in nature, and thus what matters most is whether individuals operating in the context of their society view themselves as being part of a consanguineous or an exogamous marriage.

Whereas this first limitation in the GPC dataset is one that must largely be acknowledged but accepted, the next two limitations are significantly easier to address. In the case of unrepresentative sampling, the GPC listing of relevant populations provides a clear starting point for isolating which studies may have relied on minority populations that systematically biased estimates. To address this problem, an effort was undertaken to develop a representative estimate for the consanguinity rates of each country included in the dataset. For this revised estimate, all of the studies collected by the GPC for a given country were grouped together, and those studies that exclusively sampled from any ethnic, national, or religious populations that didn't comprise either a majority or plurality of the country's population were dropped. Decisions regarding which ethnic and religious distinctions were relevant for determining majority/minority status were made using the Ethnic Power Relations Dataset as a guide.<sup>72</sup> It is worth noting that excluding these studies did not necessarily mean that minority populations were entirely excluded from consanguinity estimates – in the majority of studies, samples were taken based on geographical rather than ethno-national criteria, and in such cases minority populations might be expected to be sampled in proportions roughly comparable to their size within the broader population. But eliminating studies that only sample from minority populations helps ensure that radically non-representative groups do not distort estimates of the overall consanguinity rate in a given state. Once the GPC samples had been sorted to cut out these unrepresentative studies, each of the remaining estimates for each country were then averaged together (with each estimate weighted by sample size) to develop a new single estimated consanguinity rate for each individual country. Estimates for consanguinity rates in 65 distinct countries was created through this method.<sup>73</sup>

Having derived estimates from GPC, a subsequent effort was then undertaken to review extant literature for any further consanguinity estimates for states missing from this initial data.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Bittles 2012, p. 2

<sup>72</sup> Vogt et al. 2005

<sup>73</sup> In a recent working paper examining the relationship between consanguinity and development, Schulz 2017 presents an intriguing alternative methodology for resolving several of the same problems I describe here. Rather than focusing primarily on the dominant ethnic group in a country, Schulz attempts when possible to weight consanguinity rates to the proportional demographic size of all ethnic groups in country for which consanguinity rates have been measured. In addition, Schulz relies on anthropological records to construct a dummy variable for reports of high rates of consanguineous marriage in countries where more detailed estimates are unavailable.

<sup>74</sup> Ideally, a thorough review would also examine each of the countries included in the GPC to find if any further studies exist whose estimates were not included in the dataset. I am aware of a handful of cases at present where this is currently the case – as, for example, in my secondary estimate for consanguinity in the Philippines. Unfortunately,

In all, this search uncovered 23 additional countries (including a few countries, such as Slovakia, that I dropped from the GPC dataset due to unrepresentative sampling, but for which other more representative studies could be found).<sup>75</sup> Each of the listed studies followed the same criteria that was required of studies from the GPC data: all newly included studies had to present an empirically derived estimate that wasn't focused on a non-representative minority population. In most cases, no more than one study per country was discovered, but in any situations where multiple estimates existed for a country, estimates were weighted by their sample size and then averaged together in the same manner as the studies summarized in the GPC dataset. Combined together, this likely represents the most exhaustive collection to date of estimates of consanguinity rates for countries across the world. Summarized in the appendix to this chapter, the estimates provide a clear and simple means of testing population dynamics, comparable to other measures such as Ethno-Religious Fragmentation or Polarization. This appendix also takes care to note the cases in which some sample populations were excluded due to minority status, noting in each case the relevant population descriptor for which groups were part of the majority or plurality, and were thus eligible for inclusion in the dataset.<sup>76</sup>

As is common for comparable measures such as ethnic fractionalization, my estimate of consanguinity rates is time-invariant due to lack of detailed studies of changes in marriage patterns over time. My decision to omit minority population estimates does introduce a potential temporal dimension for countries that experienced significant demographic changes over the period of observations. In particular, the Ethnic Power Relations Database lists two observed countries – Israel and Lebanon – as having experienced changes in the dominant ethnic group over time. In my analysis, I resolved this problem by simply identifying a broader level of identity that constituted a majority or plurality throughout the period of observation (i.e. Shi'ites and Sunnis grouped together as Muslims in Lebanon, and Ashkenazim and Mizrahim grouped

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the GPC is used so extensively in recent research on consanguinity that it is often time-consuming to determine whether more recent estimates for a country were derived independently or from the GPC and its sources. A systematic effort to reexamine each of these countries and assemble any further estimates would be a valuable contribution for future research.

<sup>75</sup> Sources for each country were as follows: Benin (Sopoh et al. 2010; Yemadje et al. 2012), Bhutan (Dorji 2003), Central African Republic (Ndamobissi et al. 1995), Chad (Crognier 1977), Czech Republic (Zahálková 1970), Democratic Republic of the Congo (E-Anjafono et al. 2014), Djibouti (Pan-Arab Project for Human Health, 2004), Finland (Jorde and Pitkänen 1991), Gambia (Bennett et al. 2002), Ghana (Field 1958), Kyrgyzstan (Kucher and Soltobaeva 2004), Malta (Vassallo 2003), Mauritania (Isselmou et al. 2001), Nepal (Adhikari et al., 2014), Niger (Manyell 2006), Senegal (Ndiaye et al. 1988), Slovakia (Genčík et al. 1982), Switzerland (Morton and Hussels 1970), Tajikistan (Tuma and Titma, unpublished), Thailand (Hussain and Bittles 2004), Togo (Agouké et al. 1989), and Uzbekistan (Newby and Kamilov 2002). In the case of one further state, Azerbaijan, an estimated consanguinity rate of 32.4% is referenced in the English-language abstract Skoblo 1975, but an English translation of the article was not available to confirm this estimate. Instead, a roughly comparable estimate of 31.6% was derived from GPC dataset based on rates among Azerbaijani populations in Iran (from Saadat et al. 2004) and applied to Azerbaijan. Data for other minority populations, such as Georgians in Iran or Koreans in China, made several other ethno-national estimates theoretically feasible, but in those cases the evidence was less clear that populations in both countries shared similar rates of consanguineous marriage.

<sup>76</sup> Once again, it should be acknowledged that the table still represents a preliminary and potentially flawed estimate of consanguinity rates. The varying estimates related to Czechoslovakia provide an illustrative example: the methods described in this chapter have resulted in an estimated consanguinity rate for the country that is notably lower than the estimated consanguinity in both of its subsequent constituent republics. This result should serve as a reminder of the importance of developing better systematic guidelines for estimating consanguinity rates in the future so that more accurate comparisons can be made across countries and regions.

together as Jews in Israel).<sup>77</sup> To address possible concerns about my estimations, for countries in which multiple sources were available or that provided details about consanguinity estimates for several cutoffs of relatedness, this chapter also provides an alternative “best estimate” in which coder discretion was used to identify the study that appeared to provide the most credible and consistent estimate.<sup>78</sup> Decisions regarding estimate reliability were based on a combination of criteria, including sample size, region surveyed, recentness, and how well results fit with qualitative accounts of marriage practices in the country. In a few cases, such as in Senegal, estimates that seemed based on abnormally broad definitions of what constituted consanguinity were adjusted to reflect more limited definitions, so as to better reflect a relatively comparable range of relationships in the definition of consanguinity in all cases. This “best estimate” was far more vulnerable to coder bias than my more systematically derived primary estimate, but using both estimates allows this study to test a useful range of plausible approximations. These two consanguinity estimates do not diverge substantially – correlating at 97.14% - but because some of the tests below involve closely correlated alternative explanations, it is nonetheless useful to account for this range in estimation when possible.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> For both countries, I list details on temporally varying estimates in this chapter’s appendix. Robustness tests performed on Models 1 and 3 showed no change in significance for any variables if a time-dependent estimate of consanguinity was used for these two countries instead.

<sup>78</sup> Inclusion of a “best estimate” was inspired by the UCDP dataset’s coding of fatality estimates, which are similarly subject to systematic uncertainty and thus often rely on coder discretion.

<sup>79</sup> For countries included in the GPC, the source selected for each country was as follows: Afghanistan (Saadat & Tajbakhsh 2013), Algeria (Benallègue & Kedji 1984), Argentina (Liascovich et al. 2001), Australia (Port & Bittles 2001), Azerbaijan (as previously noted, estimate derived from Saadat et al. 2004), Bahrain (al-Naser 1994), Bangladesh (Khan et al. unpublished data, as cited in Bittles & Black 2015), Belgium (Twisselmann et al. 1962), Bolivia (Freire-Maia 1968), Brazil (Freire-Maia 1957), Cambodia (Sullivan unpublished data, as cited in Bittles & Black 2015), Canada (Freire-Maia 1968), Chile (Freire-Maia 1968), China (Zhan et al. 1992 data, as cited in Bittles & Black 2015), Colombia (Freire-Maia 1968), Costa Rica (Freire-Maia 1968), Croatia (Stevenson et al. 1966), Cuba (Freire-Maia 1968), Ecuador (Freire-Maia 1968), Egypt (Hafez et al. 1983), El Salvador (Freire-Maia 1968), France (Sutter & Goux 1964), Guinea (Cantrelle & Dupire 1964), Honduras (Freire-Maia 1968), Hungary (Czeilel et al. 1976), India (IIPS National Family Health Survey 1993), Iran (Hosseini-Chavoshi et al. 2014), Iraq (COSIS 2005), Ireland (Masterson 1970), Israel (Goldschmidt et al. 1960), Italy (Fraccaro 1957), Japan (Imaizumi 1986), Jordan (Khoury & Massad 1992), Kuwait (al-Awadi et al. 1986), Lebanon (Barbour & Salameh 2009), Libya (Abudejaja et al. 1987), Malaysia (Stevenson et al. 1966), Mexico (Freire-Maia 1968), Morocco (Lamdouar Bouazzaoui et al. 1994), Netherlands (Freire-Maia 1957), Norway (Stoltenberg et al. 1997), Oman (Rajab & Patton 2000), Pakistan (Ahmed et al. 1992), Panama (Stevenson et al. 1966), Peru (Freire-Maia 1968), Portugal (Freire-Maia 1957), Qatar (Bener & Alali 2006), Saudi Arabia (el-Mouzan et al. 2007), Singapore (Tay 1982 data, as cited in Bittles & Black 2015), Slovenia (Stevenson et al. 1966), South Africa (Stevenson et al. 1966), Spain (Calderón et al. 1993), Sri Lanka (Reid 1976), Sudan (Saha & Sheikh 1988), Sweden (Romanus 1953), Syria (Othman & Saadat 2009), Tunisia (Riou et al. 1989), Turkey (Koç 2008), United Arab Emirates (al-Gazali et al. 1997), United Kingdom (Coleman 1980), United States of America (Lebel 1983), Uruguay (Liascovich et al. 2001), Venezuela (Liascovich et al. 2001), Yemen (Jurdi & Saxena 2003). For two countries in the GPC, I determined that articles not included with the dataset offered clear advantages – for the Philippines, Smith et al. 2000 data as reported in Hussain & Bittles 2004 offered a more geographically representative sample, while the GPC estimate for Czechoslovakia relied on a small sample size and diverged significantly from subsequent estimates for both Czech and Slovak populations, and so I used the Zahálková 1970 estimate from a Czech sample instead. Of the countries that weren’t included in the GPC, usually only a single source was available. In the only exception – Benin – I determined that Yemadje et al. 2012 appeared to use the most reliable sample. Initial estimates for three countries – Senegal, Slovakia, and Mauritania – appeared to use abnormally large coding of relatedness that diverged qualitative reports of marriage practices. For all three countries, I thus examined researchers’ estimates and introduced a more cautious first cousin cutoff for each case.



### *Control Variables and Alternative Explanations*

Having operationalized both dependent and independent variables for this study, several additional measures were also included in the analysis, either to control for factors previously shown to be correlated with civil war violence, or to test for possible alternate explanations for any correlations discovered between consanguinity and civil war onset. As described in Chapter 1, a variety of contributing factors have been repeatedly shown to correlate with higher incidence of civil war onset, and it is thus worthwhile to control for these known effects.<sup>80</sup> All control variables described below are estimated using linear interpolation to fill in missing observations, and when necessary the earliest or latest observations are extended as needed when data weren't available from these sources for the entire time frame. In most cases, variable observations begin in either 1945 or 1950 – for those few variables where observations this early weren't available, I instead begin observations in 1960 and use a modified onset measure to account for continuing conflicts that year (I note that this is the case in models that use this more limited observation window).<sup>81</sup> All time-sensitive variables are lagged one year to minimize the risk of endogeneity effects influencing estimated correlations.

Population size is one of most the commonly noted correlates of civil war onset.<sup>82</sup> A control is thus included based on data gathered from the United Nations' World Population Prospects report and supplemented when necessary with estimates from the World Bank and the U.S. Department of Commerce.<sup>83</sup> In keeping with prior influential civil war studies, national populations are log-transformed to both minimize leverage problems arising from widely varying populations and to reflect the assumption that changes in population are likely to have a diminishing effect at high population levels. Controls are also included to account for the effects of varying levels of political freedom and democratic governance in different states. Prior studies have suggested that democracy may have both linear and curvilinear relationships with civil war violence. It has been theorized that more democratic states are less prone to violence, but also that both highly democratic and highly authoritarian states are less vulnerable than "anocracies" with intermediate levels of freedom.<sup>84</sup> To reflect this, both linear and squared political freedom scores are included as controls. The principle source for these scores was the Polity IV dataset, which categorizes each country-year along a spectrum from -10 (totalitarian) to 10 (fully democratic). For countries that weren't scored in the Polity dataset, scores are instead taken from Freedom House and rescaled to fit Polity's scoring range.<sup>85</sup> Wealthy states are often noted as having relatively fewer civil wars. Poverty may be associated with civil wars because higher overall wealth reduces the financial incentives for many people to rebel, or it may be that GDP

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<sup>80</sup> See Chapter 1 of this dissertation for a review of some of the most commonly observed correlates of civil war onset.

<sup>81</sup> This coding decision may be problematic if one considers civil wars to be continuous events rather than discrete years of violence that are merely heavily influenced by preceding conflict years. The only model that uses this alternate onset estimate is Model 11, and use of my original onset coding does not radically change significance. The only major change from reported results in Model 11 is that Lagged GDP's significance drops to the 0.1 level.

<sup>82</sup> Sambanis 2002, however, cautions against attaching too much importance to this finding, attributing it primarily to selection problems relating to how civil wars are typically defined. Because most operationalized measures of civil war – including the UCDP data - include a minimum threshold of annual battle deaths, larger states will tend to reach this threshold more quickly and thus will be observed to experience higher rates of civil war.

<sup>83</sup> United Nations 2013 and U.S. Dept. of Commerce 1980; World Bank 2016.

<sup>84</sup> Vreeland 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Marshall et al. 2016 and Freedom House 2016.

serves as a proxy for overall state power and institutionalization.<sup>86</sup> In either case, consanguineous marriage practices are also likely influenced by economic factors, so it is important to isolate these effects. Data on national GDP per capita were gathered from James et al.'s comprehensive time series of GDP estimates.<sup>87</sup>

To control for the potential effects of ethnic diversity, a number of different proxy variables measures were tested as possible estimators for the effect of ethnic cleavages on civil war onset. Their inclusion is intended to both reflect prior research pointing to ethnic divisions as a source of conflict, as well as to account for the possibility that ethnic diversity may correlate to higher rates of consanguineous marriage – if a society is divided into multiple distinct ethnicities, and these groups do not intermarry frequently, then such a scenario could result in higher rates of endogamy and potential omitted variable effects.<sup>88</sup> Ultimately, the variable that proved most effective at predicting civil war onset in the observed sample was a logged count of the number of languages spoken by 1% or more of the country's population. This variable was used as one of several possible indicators of diversity and ethnic cleavages by Fearon & Laitin 2003, and it was from this source that I derived most of my language counts estimates. For countries that weren't covered in that article, supplemental estimates are made based on the most recent edition of *Ethnologue*.<sup>89</sup> Regional and neighborhood effects have also been noted in the prevalence of civil wars in particular cultural regions and consanguinity rates similarly tend to be more pronounced in certain regions of the world, so regional dummies are included to help control for this geographic variation.<sup>90</sup> Fearon and Laitin 2003 also theorize that non-contiguous states may have a more difficult time maintaining territorial control, and it's conceivable that this factor might also be associated with more geographically isolated populations that are forced to rely more on marriages between close kin. I thus also include their dummy variable for non-contiguity in my tests.

In addition to the control variables discussed above, several other potential explanatory variables were tested to determine whether any effects associated with consanguinity were actually the product of omitted measurements. The first such variable – the Clan Governance Index estimate created by the WomanStats project – is not so much an alternative explanation as it is a plausibility test and alternate method of operationalizing the same general concept of dynasticism and kin networks' influence in society.<sup>91</sup> This estimator consists of a multivariate scale assembled from several smaller scales generated by the project's coders to describe varying characteristics of countries around the world. The CGI describes itself as an approximation of “the influence clans have in the governance of society,” as estimated by a number of characteristics centered around the systematic subordination of women in a given country. This scale includes among its constituent elements a dummy variable denoting whether

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<sup>86</sup> As suggested in Fearon & Laitin 2003.

<sup>87</sup> James et al. 2012; estimates were based off their IHME ID variable, based on international dollars with a 2005 base year. Some studies of civil war onset suggest using a log-transformed measure of GDP, rather than a linear estimate, to reflect anticipated diminishing returns at high GDP. However, my initial tests found no evidence of a significant relationship between Civil War Onset and Log of GDP, and so a simple linear estimate of GDP was used.

<sup>88</sup> Blimes 2006 discusses other ways in which ethnic diversity might indirectly influence the likelihood of civil war.

<sup>89</sup> Lewis et al. 2015. This measure of diversity was compared primarily to measures of ethnic, religious, and linguistic fractionalization from Alesina et al. 2003 and Fearon 2003, and to measures of ethnic and religious polarization from Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005. In all cases any effects from these variables were wiped out by including logged number of languages.

<sup>90</sup> Gleditsch 2007.

<sup>91</sup> Hudson et al. 2015.

consanguineous marriage is commonplace in the country, but also includes a wide variety of other components including scales denoting the legality of polygyny, the level of acceptance of domestic violence, the rights possessed by women, and the allowed age of marriage. The CGI thus arguably captures a wider range of characteristics common to many societies where kin relationships dominate the social and political sphere, but it is also more subject to arbitrary coder and scaling decisions and to criticisms regarding whether certain practices should be included in the scale. As is apparent from the variables included in the scale, the CGI is designed primarily to capture the gendered impact of traditional kinship practices, but many of the variables show clear conceptual links with the powerful kin networks I describe as being characteristic of dynastic societies.<sup>92</sup>

A second variable of substantial interest – the prevalence of Muslim populations – represents a much more conceptually distinct alternate explanation. Consanguineous marriages are notably common in Islamic societies and it is thus plausible that any trends I attribute to consanguineous marriage patterns may in fact simply be proxying for characteristics more properly associated with Muslim traditions.<sup>93</sup> Muslim-majority cultures have been noted as having particularly high rates of consanguinity, although this might be at least partially a result of historical traditions (since many Muslim societies practiced consanguineous marriage before Islam) and measurement bias (since Sub-Saharan Africa – which reportedly contains a variety of countries combining low Muslim populations and high consanguineous marriage rates – has not been as thoroughly studied by consanguinity researchers as has the Middle East and South Asia). It has also been suggested that Muslim-majority cultures may be prone to particular problematic political dynamics, such as being more vulnerable to authoritarianism or certain types of political violence.<sup>94</sup> As such, a measure of the percentage of Muslims within the population of each country was tested, based on demographic data provided by the World Religion Dataset hosted at the Correlates of War website.<sup>95</sup> This religious data provides estimates in 5-year time intervals, so a conversion into country-years was made by lagging observations by one year and using linear interpolation to fill in each five-year gap.<sup>96</sup> In case effects related to Islam are not strictly linear, an alternate dummy variable was also created to designate country-years observed in which 50% or more of the population was Muslim.

Several other alternate explanations might also be proposed to explain a relationship between consanguinity and civil war violence. To be sure, consanguinity rates appear to display a certain cultural inertia that make them unlikely to change dramatically in response to short-term conditions. Tradition appears to be the single biggest motivator for marrying endogamously, and so changes from generation to generation tend to be incremental. But evidence does exist suggesting that consanguineous marriage preferences adapt gradually to

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<sup>92</sup> The CGI scale correlates with my main consanguinity estimate at 74.2% and with my secondary “best estimate” at 75.6%.

<sup>93</sup> It is notable that both of my inspirational cases in observing the deleterious effects of dynastic feuding – Yemen and the Mindanao region of the Philippines – have either high or ubiquitous proportions of Muslim adherents in their population.

<sup>94</sup> Gleditsch & Rudolfsen 2016 note that predominantly Muslim countries are more prone to civil wars, and suggest a number of other possible explanations. See also Toft 2007’s argument that political violence among Muslims exhibits distinctive patterns of contestation and Fish 2002’s arguments concerning a possible tendency in Muslim countries toward higher levels of authoritarianism.

<sup>95</sup> Maoz and Henderson 2013.

<sup>96</sup> The proportional estimate of Muslims in the country population correlates to my primary consanguinity estimate at 81.1%, my alternate estimate at 82.7%, and the CGI scale at 70%.

pressure from economic, political, and demographic conditions. It is thus worthwhile to test these alternative explanations to minimize the risk that any observed effects are the result of an omitted variable. In many countries, consanguineous marriage tends to be associated with populations that are more rural, less educated, and that retain higher rates of adolescent fertility.<sup>97</sup> To measure the possible effects of these variables and test for these as alternative explanations, urbanization data was first assembled from United Nations reporting.<sup>98</sup> Next, education rates were collected from Barro and Lee 2013's study of variation over time and across countries regarding the percentage of individuals 15 years or older that have completed their primary education.<sup>99</sup> Subsequently, adolescent fertility rates were included based on World Bank data to further test the possibility that consanguineous marriage's measured effects were more properly associated with factors tied to gender or demographic transitions.<sup>100</sup> Physical and social geography may also play a role in influencing consanguinity rates. Populations residing in areas with rugged terrain or highly dispersed populations may become more reliant on endogamous marriage, and such geography may also be associated with a decreased ability of the state to maintain order and security. To test for this possibility, estimates of population dispersion and of the percentage of mountainous terrain within the state were both derived from Collier and Hoeffler 2004.<sup>101</sup> Finally, it is also notable that several of the countries with the highest rates of consanguinity are also significant oil producers. Because of the extensive arguments associating oil rent and the "resource curse" with a variety of deleterious political effects,<sup>102</sup> a dummy variable for major oil exporters was also constructed. Following in the methodology presented in Fearon & Laitin 2003, this dummy identifies countries in which fuel exports represented a third or more of all merchandise exports in a given year, based on data collected from the World Bank.

### *Section III* *Results*

Presented below are a succession of cross-sectional time series logistic regressions designed to test whether consanguineous marriage correlates with higher incidence of civil war violence, and whether this relationship is unlikely to be the result of an alternate explanation for which consanguinity is merely serving as a proxy. Because my estimates for consanguineous marriage are time-invariant, all the following are random effects models. Observations are for country-year, ranging from 1946 (or the country's date of independence if later) to 2016, and estimate correlations with a dichotomous variable representing the onset of a conflict after at least one year without incidents associated with that conflict in the observed country.

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<sup>97</sup> Bittles 2012.

<sup>98</sup> United Nations 2014.

<sup>99</sup> Barro and Lee 2013; initial tests were performed to attempt to distinguish the effects of male versus female education rates. However, these tests suggested that the correlation between male and female education rates was too high to easily separate the effects of one from the other.

<sup>100</sup> World Bank, "World Development Indicators." Data were derived from United Nations estimates for the number of births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 19. Because observations do not begin until 1960, a modified version of Civil War Onset was used for models including this variable to avoid dropping observation of wars that were continuing through the year 1960.

<sup>101</sup> Population distribution was represented through a Gini coefficient of population dispersion, while mountainous terrain was measured as a percentage of the total land area.

<sup>102</sup> For more, see Ross 2004 and Fearon 2005.

**Table 5.1: Consanguinity and Civil War Onset**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>	<u>Model 5</u>	<u>Model 6</u>
Consanguinity	0.024*** (0.006)	0.135** (0.051)	0.017*** (0.005)		0.015** (0.006)	
Consanguinity Squared		-0.004* (0.002)				
Consanguinity Cubed		0.000* (0.000)				
Alternate Estimate for Consanguinity				0.016** (0.005)		0.013* (0.006)
Clan Governance Index					0.034 (0.052)	0.05 (0.048)
Log Number of Languages			1.133** (0.386)	1.07** (0.35)	1.1** (0.383)	1.027** (0.345)
Lagged Polity			0.021 (0.014)	0.021 (0.013)	0.022 † (0.013)	0.023 † (0.013)
Lagged Polity Squared			-0.007* (0.003)	-0.007* (0.003)	-0.007* (0.003)	-0.007* (0.003)
Lagged Log of Population			0.716*** (0.126)	0.727*** (0.129)	0.698*** (0.134)	0.694*** (0.138)
Lagged GDP per Capita			-0.024* (0.012)	-0.025* (0.012)	-0.022* (0.011)	-0.022 † (0.011)
Non-Contiguous State Dummy			0.548* (0.233)	0.577* (0.25)	0.507* (0.241)	0.517* (0.257)
First Observation Dummy	1.402*** (0.495)	1.383*** (0.417)	1.383*** (0.588)	1.407*** (0.405)	1.381*** (0.398)	1.399*** (0.405)
Prior War Year Count	0.01 (0.013)	0.011 (0.013)	0.002 (0.01)	0.001 (0.011)	-0.002 (0.01)	0.002 (0.011)
Year Splines	X	X	X	X	X	X
Prior Peace Year Count Splines	X	X	X	X	X	X
Region Dummies			X	X	X	X
Constant	-46.981 (56.363)	-41.432 (56.027)	-77.378 (60.433)	-77.856 (60.492)	-75.049 (60.151)	-74.413 (60.251)
Observations	5450	5450	5450	5450	5450	5450

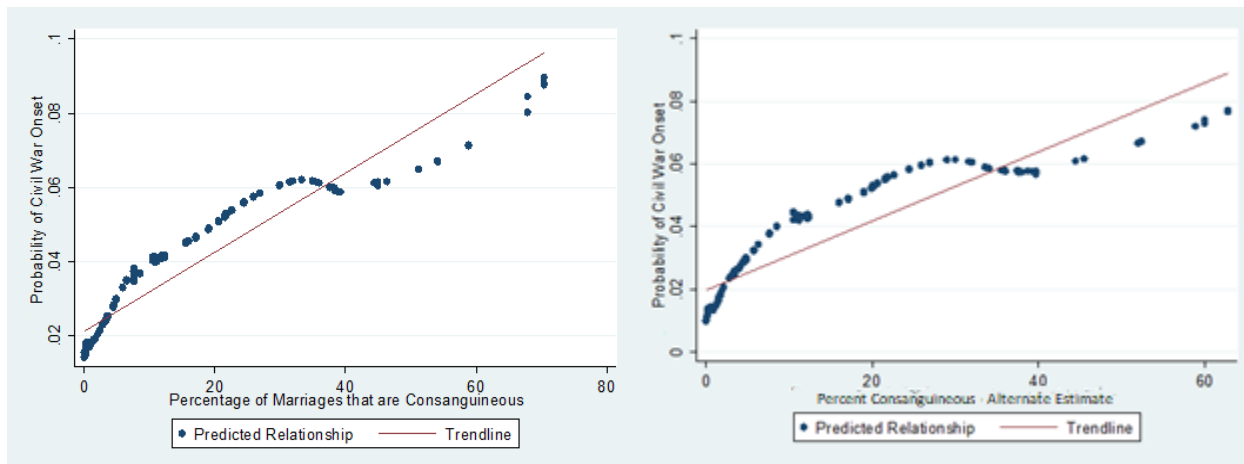
†  $p \leq 0.1$ , \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$  ; Clustered Robust Standard Errors in parentheses  
 “X” signifies control variables included in the model but omitted from table for space

Model 1 showcases an initial plausibility test that includes only time-based controls, without including any alternative variables. As is evident here, consanguineous marriage correlates as predicted with higher rates of civil war onset, significant to the 0.001 level. This provides compelling initial evidence consistent with my hypothesis that certain types of family structures may have an impact on large-scale political violence. This in turn suggests that higher levels of dynasticism, which tends to promote endogamous and restricted marriage practices, may be impacting civil war outbreaks in a wide selection of countries today. For my temporal variables, I find as expected that the first observation of a country tends to be associated with a higher rate of onset – a relationship that is likely the product of both an actual tendency for new countries to break out in civil war after they achieve independence, but also an artifact of observing only the conflict onset, so that ongoing violence is coded as beginning in the first year

of observation. The prior war year count shows a negative correlation – which would suggest that the longer a country is in a sustained and uninterrupted civil war, the less likely a new and distinct civil war with different factions will emerge – but this result isn't significant.<sup>103</sup> This model also includes splines simulating the varying impact of global changes over time, as well as the specific temporal impact of extended periods of peace, but these results are omitted in this table for space reasons (as signified by the “X” entries in the tables).

The basic correlation between consanguineous marriage and a higher probability of civil war violence in the absence of other control variables can be visualized through the use of a LOESS scatterplot, as in the prior chapters. Depicted in Figure 5.2, I present a scatterplot and trendline based on an OLS regression between civil war onset and consanguineous marriage rates – the left-hand side relies on my primary estimate for consanguinity rates, while the righthand side uses my alternative estimate. In general, the scatterplot demonstrates a fairly clear relationship, with a roughly linear correlation in the likelihood of civil war as consanguineous marriage grows more prevalent, and with few apparent outliers or major abnormalities. There is, however, some evidence of an apparent curvilinear effect, which reflects similar non-linear relationships between dynasticism and violence that were periodically observed in my prior chapters. If a cubic estimate better models the impact of consanguineous marriage, it would have interesting implications for our understanding of the impact of endogamous marriage traditions. For example, taken at face value, the scatterplot may suggest that consanguineous marriage and endogamous marriage patterns tend in general to increase the rate of civil war outbreaks, but for a small range of societies, hovering around a consanguinity of 35 to 40 percent or so, such marriages instead have a stabilizing effect and marginally lower the likelihood of war. This would lend qualified credence to the claims of proponents of dynastic and clan-based

**Figure 5.2**  
**LOESS of Consanguineous Marriage**  
**Estimates Versus Likelihood of Conflict Onset**



<sup>103</sup> This count fails to achieve significance in further models as well, but its inclusion or exclusion does not impact results and it's retained to maintain consistency with my other temporal controls.

institutions, who sometimes suggest that traditional kin-based relationships can have a stabilizing effect.<sup>104</sup> But if it exists, this stabilizing effect appears to operate only within a very small range of countries when consanguineous marriage has already contributed significantly to instability. As with these prior cases, I am somewhat reluctant to attribute too much importance to these curvilinear effects, out of concern that it may represent overfitting of results. Nonetheless, Model 2 in Table 5.1 tests a possible curvilinear effect associated with consanguineous marriage and shows that there is significant evidence supporting a curvilinear estimate, though these effects aren't as highly significant as the main linear trend. These squared and cubed terms for consanguineous marriage lose all significance, however, when further control variables are added in subsequent models. I therefore assume that a linear effect best estimates consanguineous marriage's impact and the initial curvilinear trends are most likely caused by omitted control variables. Nonetheless, the curvilinear relationship depicted in the LOESS scatterplot remains intriguing and may be worth revisiting in future analysis, particularly in an analysis where varying or changing rates of consanguineous marriage could be analyzed in detail for a single country or region.

In Model 3, I present an extended version of Model 1, which includes all temporal controls, along with all control variables that were tested and shown to reliably correlate with civil war onset. With the addition of these controls, consanguineous marriage remains correlated with civil war onset at the 0.001 level. This result allows for greater confidence that the added variables don't represent effective alternative explanations for the measured effects of consanguinity. Of the included control variables, the first to be listed is a log of the number of languages in the country, which serves as a general control for varying levels of ethnolinguistic diversity. This variable shows a very significant correlation (at the 0.01 level) between higher number of languages and higher likelihood of violence onset. For polity score, which ranges on a scale from -10 (least democratic) to 10 (most democratic), I include both a linear term to simulate the impact of greater political freedom, and a squared term which conflates both high democracy and high autocracy. These extremes can be contrasted with anocracies, whose score hovers around a score of 0, which is often seen as reflecting weak and poorly institutionalized governance. As shown in the table, democracy shows a positive correlation, suggesting that civil war may increase in likelihood as states become more democratic, but this effect is not significant.<sup>105</sup> By contrast, the squared term shows a negative coefficient significant to 0.05 level, which suggests there is good reason to believe that anocracies are more prone to civil war than either democracies or strongly authoritarian states are. The log of a country's population also behaves as predicted, showing strong evidence that there is a higher likelihood of civil war

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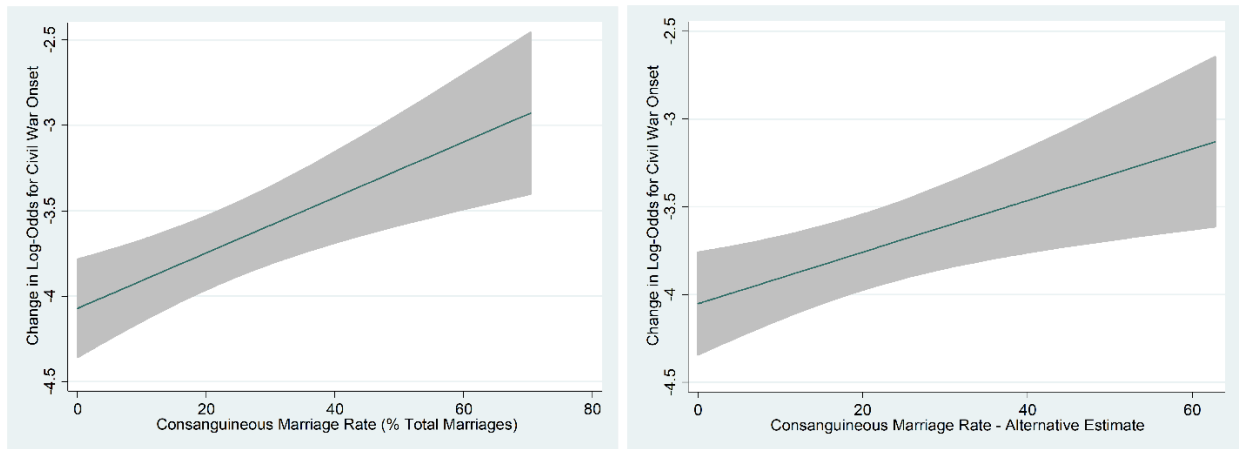
<sup>104</sup> On a large scale, this narrative is familiar to American audiences when applied to monarchies in the Middle East, and fits within a broader tendency to support entrenched foreign elites – both dynastic and non-dynastic – out of fear of instability. Perhaps the most explicit application of this approach below the level of the monarchy occurred during the United States' support of the Anbar Awakening, when the United States funneled significant resources to strengthen Sunni tribal actors in Iraq who opposed various jihadist organizations. If the curvilinear effect observed here does exist, it would suggest that expanding the power of explicitly kinship-based institutions such as tribes is a perilous strategy. The range in which dynastic practices such as consanguineous marriage might offer pacifying effects appears to be quite narrow, as compared to a much broader range of scenarios in which a rise in consanguineous marriage is associated with rising violence.

<sup>105</sup> This runs counter to some analyses, though most observers agree that democracy is associated with conflicting trends that can both limit or facilitate civil wars. Democracies are more responsive to populations and provide greater means of changing policies without violence, but they also tend to be less effective than authoritarian systems at decisively ending dissent (Gleditsch et al. 2009).

in high-population countries. GDP also behaves as expected, with wealthier states being less likely to experience civil wars at the 0.05 level of significance. Furthermore, my non-contiguity dummy matches expectations, showing a positive coefficient at the 0.01 level. Temporal variables remain consistent with results reported for Model 1. Finally, Model 3 also adds regional dummies. Although not included for space reasons, several of these regional dummies prove significant, suggesting that regional effects may indeed have substantial correlation with varying vulnerability to civil war.<sup>106</sup>

Model 4 tests the effect of substituting my primary estimate of consanguineous marriage with the more subjective “best estimate” indicator, which I based on an evaluation concerning which studies offered the most credible report of consanguinity rates for each country. It otherwise includes the same variables as Model 3. Using this alternate estimate results in a slightly lower level of correlation with civil war onset than my more systematically generated estimate, dropping significance to the 0.01 level. This is still a strong level of significance, particularly given the fact that these two variables contain notably divergent estimates for several important or outlier cases such as India (which experiences an abnormally large number of conflict onsets due to the presence of many sporadic regional insurgencies) or Senegal (which possesses by far the highest rate of consanguineous marriage in my primary estimate). The retention of significance across both estimates offers some reassurance that the relationship between consanguinity and civil war is relatively robust to reasonable variation in estimates. The marginal impact of both my primary estimate of consanguineous marriage (left) and my alternative estimate (right) are depicted along with 95% confidence intervals in Figure 5.3.

**Figure 5.3**  
**Change in Log-Odds of Conflict Onset Versus**  
**Consanguineous Marriage Rate Estimates**



Models 5 and 6 offer a further plausibility test through inclusion of the WomanStats Clan Governance Indicator, a more multivariate estimator than consanguineous marriage, but which

<sup>106</sup> Regions were defined as follows: Western (including the United States, Canada, and Australia), Latin America, Western Europe, Middle East / North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, South and East Asia, and Eastern Europe / Central Asia. To avoid multicollinearity, one regional dummy variable had to be dropped. As the region with the fewest observations, Eastern Europe / Central Asia was chosen.



similarly aims to compare dynastic tendencies across states. In a variant of Model 3 (not shown) where the CGI estimate entirely substitutes for consanguinity, the variable shows a level of significance (at the 0.01 level) and a positive coefficient comparable to that displayed by consanguineous marriage. Models 5 and 6 test this relationship further by showing variants of Models 3 and 4, respectively, that add on the CGI to test which variable's correlation with civil war onset is more robust. Both my original and alternative estimate appear in these models display higher significance than the CGI, with p-values at the 0.01 and 0.05 level, respectively. In both models, the CGI loses significance and its observed effects are apparently entirely captured through the inclusion of a consanguineous marriage estimate. Of course, these variables all show significant collinearity, and we should be cautious in concluding that consanguineous marriage is inherently a better predictor for violence from just these results. But in the limited sample of states where consanguinity rates are available, Models 5 and 6 suggest that these rates may be a somewhat more robust proxy capturing the relationship between dynasticism and violence than the estimate of similar dynastic social forces offered by the CGI.

Table 5.2 presents a variety of models that were used to test different alternate explanations for the apparent relationship observed between consanguineous marriage and civil wars. Most of the alternate explanatory tested showed negligible evidence to suggest this was the case. In Model 7, I test the impact of including a dummy for countries whose exports were dominated by fuel such as oil in a given year in case the heavy oil production of some high consanguinity country may be influencing outcomes. Comparing these results to those described for Model 3, we can see that all prior variables retain identical significance and that oil production shows no significant relationship. Model 8 tests the impact of urbanization, which shows no signs of significance and fails to reduce the consanguinity rate's significance (which remains at 0.001). Models 9 through 11 each contain fewer observations than the previous models, due to the omission of some countries for which appropriate control data were not available.<sup>107</sup> As a result, some control variables lose significance; they are still displayed in tests here to aid in comparison of effects between models. Model 9 tests the impact of primary education completion rate, and once again shows no evidence to support the hypothesis that consanguineous marriage's observed effects are simply acting as a proxy for differences in education across country-years. Consanguineous marriage is reduced to the 0.05 level of significance in this model but remains largely consistent with prior tests while my education estimate shows no evidence of significance.

Model 10 tests the impact of two potential geographic factors that could conceivably explain correlations with both civil war and consanguineous marriage – the physical terrain of a country (estimated here through a percentage of mountainous terrain for the state) and an estimate of population dispersion across the state. Neither variable shows evidence of significance, and this lack of evidence persists if either of the two variables is tested without the other. As in Model 10, consanguineous marriage remains significant, albeit at the reduced 0.05 level. Finally, Model 11 examines the possible impact of adolescent fertility as a proxy for both female rights and potential demographic issues, but also shows no evidence of significance. Control variables all show roughly consistent results across all tested models – while some changes in significance do occur, none represent radical changes in the coefficient or its direction of influence. Despite the low number of observations, consanguineous marriage in this sample returns to the 0.001 level of significance. Viewed as a group, the models in Table 5.2 help

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<sup>107</sup> In Model 11, observations also only began in 1960, further reducing the number of total observations.

**Table 5.2: Consanguinity and Civil War Onset – Testing Alternate Explanations**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Model 7</u>	<u>Model 8</u>	<u>Model 9</u>	<u>Model 10</u>	<u>Model 11</u>
Consanguinity	0.017*** (0.005)	0.018*** (0.005)	0.018* (0.007)	0.019* (0.008)	0.02*** (0.005)
Log Number of Languages	1.116** (0.421)	1.136** (0.437)	1.071 (0.849)	1.295 † (0.676)	1.012** (0.36)
Lagged Polity	0.024 (0.015)	0.021 (0.014)	0.03 † (0.018)	0.035* (0.016)	0.037* (0.015)
Lagged Polity Squared	-0.008* (0.004)	-0.007* (0.003)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.009** (0.003)
Lagged Log of Population	0.713*** (0.125)	0.716*** (0.125)	0.803*** (0.195)	0.605*** (0.147)	0.73*** (0.157)
Lagged GDP Per Capita	-0.025* (0.012)	-0.026* (0.012)	-0.024 (0.015)	-0.029 (0.022)	-0.026* (0.013)
Non-Contiguous State Dummy	0.53* (0.219)	0.556* (0.239)	0.322 (0.466)	0.441 † (0.251)	0.627* (0.288)
First Observation Dummy	1.381*** (0.4)	1.387*** (0.396)	1.473*** (0.445)	1.416** (0.465)	-0.013 (0.645)
Prior War Year Count	0.002 (0.011)	0.001 (0.01)	0.003 (0.015)	0.004 (0.02)	0.005 (0.011)
Fuel Export Dummy	0.171 (0.272)				
Lagged Percent Urbanization		0.002 (0.008)			
Lagged Primary Education Completion Rate			0.0 (0.007)		
Mountainous Terrain				-0.003 (0.006)	
Geographic Dispersion				0.276 (2.028)	
Lagged Adolescent Fertility					0.001 (0.003)
Year Splines	X	X	X	X	X
Prior Peace Year Count Splines	X	X	X	X	X
Region Dummies	X	X	X	X	X
Constant	-78.001 (60.689)	-77.261 (60.231)	-72.555 (61.273)	-52.32 (66.695)	231.538 (224.467)
Observations	5450	5450	5029	4748	4657

†  $p \leq 0.1$ , \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$  ; Clustered Robust Standard Errors in parentheses  
 “X” signifies control variables included in the model but omitted from table for space

demonstrate that consanguinity’s relationship with civil war onset is unlikely to be the result of the proposed counter-explanations. None of these alternate variables cause consanguinity to become non-significant, nor do any of them show even suggestive evidence of a statistical relationship when added individually to my core models. There is thus good reason for confidence that my statistical results reflect dynamics associated with consanguinity itself, rather than my proposed alternative phenomenon.

In Table 5.3, I present my final models to test the issue of Islam and its possible

**Table 5.3: Consanguinity and Civil War Onset – Islam as an Alternate Explanation**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Model 12</u>	<u>Model 13</u>	<u>Model 14</u>	<u>Model 15</u>
Consanguinity	0.019** (0.006)		0.017* (0.007)	
Alternate Estimate For Consanguinity		0.016* (0.007)		0.013 † (0.008)
Lagged Muslim Majority Dummy	-0.1 (0.282)	-0.017 (0.286)		
Lagged Percent Muslim			0.001 (0.004)	0.002 (0.005)
Log Number of Languages	1.103** (0.397)	1.064** (0.378)	1.148** (0.403)	1.123** (0.394)
Lagged Polity	0.02 (0.013)	0.021 † (0.013)	0.021 † (0.013)	0.022 † (0.013)
Lagged Polity Squared	-0.008* (0.003)	-0.007* (0.003)	-0.007* (0.003)	-0.007* (0.003)
Lagged Log of Population	0.717*** (0.128)	0.728*** (0.129)	0.717*** (0.125)	0.726*** (0.127)
Lagged GDP per Capita	-0.024* (0.012)	-0.025* (0.012)	-0.023 † (0.012)	-0.023 † (0.012)
Non-Contiguous State Dummy	0.555* (0.235)	0.579* (0.249)	0.544* (0.227)	0.559* (0.242)
First Observation Dummy	1.386*** (0.397)	1.408*** (0.408)	1.381*** (0.398)	1.398*** (0.409)
Prior War Year Count	0.001 (0.01)	0.001 (0.011)	0.002 (0.01)	0.002 (0.011)
Year Splines	X	X	X	X
Prior Peace Year Count Splines	X	X	X	X
Region Dummies	X	X	X	X
Constant	-78.136 (61.008)	-77.991 (61.051)	-76.852 (61.222)	-75.925 (61.266)
Observations	5450	5450	5450	5450

†  $p \leq 0.1$ , \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$  ; Clustered Robust Standard Errors in parentheses  
“X” signifies control variables included in the model but omitted from table for space

suitability for any effects of consanguinity. As previously noted, proportional population of Muslims and rates of consanguineous marriage show notably high levels of correlation, and it is plausible that some other issue associated with Muslim cultures, institutions, or history beyond dynastic and kin relationships may be the real underlying driver of any observed effects associated with consanguinity.<sup>108</sup> Thus, special attention needs to be given to distinguishing these

<sup>108</sup> Unsurprisingly given their strong collinearity, if a Muslim population estimate is included in models in place of any consanguinity estimate, Islam demonstrates a direction of effect similar to that displayed by consanguinity. Variants of Models 12 and 14 where the consanguineous marriage estimates are dropped show the following results:

effects from one another. Models 12 and 13 test consanguineous marriage against a dummy variable denoting a Muslim majority country-year observation, while Models 14 and 15 included the actual percentage of the population that is Muslims. I present two models for each test so utilize both my main and alternative consanguineous marriage estimates. These tests suggest that my primary estimate for consanguineous marriage is somewhat more robust and powerful than the alternative estimate I have developed. In Models 12 and 13, my primary estimate is significant to the 0.01 level while my alternative estimate only rises to the 0.05 level. Similarly, in Models 14 and 15, my primary estimate is significant to 0.05 level, while my alternative estimate is merely suggestive at the 0.1 level. None of these models show my Islam variables to be significant, though the relatively lower significance of consanguinity in Models 14 and 15 suggest that a percentage estimate of Muslim populations is likely more closely tied to consanguinity and its relationship to civil war than is a simple dummy variable. Nonetheless, all results are consistent with the conclusion that it is consanguineous marriage, not Islam, that is particularly associated with higher incidents of civil wars. As with the Clan Governance Index,<sup>109</sup> we should keep in mind that the strong collinearity between consanguinity and Islam make it difficult to confidently dismiss either explanation. Nonetheless, these tests present the intriguing possibility that much of the instability and violence that is often stereotypically associated with Muslim countries may in fact be the result of underlying tribal and kinship structures that are only peripherally related to religion.

#### *Section IV* *Discussion and Conclusion*

The regressions presented across Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 offer compelling evidence to support the argument that strong kinship bonds and highly dynastic social structures – proxied here through the phenomenon of consanguineous marriage – have a measurable impact on global rates of civil war onset. The outcomes of the tests presented here suggest that consanguineous marriage is consistent with, and potentially more predictive than, similar measures of dynasticism and strong kinship such as the Clan Governance Index. Most tested alternative explanations do not appear to challenge these results, although the close correlation between Islam and consanguineous marriage means that we should still be cautious about dismissing religious explanations for the observed effects. These results, based on a sample of contemporary countries drawn from across the world, suggest that dynasticism’s and kinship’s roles in energizing large-scale political violence are not confined to the distant past or to rare and unrepresentative outlier cases. Instead, kinship networks’ influence over broader political conflicts appears to be a relatively widespread dynamic influencing a variety of contemporary civil wars. Dynasticism and endogamous marriage patterns, and the feuding associated with these phenomena, thus should not be dismissed as isolated or idiosyncratic characteristics of a

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the Muslim majority dummy (Model 12) remains insignificant, while the population percentage of Muslims (Model 14) is significantly correlated to greater civil war at the 0.05 level.

<sup>109</sup> The clan-governance indicator, my primary alternative method of testing for dynasticism and kin network effects, can be substituted for consanguinity here to test how robust this measure is to the inclusion of Muslim effects. If used in place of consanguinity for Model 12, the CGI reaches the 0.1 level of significance, and in Model 13 fails to achieve even that level – the Muslim variables in each model remain similarly insignificant. The CGI thus shows similar directional effects as consanguinity, but is somewhat less robust against the counter-explanation of a violence effect associated with predominantly Muslim populations.

handful of countries, but rather should be treated as a potentially serious and widespread generator of political instability and civil war. The evidence presented in this chapter may well suggest that the types of dynastic conflicts that I described for the Philippines in Chapter 4 are serving as an incubator and motivator for large-scale political disputes in weaker states across the world. The strong evidence in support of a correlation between consanguineous marriage and civil war onset since 1946 showcases the importance of understanding civil wars not merely as nation-level conflicts between formal groups over territory or ideology, but also as the accumulation of lower-level destabilizing trends that incentivize conflict and violence among smaller networks of actors. For those interested in understanding or preventing civil war outbreaks in the future, my results here demonstrate the critical need for understanding the role of kinship and other personal ties in influencing political authority structures and in incentivizing violent confrontations.

The research presented in this chapter offers only a cursory and initial investigation into dynasticism's global role in patterns of political violence, and there are therefore a number of ways in which future studies can address potential weaknesses in the current study or expand on these results in different ways. First and foremost, further empirical research into marriage practices and consanguineous marriage rates would be of immense value for future studies following in this article's approach. Many countries have only one source for estimates of consanguinity, and even more still lack an estimate altogether, making it crucial for researchers to continue expanding our understanding of this phenomenon. Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific are particular regions that would benefit from more extensive research into consanguineous marriage among dominant ethnic groups. Further efforts to improve our existing knowledge by establishing more consistent cross-country standards for estimating consanguinity would be similarly helpful. My results here – and in particular the generally consistent patterns seen in my two estimates of consanguinity rates – suggest that consanguinity's influence is robust enough to compensate for reasonable levels of misestimation. But even so, the fact that my alternative measure – which seeks to more closely match anecdotal reports of consanguinity's prevalence – tends to be somewhat less significant than my main estimator may suggest that there is some risk that more precise estimates might weaken the results reported here. It is thus important for researchers to continue to perfect our understanding of consanguinity and its variation in manifestation.

Future studies that seek to build on the results in this chapter may also endeavor to disaggregate endogamous marriage patterns to the sub-state level. The choice I made here to develop a single estimator for each state was necessary for cross-country analysis, but it unfortunately minimizes the wide degree of variation in consanguineous marriage preferences within a country. Some countries, India perhaps foremost among them, have experienced a wide range of regional intrastate conflicts and have also been studied extensively on ethnic and regional levels for variation in consanguineous marriage rates.<sup>110</sup> Such cases represent a promising opportunity to test consanguinity's influence at the sub-state level – examining whether regions or ethnic groups with higher rates of consanguinity experience greater incidents of conflict would represent compelling evidence to support the claims advanced in this chapter. Detailed quantitative case study work might also offer a better chance to fully disaggregate the effects of consanguineous marriage from other correlated variables. For example, research into a state in which both Muslims and non-Muslims practice consanguineous marriage may serve a

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<sup>110</sup> For disaggregated analyses of civil wars, see Buhaug et al. 2008, Cerman & Gleditsch 2009, and Buhaug 2010.3

useful role in testing my hypothesis that it is marriage practices, not religion, that drives much of the apparent elevated violence experienced by traditionally Muslim countries.<sup>111</sup>

The unclear relationship between consanguineous marriage and Islam is but one of several questions raised by this chapter that might merit further exploration. I argue here, for example, that consanguineous marriage is closely tied to dynasticism and strong kin networks, and that these powerful kin linkages are themselves associated with cultures of feuding and low-level conflict which increase a state's vulnerability to large-scale violence. Each of these chains of association and proposed mechanisms are worthy of greater analysis and further testing. Future studies might examine whether I am correct in arguing that consanguineous marriage is closely tied to dynasticism and powerful kinship networks – perhaps through observing whether countries with these marriage patterns show a stronger impact from family networks on economic and political associations. Another claim worth testing is whether I am correct in assuming a primarily cultural/constructivist mechanism is responsible for driving localized violence in consanguineous societies. This assumption rests primarily on my study of European aristocracies in Chapter 3 and deserves greater scrutiny for modern interactions. Woodley & Bell 2003, for example, propose instead that consanguinity is likely to influence politics primarily through the essentialist mechanism of inclusive fitness. While I am skeptical of this hypothesis, empirical tests could be conducted on the prevalence of feuds between genetic relatives to determine which claim is more correct. Finally, the link I suggest exists between localized feuding and large-scale civil war violence also merits further research. If consanguineous marriage is indeed linked to high levels of dynasticism, then it's possible that any relationship with civil war violence might be indirect – such as through reducing class mobility or democratic representativeness – rather than as a result of violence. A study that tests whether rates of localized feuding do indeed correspond to higher likelihood of larger scale conflicts would provide evidence to support or reject this hypothesized mechanism.

Finally, because I posit that consanguineous marriage is merely a proxy for broader dynastic patterns of authority in a society, future research might seek to test my argument by pursuing other means of estimating this dynastic structure. I have already suggested that the WomanStats project offers a promising means of corroborating kinship patterns through gender-related indicators. Earlier in this paper, I suggested a number of other possible approaches that might be used to construct further proxies for varying levels of dynasticism in different states. Future research might attempt to use the dynastic status or lack thereof for heads of state or economic indicators such as generational class mobility to test the influence of dynasticism. More culture-focused approaches might use resources such as the World Values Survey or might examine variations of this chapter's approach by comparing other kinship indicators such as the prevalence of polygyny or arranged marriages. All of these indicators might be used to examine political violence and civil wars – the primary topic of interest in this dissertation – or might examine other political dynamics that could emerge as a consequence of dynasticism, such as high levels of patrimonialism and strong informal institutions. All of these approaches follow on this chapter's contention that it is possible and valuable to examine national political trends in the context of local kinship structures, and that doing so reveals the powerful influence that kinship continues to exert on political and security outcomes across the modern world.

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<sup>111</sup> Stepan & Robertson 2004, seeking to disentangle any effects of Islam versus Arab culture on democratic governance, offer a useful example of how one might attempt to separate out the heavy overlap between Islam and consanguineous marriage.

Furthermore, they show that it is possible to take even the highly ambiguous and culturally-variable phenomenon of kinship and apply viable quantitative measures that allow for broad cross-national study of its effects. The tests I have presented in this chapter have proven that this methodology can be a valuable addition to more case-specific research.

## Appendix 5.1

### Estimated Percentage Consanguineous Marriage by Country (A)

Afghanistan	46.31 [52.4]	Kuwait	39.2 [34]
Algeria	22.6 [22.6]	Kyrgyzstan	8.54 [8.54]
Argentina	0.55 [0.2]	Lebanon	33.3 [35.5] – Native Muslim ( <b>D</b> )
Australia	0.28 [0.2] – Caucasian	Libya	37.6 [37.6]
Azerbaijan	31.6 [31.6]	Malaysia	7.6 [7.6]
Bahrain	44.4 [45.5]	Malta	4.4 [4.4]
Bangladesh	10.49 [10.49]	Mauritania	67.9 [60] – ( <b>E</b> )
Belgium	1.0 [1.0] – Belgian	Mexico	0.15 [0.013]
Benin	10.88 [10.9]	Morocco	19.1 [19.9]
Bhutan	17.12 [17.12]	Nepal	24.43 [24.43]
Bolivia	0.53 [0.6]	Netherlands	0.2 [0.2]
Brazil	4.48 [4.8]	Niger	58.89 [58.89]
Cambodia	12.3 [12.3]	Norway	0.3 [0.1] – Norwegian
Canada	1.51 [1.5]	Oman	35.96 [35.9]
C. African Repub.	11.2 [11.2]	Pakistan	54.08 [62.79] – Muslim
Chad	11.85 [11.85]	Panama	1.66 [1.7]
Chile	0.87 [1.3]	Peru	2.47 [4.1]
China	2.34 [2.13] – Han Chinese	Philippines	0.4 [12.2]
Colombia	3.12 [3.0]	Portugal	1.56 [1.5]
Costa Rica	3.4 [3.4]	Qatar	44.94 [44.5]
Croatia	0.001 [0.001]	Saudi Arabia	38.35 [33.58]
Cuba	0.8 [0.8]	Senegal	70.4 [39.3] – ( <b>E</b> )
Czech Republic	0.93 [0.93]	Singapore	3.6 [0.51] – Singaporean
Czechoslovakia	0.002 [0.93]	Slovakia	5.9 [1.2] – ( <b>E</b> )
Dem. Rep. of Congo	20.6 [20.6]	Slovenia	0.6 [0.6]
Djibouti	38.7 [38.7]	South Africa	2.8 [2.8]
Ecuador	3.51 [6.3]	Spain	2.46 [1.9] – Spanish
Egypt	31.45 [28.98]	Sri Lanka	21.5 [21.5]
El Salvador	4.9 [4.9]	Sudan	51.17 [52] – Arab
Finland	0.24 [0.24]	Sweden	0.64 [0.6]
France	0.81 [0.8]	Switzerland	1.27 [1.27]
Gambia	30 [30]	Syria	31.96 [31.96] – Syrian
Ghana	19 [19]	Tajikistan	38 [38]
Guinea	25.9 [25.9]	Thailand	21.8 [21.8]
Honduras	3.4 [3.4]	Togo	37.6 [37.6]
Hungary	0.14 [0.14]	Tunisia	26.9 [26.9]
India	21.68 [16] – Hindu ( <b>B</b> )	Turkey	15.6 [20.06]
Iran	29.91 [37.39] – Persian Shi'ite	U.A.E.	35.34 [35.99]
Iraq	35.54 [32.05] – Arab	U.K.	0.68 [0.4] – English
Ireland	0.57 [0.5]	U.S.A.	0.18 [0.1] – Caucasian
Israel	6.52 [5.73] – Jewish ( <b>C</b> )	Uruguay	2.1 [0.7]
Italy	0.59 [0.5]	Uzbekistan	16 [16]
Japan	7.63 [3.9]	Venezuela	1.39 [1.4]
Jordan	31.56 [39.7]	Yemen	34.95 [33.9]



- A. The first number listed for each country represents an average (weighted by sample size) of all surveys that recorded either the general population as a whole, or the dominant ethnic group. The specific dominant demographic for a state is listed for cases in which any unrepresentative minority estimates were excluded from my primary estimate. The number in brackets represents an alternative estimate generated through a “best estimation,” approach in which the individual study with the largest and most representative sample was selected for a country’s marriage estimate, rather than merging all relevant studies. This second percentage is designed to avoid some potential outlier estimates and to more closely reflect anecdotal reports of consanguinity’s prevalence in each country, but it is also subject to higher unintentional coding bias. As shown in Model 4, both estimates are broadly consistent – though the “best estimate” tends to be show a slightly more fragile correlation with civil war onset.
- B. India estimate also excludes studies sampling only from scheduled tribes and castes. Indian populations exhibit widely varying rates of consanguinity, and there is some risk that my primary estimate has been inflated by oversampling of more consanguineous southern populations, or by regional surveys that include a substantial number of Indian Muslims. My “best estimation” approach for India attempts to correct for this by using the 1993 National Family Health Survey, which takes pains to apply consistent methodology and weighting across India’s regions and major ethnic groups.
- C. The Ethnic Power Relations Dataset indicates three major transitions of demographic dominance in Israel, first from Ashkenazi to Mizrahi Jewish populations, and thereafter from Mizrahi Jews to Palestinian Arabs. This last transition, however, is a product of their inclusion of Gaza and the West Bank in Israel’s demographics, a population which I omit for consistency across datasets. If the transition of Ashkenazi to Mizrahi Jews is taken into account, Israel would have an estimated consanguinity of 1.38% until 1977, and 10.06% thereafter.
- D. The primary estimate excludes non-Lebanese Muslim populations, such as Palestinian Muslims. The Ethnic Power Relations Dataset distinguishes between Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims, but I treat them as a single category. If Muslim sects are disaggregated, then Christians represented the plurality of the population until 1970, after which Shi’ites became dominant. This results in an estimated consanguinity of 27.59% until 1970, and 30.45% thereafter
- E. The primary and secondary estimates for these countries were derived from the same source. In each case, authors reported consanguinity at several levels of relatedness, but the unusually distant level of relatedness included (for Slovakia) or the high number of reported marriages (for Mauritania and Senegal) introduced concerns that an unusually expansive concept of consanguinity was being used by researchers. After qualitative research reviewing marrying practices in all three countries, I decided to use a more cautious first cousin cutoff for my secondary “best estimate.” The primary estimate still uses the most expansive measurement of consanguinity, consistent with my approach for other countries.

## Chapter 6

### The Continuing Salience of Dynastic Conflict: Lessons from a Collapsed Tribal Regime in Yemen

*“A little more than kin, and less than kind...”*

*William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act I, Scene II*

**Abstract:** In this final chapter, I draw together the concepts and ideas presented in prior chapters and discuss the broader implications of a dynastic theory of civil war violence. In the first section of this chapter, I illustrate the dynastic dimension of political conflict matters by showing how kinship can in some cases play a central role in directing the dynamics of contemporary civil wars. To do so, I present a brief case overview of the ongoing Yemeni Crisis.<sup>1</sup> Through a qualitative analysis of this conflict and the underlying political tensions that prompted the current crisis, I demonstrate that dynasticism is not always a mere peripheral, exacerbating factor in civil wars – in some instances, it sits at the heart of a civil war’s emergence and persistence. I first review the progression of events that transformed Arab Spring protests in the country into a violent quagmire that remains unresolved to this day. Next, I explore some of the commonly referenced contributors to the conflict – including religious animosities and foreign power intervention – and argue that these explanations offer only limited insight into the conflict’s onset and progression. I show then that both the initial onset of violence and its continued persistence are best understood in the context of dynastic and tribal tensions that have gradually emerged among and between some of Yemen’s most influential kin networks. Through this Yemeni case, I demonstrate that the dynastic politics explored in prior chapters do not solely serve as a peripheral driver of conflict but can, in some instances, play a decisive role at the center of contemporary civil wars. I then conclude this chapter, and the dissertation as a whole, with a short discussion regarding the general ramifications of my theory for both academics and policymakers. I examine possible future research topics that may shed further light on how dynasticism continues to impact political security today, and subsequently argue that policymakers and academics should take the consequences of dynasticism seriously as a potential driver of future civil war violence.

#### Introduction

The previous chapters of this dissertation have provided an in-depth examination of dynastic politics and its impact on contemporary security issues. In these chapters, I have both explored the mechanisms through which dynasticism is likely to impact political violence and offered empirical evidence showing that kinship-based authority structures do indeed appear to

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term *Yemeni Crisis* to specifically describe the initial political transition and later explosion of violence that emerged out of the 2011 Arab Spring protests against President Ali Abdullah Saleh. These should be distinguished from the North Yemen Civil War of 1962 to 1970, which saw North Yemen’s transition from a Zaydi Imamate into a secular Arab republic, the South Yemen Civil War of 1982, in which internecine warfare hollowed out much of South Yemen’s entrenched Socialist Party leadership, the Yemen Civil War of 1994 between the Yemeni government and secessionist officials in the former South Yemen after the country unified in 1990, and the Houthi Rebellions from 2004 onward. These prior conflicts reflected different tensions that remained at least partially unresolved and have to some extent contributed to the gradual breakdown of centralized control since 2011.

have a measurable influence on contemporary civil wars as predicted. But how significant are these effects in practice? Even in highly dynastic societies like the Philippines, kin-based violence tends to operate on the periphery of political conflicts. Dynastic competition there appears to destabilize security and incentivize aggression, but these effects operate primarily as exacerbators of preexisting large-scale ethnic and political conflicts. My analysis in prior chapters certainly hasn't indicated that the dynastic incentives for violence exceed the influence of other well-reported contributors to civil war, such as economic and representational disparities or ineffective political institutions.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the evidence I have uncovered concerning dynasticism's impact on security has generally shown complicated curvilinear effects, suggesting that political dynasties' role in civil war conflicts is not as straightforward as some other potential aggravating factors. Whereas economic prosperity and the strength of political institutions have been previously shown to display an apparent linear relationship with the likelihood of civil war onset, the effects of dynasticism as presented in this dissertation appear more varied and circumstantial.<sup>3</sup> Readers thus may question whether the research presented in this dissertation on the dynastic dimension of civil war – interesting though it may be – is not ultimately of marginal value compared to studies into more direct or straightforward contributors to civil war.

This final chapter seeks to address these concerns by demonstrating why dynasticism isn't always a merely peripheral issue in contemporary civil wars, and then illustrating how and why both researchers and policymakers might work toward developing a greater understanding of this understudied phenomenon. To do so, I begin this chapter with a brief qualitative case study of the country that initially inspired this research project: the Republic of Yemen and its perpetually turbulent security environment. Through this qualitative case study, I will demonstrate that the ongoing security crisis in Yemen – initially sparked by Arab Spring protests in 2011 and escalating into civil war from 2015 onwards – was fueled in large part by the breakdown of Yemen's delicate tribal coalition system.<sup>4</sup> The most crucial cause of this breakdown, I argue, lay in the dynastic capture of formerly independent authoritarian political institutions by a handful of families and tribal interests, and the subsequent increasing intra-kin rivalries that emerged between two of the most prominent families dominating this dynastic system. Out of these dynastic rivalries came the collapse of Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime, and years of subsequent violent jockeying between different tribal and political factions hoping to fill the vacuum he left behind. I demonstrate the crucial role played by

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<sup>2</sup> For further discussion regarding the multicausal nature of civil wars, see Hegre & Sambanis 2006.

<sup>3</sup> In early modern Europe, for example, extremely close relatedness and affinal links appeared to correlate with lower incidents of warfare even as more peripheral relatedness increased bellicosity. In the Philippines, conflict tended to correlate with dynastic competition and polarization, rather than dynasticism as a whole. And even in my analysis of consanguineous marriage rates and their association with global incidents of civil war, the predicted effect of increasing consanguineous marriage rates appeared to vary with the proportion of such marriages, rather than rising linearly.

<sup>4</sup> For this chapter, I rely on a basic process tracing approach to illustrate the causal pathway through which dynastic tensions at the heart of the Yemeni regime contributed directly to the country's current civil war. I use qualitative analysis to demonstrate that my dynastic approach provides a more holistic and complete explanation for the regime's collapse than do other possible explanations. This analysis is not intended to present a generalizable theory to explain all civil wars, but rather presents a key case illustrating why a dynastic approach can potentially explain some incidents of civil war with greater clarity than can standard existing theories about civil war onset. For further insights into process tracing methodologies, see Collier 2011, Mahoney 2012, and Beach & Pedersen 2013. The utility of qualitative analysis in comparative politics is discussed in greater length in Mahoney 2007. Discussion regarding the analytic value of case studies can be found in Bennett & Elman 2006 and Flyvbjerg 2006.

dynasticism in these events by first reviewing more commonly cited explanations for Yemen's collapse – such as religious tensions between Yemen's Shi'ite and Sunni populations, the role of outside powers such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, or the proliferation of revolutionary groups demanding greater democracy, Islamist government, or regional secession – and review why such explanations fail to adequately explain the timing of Yemen's descent into civil war and the subsequent progression of the conflict. I then review the central role of tribes in Yemen's governing institutions and describe how this kinship-focused perspective provides clearer insights into why security has broken down so severely in recent years, and why none of the various political actors vying for power have to date achieved victory in the ensuing civil war. While Yemen is doubtless an outlier in how deeply integrated tribes have been in the process of governance, the case nonetheless offers a clarifying illustration into how dynastic and tribal capture of state institutions – a strategy that has been embraced in different forms in a wide variety of modern authoritarian and pseudo-democratic states – can introduce systematic state vulnerability over the long term.

Moving beyond this illustrative case, the final section of this chapter concludes this dissertation with a discussion of the academic and policy implications of this dissertation. In advocating for a dynastic approach to security analysis, in which powerful families and kinship networks are taken seriously as political actors and studied in the context of kin relationships, I argue for a significant rethinking of major assumptions concerning how we understand civil war violence and the steps needed to resolve it. In this section, I review important findings, future potential areas of research, and proposed policy reforms to more effectively address the destabilizing consequences of dynasticism and kinship-based political violence.

**Section I**  
**Dynasticism and Tribal Competition**  
**At the Center of the Yemeni Crisis**

*“Yemen is the tribes, and the tribes are Yemen.”*

*Traditional Yemeni proverb<sup>5</sup>*

As of this writing, the ongoing Yemeni Crisis has led to an estimated 50,000 fatalities and disrupted the lives of an order of magnitude more.<sup>6</sup> Intense fighting in the country's most populous cities has forced approximately 22 million people – 75 percent of the country's population – into vulnerable situations in need of some level of humanitarian assistance.<sup>7</sup> Aggressive blockades and attacks on transportation hubs have resulted in crippling famine across many parts of the country.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the conflict has had especially severe consequences on the country's already-inadequate public health infrastructure, resulting in routinely underequipped hospitals and dangerous outbreaks of cholera and other infectious diseases.<sup>9</sup> And perhaps most distressingly, it remains extremely unclear when or how a resolution to this conflict might occur. As fighting has progressed, foreign actors such as Iran on one side, and Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States on the other, have gradually increased their involvement in

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<sup>5</sup> Horton 2011a.

<sup>6</sup> Fahim 2018a.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Karasz 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Smith-Spark 2018.

the conflict, even as local factions have fragmented and failed to achieve enough gains to make a swift resolution plausible. For outsiders unfamiliar with the Byzantine nature of Yemeni politics, even following the loyalties of specific actors can prove difficult. The course of the crisis, for example, witnessed the toppling of Yemen's dictator of 34 years, only to see him return to the capital at the head of an alliance with Houthi rebels whom his government had been at war with for the previous decade, and then culminated in his assassination by these erstwhile Houthi allies following the collapse of the partnership.<sup>10</sup> Unsurprisingly, the myriad number of independent factions, and the rapidly shifting nature of alliances between belligerent groups, has contributed to the difficulty for both academics and policymakers seeking to understand the conflict, its ultimate causes, and the likelihood of its eventual resolution.

Prior to the ouster of President Saleh in 2011, the fragility of the Yemeni state and the risks of a future crisis were already abundantly apparent. Yemen is the poorest Middle Eastern state, with inadequate resources, a large and extremely well-armed population, and a notably weak central government.<sup>11</sup> The country's politics are characterized by powerful centripetal forces, including radical religious movements, terrorist and criminal networks, and above all the powerful tribes and tribal coalitions that have long dominated Yemeni society.<sup>12</sup> Among Western policymakers, fears of instability tended to center around al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and other Salafist groups that took advantage of friendly tribes and weak governance to operate with impunity.<sup>13</sup> But Yemeni policymakers generally discounted the threats of such groups, apparently believing that these jihadist networks lacked a truly broad base of loyalty in the country and could be largely held in check through tribal intermediaries.<sup>14</sup> Instead, security concerns within the Yemeni regime tended to focus on two factions that maintained grudges

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<sup>10</sup> The Houthi movement officially refers to itself as Ansar Allah, but throughout this chapter I utilize its more commonly used colloquial name. Evocative accounts of the final days of the perilous alliance between Ali Saleh and his former Houthi enemies can be found in Kasinof 2017 and Browning 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Yemen is widely reported to have more guns per capita than any country other than the United States. These weapons play an important role in not only local security but also in social gatherings such as weddings (al-Karimi & Abdulmalik 2018). This proliferation of weapons has exacerbated ubiquitous outbreaks of violence across the country, often over issues surrounding land and water use. The country's verdant highlands, which earned it the sobriquet *Arabia Felix*, host valuable agricultural outposts that are nonetheless highly vulnerable to erosion and diminishing groundwater resources. Even large-scale political conflicts are often deeply embedded in webs of local vendettas and alliances related to ownership over these natural resources and the infrastructure needed to cultivate and transport agriculture and newer resources such as oil. For more on these issues, see Ward 2009, Hales 2010, and Lichtenthäler 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Space precludes a full and in-depth description of the various conflicts and movements that have collided into civil war today. More detailed accounts of modern Yemeni history can be found in Dresch 2000, Clark 2010, and Rabi 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Western policymakers have long been concerned about al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and its entrenched position in some parts of Yemen (Sharp 2010). Critics have long suggested that this intense focus on one actor in Yemen's political landscape can often lead to counter-productive strategies (Carapico 2014).

<sup>14</sup> The Saleh regime's ambiguous relationship with foreign jihadist networks dates back to the country's 1994 civil war, when mujahideen returning from Afghanistan were tasked with helping to suppress resurgent leaders from southern Yemen's old communist regime (Watson 2018). When the American War on Terror began in 2001, the presence of AQAP became a valuable source of security rents for the country, and the regime was regularly accused of allowing the Sunni Islamist terrorist presence to fester so as to continue reaping financial rewards from Western counter-terrorism initiatives. This "tacit non-aggression pact" (Bonnefooy 2014 p. 91) began to collapse in the late 2000's as regime and AQAP forces regularly began to assault one another, and jihadist organizations became more adept at balancing global and local constituencies (Loidolt 2011). But even in the latter years of Saleh's reign, the regime appears to have considered AQAP a relatively peripheral and limited threat compared to the Houthi rebellion or endemic balancing between tribal elites (Bonnefooy 2011a).

from prior conflicts – the secessionist factions that continued to push for southern independence following the South’s loss in the 1994 civil war, and the fundamentalist Zaydi Shi’ite Houthi movement in the far north of the country, which sought to revive the type of theocratic rule that had previously been ended in North Yemen with the 1960’s military coup against the ruling Imamate.<sup>15</sup> In response to these and similar threats to its rule, the Saleh regime had over time developed an intricate series of carrots and sticks designed to suborn and divide organized opposition.<sup>16</sup> This approach was perhaps best exemplified in the structure of al-Islah Party,<sup>17</sup> an influential Sunni Islamist Party that served as the main official opposition to Saleh’s General People’s Congress. Despite nominally serving as the opposition party, al-Islah was controlled and kept manageable by the leader of Saleh’s own Hashid tribal coalition, the influential Sheikh Abdullah al-Ahmar.<sup>18</sup> In the south, economic patronage and favors were similarly managed to ensure that southern regions remained subordinated to the northern highlands. Rather than being given a robust presence in the national government, as they had been promised at the time of unification, the South’s influence was largely confined to the powerless position of Vice President, occupied by the former southern military officer Abdrabuh Hadi. Economic domination proved less feasible for the Houthis of the far northern governorate of Sa’dah, since they benefitted from substantial economic autonomy through smuggling goods into Saudi Arabia. This autonomy aided the Houthis and their local tribal allies in repeatedly launch rebellions against Saleh, which Saleh answered in turn with violent military suppression. Key to these campaigns was the government’s promotion of grievances and vendettas among various Sa’dah tribes to keep Houthis’ allies divided and to give local tribal militias an incentive

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<sup>15</sup> For the issue of southern secessionism, commonly referred to as al-Hirak, see Kostiner 1996 and Day 2008. Analysis of the explosive rise of the Houthi movement in the far north of the country can be found in Salmoni et al. 2010, Dorlian 2011, Gingrich 2014, and Brandt 2017

<sup>16</sup> Patrimonial politics permeated every layer of government and business dealings in the Yemen Republic, and over time a handful of powerful figures at the top of this system had come to accrue a staggering level of wealth and power. In spite of the regime’s superficial willingness to delegate significant autonomy to tribes and other local actors, President Saleh held an iron grip on key military, political, and economic institutions. One report suggested that by the end of his reign, Saleh had made sure that 80% of transactions involving imports, manufacturing, processing, banking, telecommunications, and transportation of goods were controlled by 10 key families and business groups – all with strong ties to the president (Hill et al. 2013 p. x). For more on the patrimonial networks that spread throughout the pre-revolutionary government, see Alley 2010.

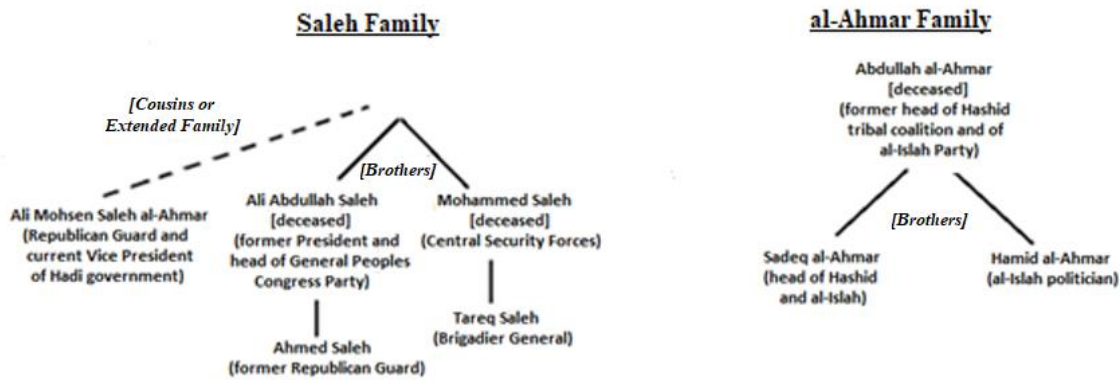
<sup>17</sup> Al-Islah was long considered the main rival to the ruling GPC, though even its support base was relatively limited. In 2005, it united with several other parties to form the Joint Meeting Parties coalition (Browsers 2007). Theoretically, this coalition put the opposition party on a more even footing with the GPC by consolidating and coordinating Saleh’s mainstream rivals. In reality, the coalition suffered from the large-scale corruption that permeated Yemeni politics and the extreme heterogeneity of its members, which ranged from conservative Islamists to the southern Yemeni Socialist Party. Critics suggested that, far from organizing a coherent opposition to Saleh, the JMP served mainly to manage and restrain the most radical reformers and direct them toward largely ineffective reform efforts.

<sup>18</sup> As will become clear later in this chapter, the inter-dynastic rivalries between the powerful Saleh and al-Ahmar families played a crucial role in the collapse of the Saleh regime. Table 6.1 offers a visual depiction of the tribes that make up the Hashid and the Bakil, the two most important tribal confederations, which are each estimated to have hundreds of thousands of members (Naylor 2012). The precise distinction between tribes and sub-tribes making up each confederation varies somewhat by source – the list presented here is derived from those given in Salmoni et al. 2010 p. 50 and Schmitz & Burrowes 2017 p. 214. Of particular note are two crucial families within the Hashid coalition – the al-Ahmar family from the al-Usaymat Tribe, and the Saleh family from the Sanhan Tribe. Figure 6.1 depicts these families’ in greater detail, listing some of the most significant members of each.

**Table 6.1**  
**Major Tribal Confederations**

<b><u>Hashid Confederation</u></b>	<b><u>Bakil Confederation</u></b>	<b><u>Other Tribal Confederations</u></b>
al-Usaymat Tribe	Arhab Tribe	Madhaj Confederation
<b>al-Ahmar Family</b>	Bani Hushaysh Tribe	Khawlan bin Amir Confederation
Bani Suraym Tribe	Dahm Tribal Group	
Bilad al-Rus Tribe	Iyal Suraysh Tribe	
Hamdan Sana'a Tribe	Iyal Yazid Tribe	
Idhar Tribe	Khawlan al-Tiyal Tribe	
Kharif Tribe	Murhibah Tribe	
Sanhan Tribe	Nihm Tribe	
<b>Saleh Family</b>	Sufyan Tribe	
	Wa'ilah Tribal Group	

**Figure 6.1**  
**Yemen's Two Dominant Hashid Dynasties**



to side with the government.<sup>19</sup> Through such strategies – centered above all on using government patronage to keep Yemen’s powerful tribes divided and off-balance – the Saleh regime managed to maintain a level of resilience that belied the state’s extreme weakness and poverty.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Brandt 2013 and 2014. As Brandt notes, this approach gradually fell apart as the government’s indiscriminate attacks and refusal to offer local allies any significant institutional power gradually alienated its Sa’ada support bases.

<sup>20</sup> Throughout much of its modern history, the persistence of the Saleh regime and the Yemeni state more generally despite its myriad weaknesses and recurring crises has often been remarked upon. See Dingli 2013 and Phillips 2017. Wedeen 2009 explores this paradox in detail, examining how Yemen’s national identity has been shaped through common historical experiences in spite of the weak institutional power of the state itself.

Ultimately, collapse of Saleh's rule and the subsequent gradual decline of stable centralized government originated not in these long-standing threats but instead from the emergence of the transnational Arab Spring movement. Inspired by the rapid overthrow of the Tunisian regime, hundreds of thousands of protestors in Yemen's capital of Sana'a and other large cities rallied to demand greater freedom and the end of President Saleh's reign.<sup>21</sup> Demonstrations on this scale tested the limits of the regime's partial tolerance for circumspect political demonstrations,<sup>22</sup> and by the third month of regular demonstrations the government grew increasingly lethal in its suppression of marches. While the demonstrations were large, Saleh appeared to calculate that strong support for true democratic reform did not extend far beyond the university students at the core of protests. Instead, President Saleh attempted to stall for time by publicly committing not to run for reelection – a promise he had made and broken in the past.<sup>23</sup> Alongside these promises, Saleh mobilized his own counter-protestors filled with paid supporters and escalated the lethal suppression of demonstrators via the armed forces. The most critical turning point in this standoff came with the eventual defection of key tribal and political allies. Central among these were Sadiq and Hamid al-Ahmar, who had inherited their father's positions as the heads of both the Hashid tribal coalition (of which Saleh's own Sanhan tribe was a part) and as leaders of the Islamist al-Islah opposition party.<sup>24</sup> The al-Ahmar brothers used their influence to organize a unified opposition to Saleh, convincing many sheikhs of his own Hashid coalition, as well as those of the rival Bakil coalition and independent tribes, to form a joint Alliance of Yemeni Tribes.<sup>25</sup> This opposition coincided with mass military defections – perhaps the most devastating of which was that of Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, a relative of Saleh's who had been given substantial control over the army.<sup>26</sup> Saleh attempted to maintain his grip on power,

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<sup>21</sup> An account of some of these protests can be found in Juneau 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Due to its relatively weak coercive apparatus, the Saleh regime was often forced to be sparing in its repression of dissent. Nonetheless, the regime's targeted attacks on journalists and intermittent outbursts of violence left no question as to its willingness to use brutal force when dissent was perceived as becoming too much of a threat to Saleh's rule. Phillips 2008 describes this peculiar *laissez-faire* approach to dictatorship as “pluralized authoritarianism,” a phenomenon that has been evident in a variety of Middle Eastern governments but perhaps reached its most explicit form in Saleh's Yemen. Descriptions of protests in Yemen and other Arab states that predated the Arab Spring can be found in Bayat 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Saleh's first promise to leave politics came in 2005 – a promise he broke when he ran for reelection within the year. Even were he to keep his promise this time, many feared that his withdrawal would only come if he could ensure that his son Ahmed Saleh took his place (Raghavan 2011b).

<sup>24</sup> Sadiq and Hamid, along with their other siblings, commanded a dizzying array of political, tribal, and business resources, which had been amassed during their father's time as the second most powerful political figure in the country. As preeminent sheikhs of the Hashid confederation, they potentially commanded tens of thousands of trained fighters affiliated with their coalitions – though since the loyalty of these fighters depended on informal codes of honor and patrimonial promises of favor-trading, such authority always had to be exercised with extreme caution. For further information, see Dehghanpisheh 2011 and Raghavan 2011a.

<sup>25</sup> Almasmari 2011 and Schmitz 2011a.

<sup>26</sup> Mohsen al-Ahmar is not closely related to the more prominent al-Ahmar family, though as a member of the Sanhan tribe he does share extremely attenuated kinship ties to them via membership in the Hashid coalition that they dominate. Reports vary as to the precise relationship between Ali Abdullah Saleh and Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, but he was broadly understood to be a cousin or similar member of the president's extended relations without being one of his immediate family members (Walker 2011). As part of Saleh's efforts to control the country's armed forces through nepotistic appointment of family members, Mohsen al-Ahmar had risen to become Saleh's “iron fist” (Raghavan 2011c) and one of the most powerful men in the country. At various times, he had been the primary military commander overseeing the Sa'dah campaign against the Houthi rebellion and had in some periods controlled roughly half of all Yemeni armed forces (Ibid).



but was forced out after being critically injured in an assassination attempt and fleeing to Saudi Arabia to recuperate.<sup>27</sup>

Efforts to rebuild the regime under Saleh's vice president Abdrabuh Hadi faltered after only a few years. Hadi's tenure began with a show of unity, as he ran unopposed with both the endorsement of his and Saleh's General People's Congress and the support of the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (a long-standing and highly diverse coalition that included most of the GPC's rivals, including al-Islah and several socialist and regional parties whose support bases are more geographically limited). But Hadi, a southerner, lacked Saleh's deep insight into the North's factious tribal politics, and had to deal with large segments of the military who retained loyalty to his ousted predecessor – due in large part to Saleh's intentional seeding of the military with his relatives and Sanhan tribesmen.<sup>28</sup> Many rival tribes and factions initially welcomed the departure of Saleh, who had come to dominate political patronage networks and appeared to be grooming his son Ahmed to succeed him. But this loose alliance quickly collapsed when it became clear that the already-powerful Hashid confederation aimed to take an even more central role in the government now that the al-Ahmar family no longer had to compete with the powerful Saleh for dominance over their tribal alliance. Moreover, many of the leaders of the new government – including Hadi, the al-Ahmars, and Mohsen al-Ahmar – were Sunni Muslims, which rankled the traditional Zaydi Shi'ite elites of the North. These tensions were ruthlessly exploited by a resurgent Houthi movement, which exploded in influence and rapidly seized Sana'a in 2015. The growth in Houthi power stemmed in part from increased support from Iran, which sought to undermine the pro-Saudi policies they feared would emerge from the growing influence of Sunni Islamist leaders. But it also emerged from the Houthis' improbably negotiated alliance with their one-time nemesis, a returned President Saleh.<sup>29</sup> Saleh succeeded in rallying friendly tribes and loyal military units to his side, rapidly rebuilding his support base after retaking the capital. For a time, it appeared that he might succeed in regaining his old position, as many in the coalition that had turned against him to establish Hadi's government reconsidered when faced with the prospect of Houthi rule.<sup>30</sup> But when Saleh made moves to secure their support by denouncing his Houthi allies, the Houthis responded by assassinating him in 2017. In the time since, factionalism and disunity have defined the Yemeni crisis. The Houthis at present retain much of the North but face serious challenges from military units and tribes that were

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<sup>27</sup> Phillips 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Saleh was well-known to have disproportionately filled the military with members of his own Sanhan tribe, and to a lesser degree with the allied tribe of Hamdan Sana'a. Military leadership was even more tightly controlled, with the wealthiest and best trained units being assigned to Saleh's closest family members (Knights 2013). Along with General Mohsen al-Ahmar, other family members who had risen through the military ranks included the president's son Ahmed, who had long commanded the elite Republican Guard, and nephews Tareq and Yahya Saleh, who both held command positions in the Special Security Forces.

<sup>29</sup> Even as Saleh seemed to drift out of foreign powers' view, he used his wealth and media connections to maintain a ubiquitous presence inside Yemen. He continued to print the endless posters that had littered the country when he was President, kept in touch with military and tribal allies, and made sure the media continued to cover him and his son Ahmed (Finn 2014, Ghabrial & al-Moshki 2015). His eventual return to the capital and the public eye seemed at once unbelievable and yet also fully consistent with his reputation as a tenacious political survivor. For more on this period of alliance, see Schmitz 2015.

<sup>30</sup> The United Arab Emirates, a key backer of the new Hadi government, appears to have even come to prefer Saleh's return to the continuation of Hadi's rule. Reports suggest that the UAE, unlike its Saudi partners, had grown increasingly uncomfortable with the entrenchment of various Salafist and Muslim Brotherhood-associated factions in the officially recognized government, and viewed a Saleh return as a viable way to sideline religious extremists on both sides of the conflict (Patrick 2017).

loyal to Saleh and have now rallied to his Sanhan tribesmen (most notably, his nephew Brigadier General Tareq Saleh). The Hashid confederacy in the North, which once served as a bulwark for the Hadi government, has been substantially divided and marginalized following the al-Ahmar family's failed push to expand their political influence and resist the Houthis advance. The South, which might have been expected to remain more loyal to Hadi, has also split, with large areas forming their own secessionist government rather than allowing Hadi to try and bring them back into a North-dominated unified government.<sup>31</sup> Interspersed across these lines, concentrated particularly in some rural regions in the South, are factions of al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and other similar radical Salafist groups who maintain localized bases of support. It remains to be seen whether any of these belligerents possesses enough support or resources to reunify the country under a stable government again.

### *Standard Explanations for the Crisis*

In one sense, there is little cause to wonder why conditions in Yemen have deteriorated into civil war in recent years. Indeed, more limited political violence – most notably in the form of periodic campaigns against the Houthis, and also more generally in the state's regular skirmishes with tribal actors and violent jihadist groups – have been a perpetual problem throughout the country's modern history. Yemen suffers from severe poverty, a notably weak central government, and powerful, well-armed centripetal actors. All these factors have long led observers to conclude that future security prospects for the country were dim, particularly as access to resources such as water and arable land continue to decline and as the population continues to exhibit explosive fertility rates.<sup>32</sup> But these long-standing and serious problems belied the other oft-noted trait of the Saleh regime: its curious stability and its efficacy at using informal tribal ties and balancing of rival actors against one another to compensate for anemic state institutions. Amidst Yemen's treacherous political landscape, which President Saleh famously likened to a dance on the heads of snakes,<sup>33</sup> the dictator succeeded in maintaining rule over North Yemen from 1978 until 1990, and thereafter became the sole figure in modern history to control a united Yemen until his ouster in 2012. His 34-year reign lasted a full 27 years longer than his most tenacious predecessor, and was roughly eleven times longer than the average reign of any North Yemen head of state since the Imamate was overthrown in the 1960's. In that time, Saleh appeared to have weathered far more severe trials than the Arab Spring protests, including not only large-scale armed conflicts but also repeated economic crises. The question, then, is not so much why civil war broke out in Yemen, but instead why this series of protests, in particular, led to the rapid unraveling of the Saleh regime, as well as the subsequent breakdown of the inter-tribal cooperation that maintained his rule.<sup>34</sup> Understanding the specific causes of Yemen's

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<sup>31</sup> Al-Qalisi 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Literature on Yemen is peppered with evocatively titled analyses referencing the country's "downward spiral" (Boucek 2009), its "prospects for state failure" (Juneau 2010), or its position "on the brink" (Boucek & Ottaway 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Clark 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Prior to the explosive advance of the Houthis into Sana'a in 2014, it initially appeared to many observers as though Yemen's ruling class had largely weathered the Arab Spring in much the same way as had Egypt. By rapidly divesting of the unpopular Saleh and coalescing around a new leader in Hadi, the Yemeni ruling elites seemed to signal their willingness to divest of an unpopular leader while simultaneously working together and head off more radical reforms. And as in Egypt and the Gulf States, the new regime appeared to have the backing of wealthy foreign powers capable of steadying it against further instability. Even under Hadi's subsequent weak leadership, it was not immediately evident that the government would break down into widespread chaos rather than continue its

current troubles is critical for efforts to restore stability to the country and to reduce the risk of future bloodshed in Yemen and similar tribalistic societies.

Understandably, observers and policymakers seeking to explain the current Yemeni crisis have often focused on generalizable explanations that conform to preexisting assumptions about the economic and political causes of civil war. Many of these explanations have substantial merit and accurately identify contributors to the ongoing crisis. But a careful examination also reveals that typical explanations for civil wars tend to conform poorly to the actual historical progression of events in Yemen. To illustrate this, I will review three commonly cited contributors to the Yemeni Crisis – lack of political representation, religious animosities, and foreign power intervention – and review how well each explanation fits with the actual unfolding of events in Yemen.<sup>35</sup> This review will demonstrate that these explanations do not adequately explain why the crisis escalated, why actors split in the way they did, and why these different factions have heretofore failed in their attempts to eliminate their rivals. By showing the problems that arise when standard explanations for civil war are applied to the Yemeni case, I will demonstrate the need for a new, more case-specific explanation into why violence and factionalism tore apart the Yemeni state – an explanation that will prove to be strongly rooted in the tribalism and dynasticism at the heart of Yemeni politics.

At first, it may be tempting to conclude that the ultimate cause of the Saleh regime's collapse lay in its repressive character and lack of true democratic representativeness.<sup>36</sup> The instigating event that led to Saleh's ouster was, after all, a series of Arab Spring protests in which thousands marched demanding his resignation and substantive democratic reforms to the government. Outside the capital, these broad demands for national political reform were also

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long-entrenched equilibrium of low-level violent competition. For further discussion regarding the Arab Spring's variable impact on neighboring authoritarian regimes, see Brownlee et al. 2015.

<sup>35</sup> The three explanations I will focus on here – economic and political disenfranchisement, religious animosities, and foreign intervention – all have extensive precedence in broader research on the causes of civil wars. In the period leading up to the current civil war, Yemen was a country experiencing the effects of extreme poverty, as well as severe economic and political inequality. All of these have been proposed as potential causes of civil war – see Hegre 2001, Collier & Hoeffler 2004, and Miguel et al. 2004. Moreover, as an authoritarian regime that nonetheless allowed limited political expression and electoral participation, the Saleh regime was dangerously close to an anocracy at times, rarely engaging in the type of sustained repression that stronger authoritarian states rely on (Vreeland 2008). Religious polarization is also a credible explanation, given the important role played by religious movements such as the Shi'ite Houthis, on the one hand, and Sunni religious movements from al-Islah to al-Qaeda on the other. The theory that religious differences might be prone to polarizing and contributing in mutual alienation to the point of intrastate conflicts is discussed in works, including Fox 2005 and Svensson 2007. The fact that violence has increasingly coalesced along sectarian lines has obvious parallels to the destabilization of Iraq and Syria, where animosities between Sunnis and Shi'ites played a critical role in conflict escalation (see, for example, Fearon 2007). Finally, the important role played by foreign powers such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United States has unquestionably shaped the course of the conflict, from the central role played by the Gulf Cooperative Council in negotiating Saleh's initial exit to the direct intervention of these powers in ongoing fighting. Works such as Walter 1997, Regan 2002, and Gleditsch 2007 have all argued that third party foreign interventions play a determinative role in influencing the outbreak or continuation of fighting in intrastate conflicts.

<sup>36</sup> While Yemen did appear to take some genuine steps toward greater openness and democratic accountability shortly after unification, it soon became clear that the Saleh regime would never allow true political accountability (Schwedler 2002). Yemeni elections were plagued by clientelism, vote buying, and electoral manipulation (Corstange 2016). This rampant corruption ensured that the same elites retained power regardless of how public mood soured. The failure of Yemen's pseudo-democratic institutions was exemplified in the marginalization of the officially sanctioned opposition coalition, the JMP, when organic protests emerged. Rather than working through the JMP to voice their concerns, protestors initially condemned the entire political system and forced JMP leaders to rapidly shift tactics to maintain their relevance (Durac 2011).

folded into regional grievances over the marginalization of communities far from the capital and its powerful tribes – most notably in the South, where demands for greater autonomy had continued to persist since its union with the North in the 1990's, and also in the far northern Sa'dah governorate where fighting between Houthis and the government had severely disrupted many locals' lives.<sup>37</sup> These political demands were coupled with extreme economic unrest, driven by Yemen's increasingly dire prospects for growth.<sup>38</sup> The government's response – which vacillated between initial caution and a hurried effort at suppression as protests grew in size – fit the long-observed pattern regarding the prevalence of civil war and revolution in weakly authoritarian states.<sup>39</sup> Due to its weak control over its well-armed population, the Saleh regime had long practiced a selective tolerance for limited displays of protest and criticism, but this left the state in a dangerous middle ground – not democratic enough to adequately respond to grievances, but not consistently repressive enough to deter its populace from revolting. In the years following Saleh's ouster, the transition of the crisis into an increasingly regional struggle – with Houthi support rooted in the North and Hadi's official government largely retreating into southern territories – may further suggest that the roots of the conflict lie in the failure of Saleh's Sana'a-based government to adequately govern the country as a whole and limit sub-state regional resentments.

But while popular anger at the Saleh regime and many of its policies unquestionably sparked the initial protests against his rule and has undoubtedly helped fuel the recruitment efforts of various factions promising to enact policy changes, it is nonetheless problematic to view the subsequent civil war simply as a consequence of this backlash. Protest movements demanding Saleh's ouster and greater representation and regional autonomy played a highly visible role at the start of the crisis, but the progression of events saw the rapid marginalization of reformist forces in favor of more powerful actors. No new popular movements or political parties emerged out of the Arab Spring protests, and all of the subsequent belligerents such as the Houthis, al-Islah, and the GPC were preexisting powerful institutions that capitalized on the uncertainty of the moment. Had the regime successfully maintained its support among tribal allies and prevented prominent defections by government and military authorities, it is highly questionable whether the large-scale demonstrations that began in January of 2011 could have fatally undermined Saleh's rule. While clearly caught off-guard by the size and widespread support of the protests, after the first few weeks of demonstrations the Saleh regime began efforts to divide and undermine opposition through strategies that had served it well in the past: a combination of sporadic violent repression, mobilization of counter-demonstrations by

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<sup>37</sup> Day 2012 portrays regional antipathies, particularly between the recently united North and South, as one of the key factors leading up to the current crisis. Though initially presented as a joint partnership, economic and political disparities rapidly led to the North's domination over southern regions – a process that was only accelerated after the South's failed efforts at secession in the mid-1990's (Burrowes 1999).

<sup>38</sup> Even by Yemeni standards, the period leading up to the Arab Spring had been one of extreme economic hardship (Colton 2010). Dahlgren 2014 notes that poorer regions of the country and the exploding youth demographic were especially hard-hit. Much of the economic anger focused on the rampant corruption of Saleh's regime – the dictator himself was estimated to have stolen as much as \$60 billion from his staggeringly poor country during his time in power (Browning 2015).

<sup>39</sup> It has been repeatedly observed that revolutions and political transitions in authoritarian states often emerge when autocrats delay or vacillate in responding to dissent. In many cases, capricious and inconsistent repression appears to invite opposition more readily than more severe but consistent authoritarianism. Gurses & Mason 2010 review prior arguments in this vein and dissect whether this pattern is primarily a byproduct of state weakness or of particular regime types.

supporters, and the introduction of compromise reforms that could be slowly unwound once popular attention had abated.<sup>40</sup> The turning point for these efforts to salvage Saleh's rule did not arrive until late February and March of 2011, when waves of defections began to be announced among some of the president's most crucial allies. Among the most devastating of these were the widespread resignations by members of his own Hashid tribal confederation (including not only politicians in the opposition Joint Meetings Party coalition, but also members of the General People's Congress party which he led)<sup>41</sup> and most crucially the defection of his relative General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar. Protestors initially welcomed and encouraged these powerful allies. But as these stronger actors became involved in efforts to oust Saleh and mobilized tribal militias and defecting military units toward that goal, these elites rapidly marginalized the weaker student groups and activist networks that had prompted the standoff. While large-scale protests continued through Saleh's retreat to Saudi Arabia in June and into the negotiated election of President Hadi in February 2012, the increasing salience of military force weakened the capacity of non-violent democracy advocates to shape events.<sup>42</sup> Calls for regional autonomy reforms, too, quickly became sidelined in the new Hadi regime – demonstrated most visibly in the split of the Southern Transitional Council from Hadi's government in 2017.<sup>43</sup> The rapidity with which fractures emerged in the ruling regime, and the success these elites had in limiting real reformist efforts in the subsequent Hadi coalition, suggests that Saleh's fall was more a consequence of the fragility of the alliances that upheld the regime rather than the strength of the movement that overthrew it. Despite their initial role instigating the events that ended Saleh's reign, reformist movements clearly lacked the constituencies, resources, and coherent organization that were required to shape subsequent political conflicts.

A more compelling case can be made that the roots of Yemen's current conflict lie in growing sectarian animosities. In the years since Saleh's ouster, the Yemeni crisis has unquestionably taken on a religious dimension, with Yemen's Sunni South (along with select northern allies, most notably among predominantly Hashid tribes closely associated with the Sunni Islamist party al-Islah) arrayed against a theocratic Houthi movement seeking to return to

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<sup>40</sup> Along with Saleh's promise to step down after the next election, he promised pay raises for public employees, a guarantee of 50,000 new public sector jobs, a halving of the income tax, and the institution of new price controls (Kasinof & Sanger 2011). While the South and Houthis' Sa'dah homeland hosted the most spectacular recent examples of regional uprisings, the Arab Spring protests also showcased growing regional identities in the coastal Tehama strip (Qaed 2013, Waguih 2018a) and in the central city of Taiz (Worth 2011). Both of these regions saw massive protests that voiced anger at not only Saleh himself, but also their broader alienation from the entire Sana'a-dominated political order. The brutality with which subsequent civil war has struck both regions has only increased many residents' alienation from a broader Yemeni identity.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Qadhi 2011a.

<sup>42</sup> Worries among the activist base that they had lost control of reform efforts began to spread when the GCC-backed transition plan included legal and economic protections for the departing Saleh (al-Qadhi 2011b). The continuation of reform efforts showed promise with the institution of a National Dialogue Conference to promote power sharing and political reforms, but the country's continued descent into violence further entrenched perceptions that the country's elites had no real interest in allowing true political reform (Alley 2013). The failure of democratic reforms was coupled with continued economic collapse, once again highlighting the new regime's failure to address the largest concerns of protestors (Salisbury 2014a).

<sup>43</sup> From the moment he escaped the Houthi-controlled capital in 2015 and relocated to Aden, President Hadi has had an ambiguous relationship with local political figures. Many resented the northern allies he brought with him and felt his efforts to regain the country from the southern city were just a continuation of the North's longtime efforts to erode and supplant southern autonomy (Dahlgren 2015). In 2017, Hadi's tensions with the secessionist al-Hirak movement exploded with the creation of the Southern Transitional Council, made up of southern politicians who rejected Hadi's efforts to reunify the country and demanded immediate independence instead (Dwyer 2018).

an explicitly religious government comparable to that which ruled North Yemen prior to the overthrow of the Imamate. To be sure, the religious dimensions of this crisis are not indicative of particularly long-standing ancient hatreds or intrinsic animosities between sects. Even more than in states like Syria and Iraq, strong sectarian hostilities are reportedly a relatively recent trend in Yemeni history. Traditionally, the predominantly Shafi'i school of Sunnism and the local Zaydi variant of Shi'ism that had spread across Yemen were generally seen as close to one another in doctrine and practice.<sup>44</sup> Adherence to one or the other was primarily determined by a group's regional and tribal affiliation, and religious differences thus tended to be understood in the context of more important geographic identities. But the salience of religious identity in Yemen has grown markedly in recent decades, mirroring broader trends across the Muslim world. Among Zaydis, this transformation is embodied in the striking rise of the Houthi movement, a genuinely broad-based Islamist network that began in the 1990's as a localized protest movement against the Saleh regime. This movement grew substantially following mass demonstrations against the United States invasion of Iraq, and it subsequently succeeded in gaining increasing attention and combat experience through its tenacious resistance to repeated wars of suppression by the central Yemeni government. The Houthi movement partly drew inspiration and support from foreign Shi'ite political organizations like the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hizbullah. But much of its tenacity and recent success has sprung from the Houthis' adeptness at modifying their predecessors' template to fit local grievances such as some northern tribes' marginalization by the post-Imamate military government in general, and their ostracism by the Saleh regime in particular. Yemeni Sunnis, for their part, have similarly been reshaped by transnational religious trends.<sup>45</sup> As in other parts of the Muslim world, conservative Salafist ideologies have experienced notable success in recent decades spreading their beliefs across Yemen and establishing new schools and religious institutions.<sup>46</sup> The most dramatic examples of this transformation in Sunni identity come in the spread of violent jihadist organizations such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>47</sup> But far more relevant in most Yemenis' lives has been the success of broad-based mainstream political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamist al-Islah Party.<sup>48</sup> Their concerted effort to promote conservative Sunni and Salafist

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<sup>44</sup> As noted in Day 2012 p. 33, there was a long-standing tradition of inter-sectarian collaboration among both religious groups. While conflicts with a religious dimension certainly did arise periodically between Yemeni Shafi'i and Zaydi adherents, it was often difficult to untangle these religious motivations from the pervasive problems of tribal animosity and regional rivalries between the Zaydi highlands and the rest of Yemen. Inter-sect cooperation was nonetheless extensive enough that commentators such as Day 2006 suggested that Yemen's politics and culture could serve as a template for how more religiously divided societies such as Iraq might better integrate disparate Muslim sects.

<sup>45</sup> Ironically, Houthi success also came from emulating some of the more effective proselytizing strategies initially popularized by Salafist groups (Weir 1997).

<sup>46</sup> Salafism's spread has undoubtedly been aided by the patronage of wealthy conservative Muslim states, Saudi Arabia foremost among them (al-Rasheed 2008). But as with the Houthis, the tendency among critics to portray Yemeni Salafists as tools of foreign interests is more fiction than fact. Salafism in the country has developed its own domestic traditions and has continued to adapt to local conditions and norms (Bonney 2011b). And indeed, as with the Houthis, Salafist groups radically increased their profile over the course of the Arab Spring, with their telegenic younger members helping to organize and rally protestors against Saleh (Bonney 2014).

<sup>47</sup> Recent overviews of the history of AQAP in Yemen can be found in Johnsen 2014 and Horton 2017. See also Raghavan 2018 for an account of current counter-terrorism efforts against the group.

<sup>48</sup> Al-Islah has gained unparalleled social influence due to its prominence as the leading opposition party throughout the Saleh years, a status that has only increased as it has become a dominant player under Hadi. Nevertheless, most observers have suggested that it has largely failed in its political mission of unifying diffuse Sunni Islamist traditions

policies has resulted in the conversion of a large number of traditionally Shi'ite populations and families. Many of al-Islah's leading figures, chief among them the al-Ahmar family, come from such convert families. As a result of these transformations and the aggressive political agendas of new sectarian organizations, a cycle of mutual alienation has occurred in recent decades among Sunnis and Shi'ites in Yemen. As both groups become heavily influenced by new, aggressively political sectarian organizations, religious loyalties on both sides have increasingly turned confrontational and more willing to commit violence against religious rivals.<sup>49</sup>

Religious identity has certainly fueled hostilities and mutual anxieties during the Yemeni crisis, but it would be highly misleading to characterize the fighting as a primarily sectarian conflict. The destabilization of the government began with a concerted push to oust Saleh that united most of Yemen's disparate elements regardless of their sectarian loyalties. This willingness of Shi'ite and Sunni factions to work together persisted in some capacity for years in the subsequent Hadi government. To be sure, the Hadi government's leadership is now dominated by Sunnis and it has lost most of the traditional northern Shi'ite lands to the Houthis. However, splits within this Shi'ite community have been apparent for years, as GPC loyalists and Houthi-skeptics continue to signal their willingness to turn on the Houthis in the right circumstances.<sup>50</sup> The Houthis' explosive expansion was aided in large part by the behind-the-scenes machinations of Ali Abdullah Saleh and his political and military allies, and it has long been evident that many northern groups' willingness to work with the Houthis is based more on pragmatic self-interest than on true religious loyalty.<sup>51</sup> Sunni communities, in turn, also show intense skepticism regarding the more radical jihadist members of their coalition, and there is still substantial hope that organizations like AQAP can be once again marginalized if inter-sect cooperation becomes more feasible.<sup>52</sup> The most influential Sunni political institutions like al-Islah never fully divorced themselves from tribal domination by leading elites, and the Sunni community as whole thus at present lacks a coherent unifying ideology that surpasses the regional and tribal loyalties of constituents.<sup>53</sup> Taken together, these examples of pan-sectarian coalitions and intra-sectarian splits strongly suggest that at present the Yemeni crisis has not been primarily driven by religious differences. This isn't to say that religious differences won't become more salient over time – indeed, many powerful forces in the country are working to encourage that exact outcome – but to date, religion appears to have been more of a mechanism

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under a single democratic banner. This is largely because of its subordination to elites like the al-Ahmars at the top of the party hierarchy, who have made sure that the party functions as a tool for personalized patrimonial advancement comparable to the GPC. As one might expect, this top-down system has historically functioned much more smoothly for a party with a dictator at the top of the hierarchy than for an opposition party uniting multiple competing factions. For more, see Dresch & Haykel 1995, Schwedler 2006, and Longley 2007.

<sup>49</sup> For an account of the growing animosity along sectarian lines, see Fahim 2018b. Yadav 2017 notes that external pressure from foreign states who assumed that conflict would be along sectarian lines has perversely encouraged and entrenched sectarian splits within Yemen.

<sup>50</sup> As evidenced by repeated defections of GPC-affiliated generals and political officials who joined with the Houthis along with Ali Abdullah Saleh, and have gradually abandoned the group since the former dictator's assassination (al-Sherbini 2018).

<sup>51</sup> Toska 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Hill & Kasinof 2015.

<sup>53</sup> This failure is arguably a two-edged sword. The lack of a coherent pan-Sunni movement comparable to that of the Houthis potentially slows the process of mutual radicalization and alienation between the two sects. On the other hand, the failure of moderate institutions like al-Islah to embrace genuine religious populism continues to raise the possibility that more radical jihadist groups might flourish in the future among Sunnis disaffected by non-violent Islamist institutions that are too heavily compromised by the status quo.

for already-entrenched elites to broaden their power and bases of support, and not the primary cause of fighting between factions dominated by these elites.

Along with the prior explanations for the onset and progression of the Yemeni crisis, another compelling and widespread interpretation of the civil war focuses on the role of international actors.<sup>54</sup> According to this perspective, much of the blame for Yemen's civil war can be attributed to the dangerous willingness of Iran on the one side, and a coalition of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States on the other, to arm and finance local factions and transform Yemen into an arena for proxy war. Indeed, much of the recent radicalization among local Sunnis and Shi'ites described above can be traced back to the policies of both Iran and Saudi Arabia, who have for decades sponsored conservative and politicized religious groups in Yemen and the broader Middle East. This sponsorship has escalated in recent years, and both international factions are now heavily involved in actively supporting different sides of the conflict. The Iranian Republic views the Shi'ite-dominated Yemeni North as fertile territory to expand its international presence and has long sponsored the Houthis as both a means to extend its influence in the Arabian peninsula, thereby exerting leverage on its rival Saudi Arabia.<sup>55</sup> The Saudis, in turn, have long viewed Yemen as a strategic liability resting on its border. Despite its extreme poverty, Yemen's large and well-armed population has made the country difficult to ignore. These security concerns have often impacted Saudi-Yemeni relations. For example, the North Yemen Civil War saw Saudi Arabia become deeply entrenched in a military quagmire in its attempt to save the Imamate from being overthrown by revolutionary Nasserite republicanism.<sup>56</sup> More recently, Saudi Arabia took the drastic step of expelling their prodigious numbers of Yemeni migrant workers after President Saleh sided with Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War.<sup>57</sup> With the rise of the Houthi movement, Saudi Arabia's anxieties concerning Yemen have focused primarily on this group, which derives substantial resources from smuggling into Saudi Arabia and which the monarchy views as a potential inciter of its own restive Shi'ite minority.<sup>58</sup> These international security interests have led to substantial transnational funding of both sides in the conflict and therefor significantly increased the

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<sup>54</sup> The rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia dates back to the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and the Saudis' fear of a revolutionary wave of populist Islamist movements backed by the Islamic Republic. Yemen, from this perspective, has joined Syria and Iraq as a state where preexisting tensions between Sunni and Shi'ite communities and domestic unrest have created opportunities for both regional powers to pursue their interests militarily (Chubin & Tripp 2014).

<sup>55</sup> While the precise level and significance of Iranian support for the Houthis is a subject of debate, it is clear that the Iranian regime has played an important role, proffering weapons and supplies to the insurgency. See Schmitt & Worth 2012, Reardon 2015, Saul et al. 2017., and Knights 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Saudi policy toward Yemen has shifted repeatedly over the years, but the kingdom has been consistent in seeking to undermine any possibility of a strong, unified Yemeni state controlled by any groups perceived as an ideological threat to Saudi hegemony. The Saudi monarchy initially viewed the imamate as a rival monarchy with its own claims to territories and tribes within Saudi Arabia and based on Zaydi doctrines rejected by the Salafist kingdom. However, with the rise of Nasserism, Saudi Arabia committed itself to halting the spread of Arab nationalism into the Gulf by intervening in the North Yemen Civil War (for a succinct review of this conflict, see Wenner 1993). The Saudis ultimately failed in their quest to prop up the imamate but nonetheless maintained a strong presence in the subsequent Yemen Arab Republic. Relations, however, remained strained, and the Saudis' played a notable supporting role in the South's secession effort during the 1990's civil war. Saudi security policies and relations with Yemen are discussed in greater detail in Gause 1990, Katz 1992, Niblock 2004, Peterson 2013a, and Hill 2017.

<sup>57</sup> This event had a profound impact on the Yemeni economy. At the time, remittances sent from Yemeni workers in Saudi Arabia to family members in Yemen played a critical role in the country's economic well-being. This radical economic shock contributed to long-lasting economic woes while the country was still adapting to the recent unification of North and South. For more, see Okruhlik & Conge 1997.

<sup>58</sup> Jones 2007.



capacity of belligerents in the civil war to keep fighting despite the increasing exhaustion of Yemen's own resources. Moreover, international interests have directly shaped the constituency of local alliances. The split within the regime between Saleh and Hadi was directly engineered by the United States and Gulf Cooperative Council when they pressured Saleh to resign and negotiated the elevation of Hadi as his successor. This effort to protect the Yemeni regime at the expense of its ruling dictator, from the US perspectives, was based mainly on the fear that Saleh's unpopularity might become an impediment to US efforts at combatting AQAP presence in the country.<sup>59</sup> More recently, Ali Abdullah Saleh's attempted defection from his Houthi allies and his effort to reunify his old support base were notably supported by the United Arab Emirates, which has increasingly grown estranged from Saudi Arabia's strategy of supporting politicized Sunni groups whom the UAE fears are too closely aligned with the anti-monarchist Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>60</sup>

The role of foreign powers in exacerbating and influencing the Yemeni Crisis is undeniable, but once again substantial problems arise when we attempt to understand the conflict as being primarily a transnational proxy conflict. The infusion of resources provided by powerful foreign states have greatly increased the capacity of local actors to continue fighting and have likely substantially extended the war's duration and magnitude. But foreign powers have repeatedly failed to direct events in the Crisis to their satisfaction and regularly find themselves constrained by the factious alliance system among Yemen's domestic political actors. Indeed, the tendency of some outside observers to portray either the Houthis or the Hadi coalition as mere puppets of foreign forces may be substantially influenced by the mutual demonization on both sides of the conflict – anti-Houthi propaganda has long attempted to paint them as catspaws of Iran, while the Houthis in turn regularly denounce their opponents as tools of Saudi Arabia and in league with foreign jihadist networks such as al-Qaeda. But in reality, international support for both the Houthi movement and the tenuous alliance supporting Hadi have succumbed to significant principal-agent problems, with local actors proving restless and difficult to control by their state patrons.<sup>61</sup> In the North, the Houthis are regularly forced to make concessions and local deals to maintain control over factious tribal territories, and even these efforts came close to unraveling when Ali Abdullah Saleh made his bid to regain power.<sup>62</sup> To an even greater extent, Saudi Arabia and its allies have regularly failed to translate their massive military investments into reliable strategic gains. Even as the Saudi-led campaign has committed unprecedented levels of material support to the conflict, including naval blockades and sustained aerial bombardments,

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<sup>59</sup> Carapico 2014 offers a compelling argument that the strategy adopted by the USA and its Gulf allies of rushing Saleh out of power while simultaneously maintaining as much continuity in the ruling regime as possible proved fatal for the subsequent Hadi regime. Rather than representing a true effort at reform, the foreign-backed Hadi government attempted to keep hold of a collapsing coalition and unsustainable status quo.

<sup>60</sup> The UAE has long been rumored to be experimenting with patronizing other anti-Houthi factions that might prove both more effective than President Hadi and less beholden than him to Islamist groups like al-Islah. This was particularly evident in their entreaties to Ali Abdullah Saleh, who broke his alliance with the Houthis in anticipation of a strong UAE-backed initiative to return him to power (Edroos 2017). Since Saleh's death, the Emiratis have experimented with supporting Saleh's close kin, most notably by backing the anti-Houthi campaign led by Tareq Saleh (Shaif & Watling 2017). Perhaps most distressingly for supporters of President Hadi, they have also been rumored to patronize elements of the al-Hirak southern secessionist movement (Wintour 2018).

<sup>61</sup> For broader analyses of the principal-agent problems associated with foreign intervention in civil wars, see Salehyan et al. 2011.

<sup>62</sup> For arguments emphasizing the limited and peripheral nature of Houthi ties to Iran, see Juneau 2016 and Gordon & Parkinson 2018.

the kingdom's goal of building a unified, Sunni-dominated government remains out of reach.<sup>63</sup> These failures of both Saudi Arabia and Iran to overcome crucial local alliance politics lend support to the conclusion that foreign forces have substantially exacerbated the conflict, but that the root of Yemen's civil war currently lies in intractable domestic rivalries.

### ***The Dynastic Dimension – Intra-Kin Rivalries at the Heart of a Tribal Regime***

Standard explanations for the causes of civil wars unquestionably offer insights into the Yemeni Crisis. Analyses rooted in state repression and popular economic or political discontent, or in the rise of religious animosities, or in the intervention of foreign powers, all shed important light on factors that continue to contribute to present-day violence. But each of these explanations has also proven unsatisfactory in explaining the full progression of the crisis from the initial unified ouster of President Saleh to the subsequent division of factions into collapsing coalitions. Why did the pro-democratic protestors who sparked a revolution become so quickly sidelined? Why have alliances appeared to span sectarian lines during some phases and in some regions, but closely align with these social cleavages in others? And why has the substantial intervention of foreign powers nonetheless resulted in an intractable standoff and severe principal-agent problems with local actors?

Understanding these dynamics depends on acknowledging the fundamentally tribal nature of the political alliances that supported the Saleh regime, and utilizing a kinship-based approach to analyze how these alliances shifted during the lead-up and unfolding of the present-day civil war.<sup>64</sup> Through such an approach, it becomes evident that the ongoing Yemeni crisis – though fueled by popular politics, religious divisions, and foreign actors – has been rooted largely in the collapse of a dynastic partnership and broader tribal equilibrium that underpinned the relative stability of the Saleh era. At the regime's heart was a partnership between two families linked through distant tribal ties – the family and Sanhan tribe of President Saleh himself, on the one hand, and the politically influential al-Ahmar family that dominated the Hashid tribal coalition to which the president's Sanhan tribe belonged, on the other – that succeeded for over 30 years in balancing intra-kin and inter-kin rivalries and creating an

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<sup>63</sup> Najjar & Al-Karimi 2017, Byman 2018, and Worth 2018.

<sup>64</sup> This chapter is, of course, far from the first analysis to note the significance of tribes to Yemen's security environment. The influence of tribes is one of the most prominent characteristics of modern Yemeni politics, and their importance rarely escapes the notice of analysts and researchers. Dresch 1989 offers perhaps the most authoritative and influential discussion on the topic, providing a deep overview of North Yemen's tribal environment just prior to unification with the South. Phillips 2008 likens the modern country's tribal territories as "states within a state" (p. 98), while Salisbury 2017a similarly characterizes Yemen as "less a divided country than a collection of mini-states engaged in a complex intraregional conflict" (p. 6). Salisbury continues to describe the current crisis as follows: "The groups that hold the balance of power in this chaos state do not correspond directly to those engaged to date by the UN and international powers. In the lived reality of most Yemenis, the erstwhile Houthi-Saleh alliance and the government of President Hadi have been just two actors among many operating in the country..." (p. 45). Where my argument here differs somewhat from most prior analyses lies in my specific contention that the collapse of Saleh's rule exemplifies the vulnerabilities inherent in entangling a political regime too tightly with dynastic alliances. The rivalries and generational disruptions that plague dynastic politics played a crucial role in undermining Yemen's tribal détente and in causing the entire country to spiral into civil war. Focusing on this kinship-based element of the current conflict sheds new light on the security vulnerabilities of tribal and clan-based regimes that are not evident when tribes are primarily compared to less fluid phenomena such as mini-states or pseudo-ethnic groups.

equilibrium in Yemen's factious tribal politics.<sup>65</sup> The 2007 death of the al-Ahmar family patriarch, Sheikh Abdullah al-Ahmar, and the long-standing fear among Abdullah's sons of an increasingly entrenched Saleh dynasty under the president's son Ahmed, resulted in the collapse of this dynastic detente.<sup>66</sup> As splits arose between the two families that together had entrenched Hashid dominance over Yemen's political institutions, these intra-kin rivalries generated new opportunities for actors both inside and outside the Hashid coalition to oust President Saleh and incentivized subsequent aggressive competition between tribal leaders.<sup>67</sup> The collapse of the Saleh-al-Ahmar partnership perfectly illustrates dynastic partnerships' vulnerability to generational transitions and to changing political conditions over time. Just as importantly, the unfolding of the Yemeni Crisis demonstrate that even seemingly mutually beneficial kinship alliances can easily collapse when participants begin to view one another as competitors for

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<sup>65</sup> Throughout this chapter, I treat membership in the same tribe or tribal confederation as a form of shared kin relationship. Thus, the rivalry that eventually emerged between the Saleh and al-Ahmar clans has fundamentally been an intra-kin conflict, since both families are at the head of rival blocs within their shared Hashid confederation. To be sure, the actual biological level of relatedness between members of the same tribe or confederation can often be so remote as to be effectively fictive. While tribes and tribal alliances in Yemen claim shared descent from distant primordial ancestors, the historical reality of these genealogies of shared lineage are often highly questionable. Nonetheless, for Yemenis themselves, the kinship dimension of tribal ties has a very real social impact. The same types of loyalties, resentments, and passions that drive family-based relationships also operate in a comparable (though perhaps more attenuated) manner at the level of tribal ties. Indeed, it is arguably because Yemeni tribes are fundamentally kinship-based institutions that so much of tribal politics has coalesced around a handful of families who succeeded in tying their broader tribe's success to their individual family's dynastic power.

<sup>66</sup> It should be noted that even at its height, the stability of the Saleh era was only a relative one. Indeed, the security environment in Yemen prior to the current crisis was roughly comparable to that of the Philippines as I describe in Chapter Four – a state where pervasive low-level kinship-based feuding amplified broader political conflicts such as the Sa'dah wars and terrorist insurgencies. *Tha'r* (blood feuds) between families and tribes remained a routine problem in the country, with one (likely conservative) study identifying 4,698 people killed in Yemen in such feuding between 1998 and 2008 (al-Shawtabi 2008). In ideal cases, such vendettas were quickly resolved through *'urf* (tribal and customary law), which offered a variety of mechanisms through which grievances could be addressed before a cycle of vengeance killings could take root. Attacks and tribal raids in times of stability could even take on a ritualistic and symbolic character, with law-breaking tribes taking great pains to avoid fatalities so that grievances could be signaled without inviting severe retribution (Carapico 1998 p. 263). The most iconic example of this phenomenon in Yemen came in the spate of tribal kidnappings of foreigners in the 1990's and 2000's, wherein hostages were treated to elaborate hospitality customs even as they were being held as bargaining chips against the central government (Lancaster 1997). But even in the most stable periods, there was always a persistent risk that any local tribal conflict might escalate and draw in more powerful factions and belligerent groups, thereby exacerbating intrastate conflicts lingering across the country (IRIN Report 2009, Abdullah 2010).

<sup>67</sup> In his exploration of Yemeni kinship and feuding, Dresch 1986 presents an analysis that presages the intra-kin rivalries that eventually emerged between the Saleh and al-Ahmar families and ultimately split the Hashid hold on political power. In this study, Dresch noted that Yemeni kinship is segmentary, but that loyalty is not ineluctably lineage-based. In other words, Yemeni kinship operates on tiers of diminishing loyalty, from immediate family to extended clan to tribe to tribal confederation. These different levels of kinship aid in balancing against rivals, as besieged groups can often make appeals to extended kin networks to protect against outsiders. But contrary to classical theories of segmentary lineages, loyalty at each level of organization is generally based on immediate group interest and can regularly cross broader lineage ties. Thus, while tribal ideals might celebrate the idea of "my tribe and I against our neighbors, my neighbors and I against outsiders," in reality a tribe from the Bakil confederation will often ally with a friendly Hashid tribe against a rival Bakil tribe, and families will in turn betray their own tribe if there is enough immediate incentive to do so. These conclusions match my own observations in both this and prior chapters, wherein it has been clear that intra-kin violence is a persistent element of dynastic politics, particularly when dealing with more peripheral kinship ties such as those to clan and tribe.

status and legitimacy. And most broadly, the centrality of this dynastic rivalry to the current Yemeni Crisis showcases how violent dynastic competition operates not only on the fringes of contemporary civil wars, but in rare but important cases still plays a determinative role in the onset, continuation, and possible conclusion of major civil wars today.

The tribes of Yemen are a deeply rooted social phenomenon: they inform members' status and cultural identity, offer an economic safety net, and play a crucial role in maintaining security in Yemen's lawless expanses. The country's tribal landscape is highly factionalized, with thousands of different tribes and sub-tribes scattered across the country.<sup>68</sup> Prior to the centralization of the modern Yemeni state, these kinship-based institutions played a crucial role in governing the region and maintaining social order.<sup>69</sup> Only a minority of modern Yemenis are active members of a tribe,<sup>70</sup> but those members have come to dominate the country's core northern highlands and national politics. Tribes in Yemeni society are understood in both territorial and kinship terms – tribal membership is inherited, and members view one another as distant kin, but this affiliation is also implicitly associated with particular ancestral territories and their resources.<sup>71</sup> Consequently, a tribe's power is exerted through both norms and material benefits. Socially, tribes are relied on to support and unite members, and a tribe's sheikhs – leaders and elders drawn from the tribe's most prominent families – play a crucial role resolving disputes and negotiating agreements both within the tribe and with outsiders.<sup>72</sup> Materially, tribal sheikhs often help manage local farming land and organize militias responsible for defending tribesmen and exerting influence on those entering or bordering tribal lands – ranging from taxing of products passing through the territory to launching raids and kidnapping attempts on outsiders.<sup>73</sup> In some cases, multiple tribes are bound together to form an even larger coalition –

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<sup>68</sup> Egel 2013.

<sup>69</sup> For historical insights into the complex and highly formalized role of tribes in Yemen prior to modern statehood, see Dresch 2006.

<sup>70</sup> Weir 1997 estimates that in rural northern segments of the country, up to 90% of populations will identify as tribal, with the only exceptions being individuals from either the elite sayyid descendants of the prophet Muhammed or the downtrodden *akdam* class descended from servants, slaves, or taboo professions. Schmitz 2011b, however, estimates that in the country as a whole, only about 20% of the population identifies with a tribal organization that is organized and coherent enough to have its own fighting forces.

<sup>71</sup> For the association between Yemeni tribes and particular territories, see Kambeck 2014. In many cases, this association is far more than symbolic, as tribes often play a crucial role in coordinating land cultivation and managing the community in the territory (Colburn 2002 pp. 21-26).

<sup>72</sup> Sheikhs and tribal intermediaries play a pervasive and highly visible role maintaining order and resolving disputes in Yemeni society, and this phenomenon has consequently received a notable level of attention. Examples include Weir 2007 and al-Dawsari 2012. The mediating influence of tribal authorities is a very real phenomenon, but it is often tempting to exaggerate this dynamic and underestimate the very real tradeoffs that come from relying on tribes rather than formal political institutions. Tribes often jealously guard their autonomy and can actively undermine efforts to establish more universal and even-handed legal regimes. The Saleh regime exacerbated these problems by failing to assert strong state sovereignty over legal and security issues, essentially passing the burden of maintaining local order off to the tribes. While tribal law and mediation play important roles in resolving some disputes, the Yemeni experience suggests that these positive benefits are far outweighed by the destabilizing consequences of entrenching the power of factious and bellicose tribal institutions.

<sup>73</sup> Sheikhs are leaders of a tribe and come from the tribe's most prominent families, but this status emerges as much out of consensus and personal reputation as hereditary succession. A prestigious lineage is often crucial to a sheikh's legitimacy, but the position is not automatically inherited or passed down through any strict legal process. Dresch 1984 offers a detailed analysis of this political authority system and its social implications. Shryock 1990 provides a detailed account of one sheikh's rise to prominence, while Swagman 1988 investigates a case in which an intra-kin conflict emerged between two family members each vying to take up the position of sheikh following the death of their relative.

most often tied to a purported common ancestry that links each tribes' forefathers to one another. When operating with reasonable coordination between the constituent tribes' leading sheikhs, large coalitions such as the Hashid and Bakil can be some of Yemen's most influential political groupings. To be sure, this long-standing prominence of tribes and tribal coalitions in Yemeni society does not always mean that tribal loyalties are unwavering. To the contrary, Yemenis can be infamously fickle in their adherence to tribal loyalties, which is one reason why powerful sheikhs make strong efforts to maintain their tribesmen's loyalty through economic incentives.<sup>74</sup> But despite sometimes-ambiguous loyalties, Yemeni tribesmen typically take the authority of their sheikhs under serious consideration and invest a significant amount of political legitimacy in the leaders of their tribes.<sup>75</sup>

Yemen is certainly not alone among Arab countries in placing a prominent emphasis on tribal loyalties.<sup>76</sup> But the country is notable for how successful local tribes have pursued a dynastic capture of state institutions and embedded their kinship networks into the process of government. This persistence of tribalism is at least partially a result of the country's relative poverty and largely rural economy. But it is also a consequence of North Yemen's historical development. In the South, British and later communist leaders implemented sustained policies to weaken the power and autonomy of the region's tribes, largely succeeding in marginalizing southern tribes into the present day. But in the North, centralization of the state and development of a modern military did not result in a comparable detribalization, due in large part to the historical progression of the North Yemen Civil War that overthrew theocratic Imamate rule. This extremely bloody conflict was partially fueled by tribal resentments against Imam Ahmed bin Yahya's mercurial and despotic rule, which included indefinite holding of hostages from powerful tribes and the execution of prominent sheikhs – among them, Husayn al-Ahmar, whose son Abdullah inherited his role as symbolic head of the Hashid confederacy.<sup>77</sup> Through such abuses, Imam Ahmed succeeded in alienating both the Hashid and the Bakil – the two largest tribal coalitions in the North, whose previous loyalty to the status quo had earned them the sobriquet of “the wings of the Imamate.”<sup>78</sup> In 1962, a cadre of army officers, many of whom had been at the center of the Imamate's sporadic efforts to modernize its military, chose to launch a Nasserite coup against the Imam. An alliance soon emerged between these reformist military modernizers and the core of the old tribal leadership. While not all tribes or their members turned against the Imam, the bloody civil war that followed eventually saw the entrenchment of this alliance with the formation of the Yemen Arab Republic. As a result, even as a succession of military dictators made gradual efforts to centralize government rule and develop the country following the pattern of other Arab nationalist regimes such as Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, the tribal backbone of the regime largely succeeded in entrenching its interests and ensuring that reforms

<sup>74</sup> Worth 2011, echoing a stereotype common among Yemenis, claims that the tribes of Yemen are “notoriously mercenary, and will fight for whoever pays them.”

<sup>75</sup> The relationship between a sheikh and his tribesmen is thus less a strict hierarchy and more an informal patronage relationship. Responsibilities are also understood to be reciprocal – in exchange for their tribes' support, sheikhs and other elites are fully expected to direct resources and patronage to their own tribe. Carapico 2007 pp. 60-83 explores in detail how these traditional tribal social relationships have adapted to contemporary society.

<sup>76</sup> See Khoury & Kostiner 1991.

<sup>77</sup> Abdullah al-Ahmar's status as a wartime leader, a sympathetic victim of the Imam's tyranny, and a paramount sheikh of the most cohesive tribal confederation in the country made him a giant in Yemeni politics even before he took up his position as the head of al-Islah. He was referred to as a *shayikh mashayikh*, sheikh of sheikhs, while his obituary in the BBC dubbed him “the second most powerful person in Yemen,” after Saleh himself (BBC 2007).

<sup>78</sup> Phillips 2008 p. 43.

failed to weaken the powerbase of those sheikhs allied to the new government.<sup>79</sup> The relative strength and stability of these competing factions is perhaps best illustrated by contrasting the fate of the country's pre-1978 military dictators – two of whom were exiled via coup, while the other two were assassinated – with the long and stable position of Sheikh Abdullah al-Ahmar. While al-Ahmar periodically held official positions as a governor or as a member of the consultative council, he primarily relied on his position as leader of the Hashid and his broader reputation as a leader of the revolutionary war to develop a broad base of support and influence the government indirectly.<sup>80</sup>

The awkward alliance between the Arab nationalist military officers who formally ruled the nation and the powerful tribal sheikhs who controlled its informal institutions was fundamentally transformed by the rise in 1978 of Colonel Ali Abdullah Saleh to the presidency, following the assassination of his predecessor Ahmad al-Ghashmi. Upon achieving power, Saleh embarked on a campaign to cement the loyalty of key tribes by pursuing a systematic policy of encouraging tribal capture of key institutions and vastly increasing tribal leaders' level of integration into the formal mechanisms of the state.<sup>81</sup> At first, the new dictator seemed an awkward figure to be leading such an integration. Saleh sprang from unassuming roots, born to an unremarkable family from the small Sanhan tribe. The Sanhan tribe was itself a relatively weak member of the Hashid coalition, albeit one that occupied a strategically valuable position directly south of the capital in Sana'a.<sup>82</sup> Saleh was initially dismissed by tribal elites as a semi-literate peasant, and his original family name, Afash, was of such humble origins that the dictator kept it a state secret until his ouster from power.<sup>83</sup> The new dictator, however, grasped that the comparatively humble nature of his tribal credentials offered him a valuable opportunity to play middle-man between far more prominent tribes, who were wary of ceding power directly to their rivals.<sup>84</sup> Key to this strategy was securing an alliance with Abdullah al-Ahmar, at this point North Yemen's most prominent sheikh and leader of Saleh's own Hashid coalition. Saleh

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<sup>79</sup> While some of North Yemen's dictators such as Ibrahim al-Hamdi made some efforts to reign in the power of the tribes (Burrowes 1991), these efforts largely proved too difficult to implement. Rumors persist that Abdullah al-Ahmar himself may have worked in tandem with Saudi Arabia to mastermind al-Hamdi's assassination and pave the way for change in leadership that eventually put Ali Abdullah Saleh in power (Brandt 2014 p. 109).

<sup>80</sup> Abdullah al-Ahmar's rumored status as a kingmaker and power behind the throne from the overthrow of the Imamate until his death in 2007 is recounted in brief in al-Ahmadi 2014.

<sup>81</sup> Throughout the 1980's, for example, Saleh brought about a "sea change" in the national economy, redirecting import licenses to favored tribal elites and transforming the national economy into a vast mechanism for rewarding loyal tribes (Alley 2010 p. 388). Later, Saleh would go so far as to formalize the position of sheikh itself, creating an official registration process to bestow political privileges on recognized sheikhs (Gatter 2012 p. 770).

<sup>82</sup> Describing the Hashid confederation, Dresch 1984 characterizes the Sanhan tribe as "somewhat peripheral," to the alliance (p. 43). But the traditional territories of Sanhan and its sister tribe Hamdan Sana'a abutted the North's capital and controlled major roads entering into the city. As Saleh cemented his grip on power, this positioning would prove to be not only a strategic military asset, but also a tremendous source of income. Saleh offered his tribes special tax privileges that redirected trade through roads they controlled. Of particular value was control over shipments of qat entering the city, which is chewed in prodigious quantities by residents (see Gatter 2012).

<sup>83</sup> Saleh's apparent lack of education is noted in Carapico 2001 p. 291. His efforts to keep his real family name secret prior to ouster are briefly discussed in Salisbury 2014b. After his real name was exposed, Saleh, with characteristic adaptability, proceeded to capitalize on the revelation by advertising himself as a man of the people and contrasting his humble roots to the tribal and economic elites that he now claimed to oppose.

<sup>84</sup> Saleh's rise to power through balancing the core Hashid alliance against its various rivals brings to mind Padgett & Ansell 1993's account of the rise of the Medicis, who similarly parlayed their roles as dynastic intermediaries into a position of authority. The parallel is not without irony, given the frequency with which Saleh was dubbed "Machiavellian," by political observers.

expertly balanced out concessions and key positions between rival tribes, offering enough concessions to core Hashid tribes to satisfy al-Ahmar while also courting key allies from other tribal factions (including the larger but less organized Bakil coalition).<sup>85</sup> The greatest beneficiary of this alliance was Saleh's own Sanhan tribe: by presenting himself as a counterbalance to al-Ahmar and his supporters, Saleh was able to convince Yemen's factious tribes to go along with his agenda of filling key military positions with Sanhan kinsmen and funneling patronage into Sanhan territories.<sup>86</sup> By selectively doling out state resources, Saleh effectively managed to channel the energy of Yemen's countless feuding tribes into a polarized government system dominated by two branches of the Hashid coalition – al-Ahmar's alliance of core Hashid tribes, and the more varied collection of tribes that balanced against this Hashid dominance through currying support from the more mercenary President Saleh.<sup>87</sup>

Over time, President Saleh restructured North Yemen's entire political system around the principal of dynastic and tribal capture of institutions.<sup>88</sup> By doling out this political access, a rough balance of power was maintained between Saleh's distant kin allies in the senior Hashid leadership position and various non-kin allies outside the Hashid confederation – thereby securing Saleh's own position as the central figure shaping the direction and level of tribal contestation. In the military, this process occurred through Saleh's selective offering of military equipment and officer positions to friendly tribes, so that they in turn would support Saleh's filling the most important positions with his own close relatives and tribesmen.<sup>89</sup> Saleh later

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<sup>85</sup> Peterson 2016 offers an informative analysis concerning the varying levels of organization and influence among the Hashid and Bakil. Dresch 1984 quotes supporters of Hashid al-Ahmar as bragging that “We are not tribes; we are like units in the army...” (p. 43) and contrasts this cohesiveness to the factious Bakil. In spite of the fact that the Bakil may be as much as four times the size of the Hashid (Phillips 2008 p. 53), they have never rallied around a single sheikh or lineage in the way that the core Hashid tribes united under al-Ahmar in recent decades. As one might expect, these varying degrees of hierarchy have contributed to the perception that the Hashid have been far more politically effective than their less organized rival.

<sup>86</sup> With the most important positions reserved for family members, beginning early on with his seven brothers and various cousins, and extending in later years to a variety of offices bestowed on sons, sons-in-law, and nephews (Peterson 2013b p. 309). This strategy has clear parallels among other Arab dictatorships, particularly among the Baathist regimes that Saleh often emulated. In Syria, Iraq, and other Arab autocracies, it has been commonplace for dictators to staff the military with allied ethnic or tribal groups as part of a strategy of “coup-proofing” (Quinlivan 1999). Knights 2013 offers a thorough description of key military units like the Republican Guard that Saleh staffed overwhelmingly with members of his own Sanhan tribe and the allied Hamdan Sana'a tribe. Seitz 2014 describes the Yemeni military under Saleh as a praetorian vehicle for patronage, and Blumi 2012 describes it as the core of a “tribal-military-commercial” complex (p. 176). But while other influential tribes and politicians attempted to build up their own support bases within the military, none had the type of centralized influence to emulate Saleh's systematic subversion of the armed forces.

<sup>87</sup> Abdullah al-Ahmar was once reported to have characterized this ambiguous detente as follows: “Saleh is my president, but I am his sheikh...” (Gasim 2018).

<sup>88</sup> Indeed, in transforming the previously decentralized tribal system into one where power, wealth, and influence were concentrated in the capital and its political patronage system, Saleh gradually transformed the tribes themselves into increasingly dynastic institutions dominated by a few key families from whom all patronage to the rest of the tribe flower. For brief analysis noting that tribal rivalries had increasingly centered on the relationships between a few key families at the head of each tribe, see Finn 2011 and Raghavan 2013.

<sup>89</sup> As with patronage in government offices and businesses, the military over time developed rough tiers of favoritism. The Sanhan tribes and a handful of associated allies directly benefited from Saleh's favor and enjoyed the greatest opportunity. More broadly, members of the Hashid tended to enjoy favored positions, but this had more to do with the Hashid's greater centralization and the influence of key leaders like Abdullah al-Ahmar than with any concerted effort by the Saleh regime itself to support the Hashid over other possible allied groups. Alley 2010 characterizes this discrepancy as an environment where the Sanhan were “systematically privileged” while the

allowed for the creation of the modern House of Representative, which proved to be a useful mechanism through which tribal interests could voice their preferences in the government.<sup>90</sup> The legislature's largest parties encapsulated the Saleh-al-Ahmar entente – Saleh controlled the General People's Congress, while Abdullah al-Ahmar sat at the head of al-Islah, the country's main opposition party. Al-Islah itself served to manage the growing popularity of Sunni Islamist ideas, allowing the regime to maintain influence over a potentially incendiary ideology through a tribal leadership that could calibrate their level of opposition to avoid backlash from Saleh's regime.<sup>91</sup> In its dealings with the tribes, the Yemeni government selectively embraced a more traditional and deferential approach. The government's negotiations to resolve tribal kidnappings and inter-tribal conflicts, for example, regularly led the regime to act more like a powerful tribe fulfilling a traditional third-party mediator role than like a modern state enforcing its sovereign authority.<sup>92</sup>

But along with these carrots also came liberal use of more punitive measures. Non-Hashid tribes that were too weak or too intractable to be of use to Saleh tended to be particularly ill-served by his consolidation of power. Much of the Houthi rebellion's earliest supporters, for example, were drawn from tribesmen of the small, far-northern Khawlan bin Amir tribal confederation, who had largely found themselves excluded from government recognition and patronage opportunities.<sup>93</sup> It was only among such peripheral groups that populist movements genuinely independent of tribal hierarchies were able to take root – most notably with the rise and transformation of the Houthi movement, but also to some degree among the separatist and socialist movements of the South and some Salafi jihadist groups. For groups with access to power, the regime's careful cultivation of tribal elites ensured that political success depended on

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broader Hashid coalition was merely “generally privileged” (p. 397). Below the Hashid came members of influential tribes outside the core Hashid alliance, such as the more prominent members of the Bakil confederation. Those without any such patronage ties were forced to fight for opportunities to advance in the highly patrimonial environment. Finally, members of some disfavored groups such as the tribes of the Sa'dah area or the South were systematically disfavored and excluded from positions of influence and power.

<sup>90</sup> The legislature is made up of not only sheikhs, but also a variety of professions and classes, including qadis and businessmen. But the institution has tended to overwhelmingly represent the interests of entrenched tribal elites and has served as a check on real reformist impulses. For an overview of its early years, see Sharif 2002.

<sup>91</sup> The most egregious example of this dynamic was in 1999, when al-Islah joined the GPC in nominating Saleh for president, leaving him without a major opponent. Nominally, this decision was claimed to be a symbolic show of unity during the country's first democratic election – a logic that was repeated in 2012 when Abdrabuh Hadi was nominated by both major parties as the sole candidate to succeed Saleh. But in practice, and despite the fact that al-Islah and the JMP ran a more spirited campaign supporting Faisal bin Shamlan in 2006, the party was never truly able to shake its reputation as a fake opposition movement after this initial display of deference.

<sup>92</sup> Government representatives and friendly third-party tribes have been routinely tasked with negotiating resolutions to conflicts. The RAND terrorism database includes accounts of numerous such negotiations, particularly surrounding kidnappings, wherein tribes would try to get the government to commit to road construction, local hiring initiatives, or water and electricity projects. This traditional approach to conflict resolution partly contributed to the mystique of Saleh as “less a president than a shaykh with a state” (Johnsen 2014 p. 20; see also Schmitz 2011b). An irony of this approach was that the institutionalization of sheikhs and their duties may have weakened the perceived legitimacy of tribal authorities in many areas. The most successful tribal elites relocated to Sana'a and amassed obscene amounts of wealth and political power, while their distant tribes saw only a fraction of the benefits. Meanwhile, the state continued to increase its visibility and apparent capacity to perform many traditional functions. Thus, ironically, even as it entrenched the power of Yemen's tribal elites, the Saleh regime may have contributed to a gradual disintegration of tribal cohesiveness in many parts of the country (Dresch 1996 pp. 35-40, Peterson 2016).

<sup>93</sup> Salmoni et al. 2010, Brandt 2014.



aligning with one of the twin poles that defined the Hashid dominance of the political process – poles controlled respectively by the al-Ahmar and Saleh families.

The unequal but mutually beneficial distribution of political power between Saleh and al-Ahmar proved robust enough to cement Saleh's control of the turbulent country for three decades and allowed the regime to weather multiple serious tests. Despite perennial state weakness, the regime weathered the difficult process of integrating South Yemen into a new Sana'a-dominated government, the rise of newly empowered violent religious opposition groups among both Sunnis and Shi'ites, and Yemen's international transition from a staunch ally of Saddam Hussein's Iraq to a key recipient of the United States' War on Terror resources. Throughout these events, the two Hashid leaders maintained their coalition's dominance by balancing against one another, with Saleh maintaining a clear dominance over the formal institutions of the state and the patronage networks that flowed from it, and al-Ahmar retaining a strong symbolic authority rooted in his informal authority as premiere sheikh of the Hashid. Ultimately, the dynastic alliance that upheld the Saleh regime did not collapse from outside pressure, but instead from the inevitable transition of authority to a new generation in both families. When Abdullah al-Ahmar died in 2007, most of his political influence passed down to his sons Sadiq and Hamid.<sup>94</sup> It rapidly became clear that the next generation of al-Ahmars would have a much more tempestuous relationship with Yemen's dictator.<sup>95</sup> To them, Saleh was no longer the easily replaceable military officer he had been when he first began dealing with their father – over decades of rule, he had become a seemingly unassailable strongman who had gifted his Sanhan tribe with enough wealth and military influence to threaten the al-Ahmars' preeminence. Even more distressingly, rumors persisted that Saleh was grooming his unpopular son Ahmed to succeed him as president, threatening to permanently entrench the power of the Salehs and the Sanhan tribe.<sup>96</sup> Instead of their father's cautious balancing in coordination with Saleh, the al-Ahmar siblings began a much more aggressive strategy of competing for influence. To counter Saleh's key advantage – his control of the military and government funds – they notably pursued

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<sup>94</sup> Abdullah al-Ahmar had ten sons, four of whom have had prominent political careers. Of these, the two most frequently discussed as leaders of the family are Sadiq, who inherited his father's position as sheikh of the Hashid, and Hamid, who was long rumored to desire political influence exceeding that of their father (Dehghanpisheh 2011).

<sup>95</sup> The al-Ahmar brothers were, of course, far from the only political actors who had long tired of Saleh's stranglehold on power. But their dynastic status ultimately made them crucial leaders of the growing opposition against the dictator, as exemplified in their later central role forming the Alliance of Yemeni Tribes. Their long political careers in the shadow of their father may also have made them more willing than other actors to take risks and assert the level of influence to which they may have felt entitled. Their eventual success rallying an anti-Saleh alliance but subsequent failure in holding it together is certainly consistent with the view that the al-Ahmar brothers aspired to replicate their eminent father's political success but ultimately fell short of the institutional power and personal reputation he had amassed.

<sup>96</sup> Saleh's gradual centralization of power and the transformation of his regime from a tribal government with multiple power bases into one increasingly dominated by the Saleh dynasty had profound effects. Saleh's patrimonial authority depended in large part on his capacity to dole out favors and positions to allies, but as time progressed he became increasingly focused on expanding the influence of his core family (see Seitz 2014 for an account of this trend within the military). As in previous dynastic struggles discussed in this dissertation, it is perhaps unsurprising that some of the greatest tensions to emerge from this process were between Saleh and his peripheral kin. Along with his fellow Hashid leaders, the al-Ahmars, relations between Saleh and his distant relative General Mohsen al-Ahmar also deteriorated. Reportedly, Mohsen al-Ahmar resented President Saleh's attempts to elevate his son Ahmed Saleh above the powerful military leader. Even before Mohsen al-Ahmar's defection, Saleh viewed the general as enough of a threat to attempt to assassinate him by deceiving a Saudi airstrike team into bombing Mohsen al-Ahmar's military headquarters (Erlanger 2010, Walker 2011).

stronger ties with Saudi Arabia and allied Gulf monarchies.<sup>97</sup> Over the next few years, the once-feigned opposition among Yemen's political parties grew increasingly real, starting at the top with growing intra-kin rivalry between the country's two most powerful Hashid dynasties.<sup>98</sup>

Had President Saleh maintained enough support among influential members of the Hashid coalition, the al-Ahmar family foremost among them, it's unlikely the Arab Spring protests alone could have succeeded in toppling his rule. But instead of rallying back to his side as they had during previous crises, the Hashid leadership instead turned decisively against the dictator as the Arab Spring protests continued and grew. With the al-Ahmars at their head, the Hashid rapidly moved to ally with their traditional rivals outside the coalition to oust Saleh in his moment of weakness. Many of the leading families of both the Hashid and Bakil confederations spearheaded the creation of the Alliance of Yemeni Tribes and used this organization to quickly take control of the protest movement.<sup>99</sup> For the al-Ahmars and other traditional Hashid elites, Saleh's weakness presented the opportunity to break the dictator's increasing influence over the Hashid confederation and would potentially allow them to replace Saleh as dominant figures directing the government through informal tribal connections.<sup>100</sup> By contrast, for many in the Bakil and other non-Hashid tribes, coalitions, and dynasties, the alliance represented an invaluable opportunity to divide the Hashid into warring factions and disrupt a balance of power that had perennially excluded non-Hashid from control.<sup>101</sup> By far the crowning achievement of this campaign to denude Saleh of his support base came with the defection of General Mohsen al-Ahmar – a close relative and ally of President Saleh – who brought not only added military forces but perhaps more importantly generated divided loyalties within the heart of Saleh's Sanhan tribe. Ultimately, an assassination attempt forced Saleh to flee the country, leaving the Alliance victorious but dangerously unstable.

Saleh's vice president, Abdrabuh Hadi, gained unanimous support to lead the country, but the new President Hadi was a southerner with no close ties to the northern tribes. The al-

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<sup>97</sup> Reportedly, in the time just prior to the outbreak of the Arab Spring, the al-Ahmars were receiving \$5 million a month to promote various Saudi policies and to pay Hashid tribesmen to help reinforce Saudi-Yemeni border regions (al-Haj & Michael 2011).

<sup>98</sup> Johnsen 2010 offers an account of these growing tensions in the period just prior to the Arab Spring, including an anecdote concerning an appearance on al-Jazeera by Hamid al-Ahmar in which the opposition accused President Saleh of "high treason."

<sup>99</sup> In a contemporaneous interview, Sadiq al-Ahmar happily took credit as one of the leaders of the effort to oust Ali Saleh and criticized Hadi in particular for remaining too cautious and not breaking with Saleh sooner (Asharq al-Awsat 2011). Hamid al-Ahmar had allegedly been considering efforts to oust Saleh in the years prior to the protests and had even met with U.S. officials to discuss the possibility of organizing a popular revolt against the dictator (Hill 2011). Saleh retained the loyalty of some tribes, including not only many of his key supporters in Sanhan but also various other tribes who were hesitant to join their Hashid rivals. But Saleh's escalation of violence against protestors and rapid retaliation against the al-Ahmars incentivized key Bakil leaders to push back against Saleh lest the state dictator begin to suppress tribal elites more generally. Leduc 2011 quotes one researcher focusing on Yemen, Frank Mermier, as follows: "By attacking the home of the Hashid leader, Saleh committed an irreparable blunder."

<sup>100</sup> Internal conflicts for leadership over a tribe or tribal alliance are far from uncommon; Swagman 1988 offers a detailed account of one such conflict. But the massive power and influence commanded by both the Salehs and al-Ahmars tremendously amplified the consequences of this competition, dragging other major tribes and the entirety of the government military apparatus into their fight to dominate the Yemeni political sphere.

<sup>101</sup> Alley 2010 describes the personalized resentment that had grown up among non-Hashid against Saleh through a quote: "Bakil is the tribe of the GPC. Hashid is the tribe of the President...." (p. 398). Thus, even though Saleh's party was seen as courting the Bakil as its core constituency, Saleh himself was personally blamed for the systematic power accumulated by the Hashid under his rule.

Ahmars thus appeared at first unchallenged as the dominant tribal dynasty in the country. But opposition to this new government quickly grew, both among the actors that had lost the most in the ouster of Saleh – especially the many still-powerful figures from the Sanhan tribe – and from other groups that quickly turned on the al-Ahmars now that their shared enemy had retreated. These groups include erstwhile non-Hashid members of the tribal alliance who had no intention of replacing divided Hashid dominance with a more unified Hashid control, along with non-tribal actors who were simply skeptical of new regime policies such as growing ties with Saudi Arabia and Salafist movements. Lacking a clear alternative coalition to join, these opposition groups became easy targets for recruitment by the Houthis, and later by a returned Ali Abdullah Saleh.<sup>102</sup> Ironically, even as the al-Ahmars cemented their influence over the majority of Hashid tribes, they thus made themselves and the Hadi regime they backed increasingly large targets for all tribal actors outside their confederation. It was largely recognition of this balancing dilemma that led so many tribes to rally back to Saleh after his unexpected return to the capital, since many hoped that his restoration might return the country to a more sustainable equilibrium between powerful families.<sup>103</sup> But with Saleh's assassination by his temporary Houthi allies, the country at present appears trapped in a punishing quagmire. The tribal patronage system has so thoroughly dominated the state and its military institutions that it is no longer feasible to restore order without the cooperation of a large proportion of the tribal political establishment, but the tribes themselves are unable to strike a compromise out of fear that any agreement will empower rival kin networks.<sup>104</sup> Ironically, this impasse has led many tribal actors to embrace – or at least

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<sup>102</sup> Among the disaffected factions, the Houthis benefitted from an emerging view that the post-Saleh era was, if anything, a corrupted version of the previous status quo, now even more dominated by foreign-backed elites and more centralized in power under a handful of figures who had already grown rich and powerful under Saleh (Salisbury 2014c). Behind the scenes, Ali Saleh encouraged these tensions, and coaxed former supporters of the GPC among various marginalized tribes to turn their back on the alliance with the Hashid (al-Dawsari 2017). In an interview with the *Yemen Times*, Sheikh al-Marwani noted that the early promise of pan-tribal unity rapidly gave way to a new period of feuding and jockeying for power among the tribes (al-Wesabi 2013). This breakdown in cooperation was anticipated by many commentators, who noted that the factious tribes could rarely abide long-lasting alliances with historic rivals – as researcher Ali Abdul Jabbar noted in the midst of the Alliance of Yemeni Tribes' rise, “Whether they avenge their killings today or in ten years, the tribes do not forget their blood...” (Almasmari 2011).

<sup>103</sup> In a 2011 interview, one sheikh from Wadi Dahr presciently described the conflicted feelings that led some tribes to support Saleh's ouster and later work for his restoration: “[T]here are divisions within the tribes and many people still respect Saleh. He is a military man, a fighter, and that counts for a lot in Yemen. Hussein al-Ahmar and his brothers are businessmen. There are many men who hate Saleh, but they would stand with him because they hate the al-Ahmar brothers and the Hashid even more....” (Horton 2011b). In this same article, local political analyst Abdul-Ghani al-Iryani similarly cautions that “if either side overestimates its power, there could be war.... A government led by the al-Ahmar family and the Hashid cannot dominate the Bakil – they don't have the power to do that. If they tried to, it could also lead to civil war.” It was not coincidental that one of the key negotiators attempting to engineer Ali Saleh's return to power was reportedly Mohammed Abu Luhum, a member of one of the most prestigious Bakil dynasties (Baidhani 2017). For many in the Bakil, the newly chastised Saleh was infinitely preferable to a regime dominated by the al-Ahmars without an internal rival like the Saleh family to hold them in check.

<sup>104</sup> This is broadly comparable to the persistent security dilemmas that can often prolong ethnic and intrastate conflicts (Posen 1993). For the smaller tribes, lack of access to military patronage could result in serious vulnerability against more well-armed neighbors. And for the largest, most powerful tribes, the Saleh regime provided a clear demonstration of the differential levels of wealth and influence acquired by the tribes that dominate a regime versus those that are shut out of power. The fact that several tribes have switched from one contender to another in the ongoing civil war is consistent with the hypothesis that many tribes are exhibiting balancing behavior and attempting to strategically prevent any single rival tribe from acquiring a dominant position that will allow them to control the state and its patronage system (see Christia 2012 and Toska 2014).

refrain from opposing – relatively non-tribal movements such as the Houthis and the southern secessionist to avoid any alliance dominated by a single tribe or confederation.

Tribal balancing and dynastic disputes are far from the only issue at play in the ongoing Yemeni Crisis, but the persistent rivalries between families such as the Salehs and al-Ahmars and vastly larger kin networks such as the Hashid and Bakil tribal confederation offer an insight into the changing dynamics of the conflict that more generalizable civil war explanations lack. Had Yemen lacked such a thoroughly tribalized political structure, would it have fallen to the same civil war violence we see today? Certainly, the Arab Spring and other waves of unrest have shown that more robust regimes that are less thoroughly tribalized than Yemen can still fall into revolution and violence. But we can contrast the devastating consequences of ousting President Saleh in recent years to the past history of North Yemen, when overthrow and replacement of dictators happened with some regularity and with far less severe consequences. The Saleh-al-Ahmar alliance, characterized above all in its integration of tribal networks into the formal mechanisms of government, seemed to arrest this constant turnover of leadership and perennial state weakness. But it did so through a process of dynastic capture that entrenched kinship-based political alliances and may have perversely exacerbated Yemen's long-term problems. Saleh's kinship-based alliance with Sheikh Abdullah al-Ahmar allowed the dictator to centralize state power far in excess of any previous Yemeni ruler, and he in turn personalized this power through systematically planting his Sanhan tribesmen in the armed forces. At the same time, Saleh's strategy of playing powerful tribal rivals against one another radically exacerbated the proliferation of armed militias and violent non-state actors, allowing Saleh to maintain his position by encouraging feuding between tribal and regional factions.<sup>105</sup> Having allowed Saleh to grow powerful enough to become a political force that threatened their family's preeminence and status in the Hashid confederation, the next generation of al-Ahmars arguably overcorrected and dealt too aggressively with the low-born dictator in their determination to reassert their place at the top of the kin network. The dependence of political elites on kinship ties also made within-tribe alliances inflexible and overly rigid and cross-tribe alliances extremely fragile, preventing the underlying regime from adapting once leadership had changed.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, since the onset of violence began, the tribal structure of Yemeni politics has been a persistent obstacle to resolving conflict. Tribal rivalries and family honor help motivate many Yemenis to persist in fighting, and the fear that victorious rival tribes could entrench and expand their influence through long-term patronage has similarly left many Yemenis' skeptical of any peace agreement that might favor other actors.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> The entrenchment of al-Qaeda in Yemen, for example, was greatly facilitated by the support of local tribes pursuing their individual agendas in allowing the militant group to operate in their territories. This dynamic has only been amplified by the current crisis, as many tribes have come to tolerate AQAP and other jihadist groups as a bulwark against the Houthis. It remains to be seen how destabilizing this dynamic will be in the long term and whether or not tribes will be able to root out these militant terrorist organizations once they are no longer seen as useful. For more on this dynamic, see Gordon 2013 and al-Dawsari 2018.

<sup>106</sup> In Egypt, by contrast, the ouster of Hosni Mubarak did little to weaken the underlying military infrastructure that backed him, and the autocratic forces behind his rule were largely able to reassert control in a matter of a few years. The personalistic, deeply dynastic nature of the Saleh regime meant that no one save perhaps a close relative could easily take up Saleh's position and maintain the intricate balance of dynastic agendas that had previously held his government together.

<sup>107</sup> Accounts of the overlap between the overarching civil war and more prosaic battles for tribal honor and vendettas can be found in al-Jalal 2015 and Waguih 2018b.

The Yemeni Crisis, both in its origins and in its deadly persistence, presents a thought-provoking example of a modern civil war that has its roots in tribal and dynastic politics. Despite the massive amounts of wealth and weapons that have poured in from abroad, the tribal elites of the northern highlands who continue to stand as the country's most powerful actors ultimately view the conflict primarily in terms of the domestic balance of power between the country's dominant tribes and dynasties.<sup>108</sup> This incredibly devastating civil war is thus, at its core, a successor to the petty tribal raids and kinship-based struggles that have plagued Yemen throughout its history – but after decades of empowering tribes and embedding them throughout the government's military and economy apparatus, this latest bout of fighting has experienced an unprecedented increase of lethality and ferocity compared to the lower-stakes struggles of the past.<sup>109</sup> In fighting to determine which families and tribes will dominate the post-war regime, tribal elites and their supporters seek to both maintain their access to the valuable patronage networks that come with political power, and to defend their tribal honor and dynastic authority from rival kin networks. The recognition that this civil war is firmly rooted in dynastic politics has important implications for those seeking to predict how the conflict will proceed into the future. First and foremost, my analysis suggests that the strategy largely favored by both Saudi Arabia and Iran, that of funneling resources into a preferred proxy organization and pushing for a decisive victory, is unlikely to prove fruitful.<sup>110</sup> No single actor – neither the al-Ahmars and their allies in the Hadi government, nor the Houthis and their supporters among non-Hashid tribes, nor the redoubts of Sanhan loyalists among the military – possesses the overwhelming force or widespread support-base needed to decisively control Yemen's vast array of feuding kin networks without the tacit acceptance of their rivals. Nor will simple exhaustion lead powerful tribes to accept a weak military government, as largely occurred at the end of the North Yemen Civil War. The military and government institutions after 30 years of Saleh's rule have become so thoroughly intertwined with kinship-based patronage networks that no major tribal coalition can risk being systematically excluded from state resources. Finally, because tribal elites are not only fighting for their immediate material interests, but also to assert their family and tribe's

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<sup>108</sup> Baron 2013 offers a recent account of a wedding held for two of Hamid al-Ahmar's sons. Despite the growing violence associated with the unfolding crisis, the al-Ahmar family nonetheless made sure to invite a wide selection of prominent sheikhs – including those providing military backing for the Saleh-Houthi alliance. A different sheikh explained: "Say what you will about Yemenis, but even if we're fighting a war against someone, we'll still take a break to go to his son's wedding." Such incidents perfectly highlight how the crisis, for all its ferocity and unprecedented lethality, is still understood within the context of long-established tribal and dynastic norms.

<sup>109</sup> By empowering belligerent tribal actors, Saleh and his allies thus not only condemned Yemen to a "conflict trap," of weak political institutions riven by persistent vendettas (Collier 2003), but also ensured that otherwise low-level conflicts would be fought for higher stakes and with more lethal weapons. After years of operating in a tribal regime, the most powerful tribes had been bloated with government patronage to the point that were able to mobilize tanks and full artillery in their struggle for dominance (Day 2012 p. 94).

<sup>110</sup> This observation is consistent with a broader critique of foreign interventions in Yemen, which notes that foreign actors who fail to understand Yemen's complex political environment rarely appreciate how disruptive and counter-productive their actions can be. The US government has on repeated occasions earned the enmity of friendly or neutral tribes by killing sheikhs or tribesmen on raids against AQAP (Michael & al-Haj 2017) and in general has tended to apply counter-insurgency strategies developed for other countries without adapting them to Yemen's unique tribal political environment (Johnsen 2013). Saudi Arabia's targeting of civilian health care and food infrastructure has similarly come under criticism, not least because it tends to entrench support for the Houthis among tribal populations who might otherwise be more amenable to breaking with the group (Niarchos 2018). Foreign powers that pursue massive intervention without a clear sense of the actors who drive the conflict locally are at risk of not only prolonging the painful crisis, but also of hurting their own strategic goals through such intervention.

status and prestige and to secure the dynastic authority of future generations, belligerents are likely to persist through even serious short-term losses if they believe their opponents are likely to represent a long-term threat to their family's status.

An end to the Yemeni Crisis is thus likely to occur only after one faction is capable of garnering widespread support from a variety of rival factions. Without such a broad base of support, any military victory is likely to be rapidly undermined by defections and balancing behavior among the myriad feuding kin groups who are wary of empowering their rivals too thoroughly. Theoretically, a sufficiently powerful victor might be capable of avoiding this outcome by systematically undermining the power and authority of the tribes. Such an outcome would be similar to the process of detribalization that occurred to varying degrees in neighboring Middle Eastern countries during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.<sup>111</sup> But that possibility appears highly unlikely at present. Of the major factions in the crisis, only the Houthis have a leadership structure that isn't thoroughly dominated by tribal interests, and even they are deeply dependent on the goodwill of tribal allies to retain their territories in the North.<sup>112</sup> A far more likely path to peace lies in the establishment of a new dynastic balance that is acceptable to a majority of the North's tribal elites.<sup>113</sup> But even here, achieving such a balance requires threading a needle by selecting a leader that is sufficiently powerful to act as a real check on the authority of powerful tribal dynasties like the al-Ahmars while still being enough of a tribal outsider to be acceptable to these factious dynasts. It was precisely this dilemma that led many tribes to rally back to President Saleh and his Sanhan tribe only a few short years after a united push to unseat him. Perhaps unsurprisingly it also appears that several major players continue to view the Sanhan tribe as the most likely candidate to achieve this balance even after Saleh's death.<sup>114</sup> In 2016, the Saudi-backed Hadi government named General Mohsen al-Ahmar, a Saleh relative, the new Vice President, while the United Arab Emirates has increasingly lent support to Ali Abdullah Saleh's nephew, Brigadier General Tareq Saleh.<sup>115</sup> It's unlikely that the Sanhan tribe and the Saleh

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<sup>111</sup> See, for example, Tapper 1983.

<sup>112</sup> The southern government is also less thoroughly tribalized than the North. But far more than the Houthis, the southern alliance shows already shows severe strains between its constituent members, and its unclear how a cohesive ideological movement with the power to radically transform Yemeni society could conceivably develop from this alliance in its present form.

<sup>113</sup> A conclusion designed to balance different interests in this way is perilous, as exemplified by the total failure of the Hadi government to live up to its promise of compromise and representativeness. It also risks further entrenching tribal elites, likely laying the groundwork for future kinship-based splits. But a balanced government under a leader with the proper tribal backing is likely the most effective means of ensuring power sharing across major actors, and such power sharing is often seen as one of the most effective tools for sustainable conflict transformation (Sisk 1999, Hartzell & Hoddie 2003).

<sup>114</sup> A case can be made that the success of various Sanhan candidates has more to do with the tribe's dominance of key military institutions, rather than its position as an acceptable intermediary between the larger tribes. These interpretations, however, are not in conflict. No tribe, no matter how militarily powerful, can defeat a united opposition of the other tribes. The two key traits that distinguish the Sanhan from innumerable alternative contenders is, on the one hand, its massive penetration of key military institutions and, on the other, its relatively low status which makes it paradoxically more flexible in forming alliances when compared to larger, more prestigious tribes. Even if one believes that the first advantage is by far the most important, the nature of Yemen's tribal system ensures that military strength can only translate into sustained political power if a tribe's leadership is successful in negotiating effective alliances and support networks with other tribal leaders.

<sup>115</sup> Mohsen al-Ahmar, now the Vice President of the internationally recognized Hadi government, was for a time seen as "the last Sanhan standing" (Salisbury 2017b). It is Tareq Saleh, however, who has made the strongest recent impression, leading GPC forces against the Houthis around Taiz and Hodeidah (Anonymous 2018). Meanwhile,

family are the only kin group capable of fulfilling this role as intermediary, but identifying a sufficient replacement requires selecting a candidate that lacks overwhelming tribal status but still retains a powerful independent base of power that allows them to compete with more prestigious families – a rare combination. Unfortunately, regardless of who ultimately prevails, it's unlikely that any such dynastic compromise will succeed in maintaining a peaceful balance between Yemen's powerful tribes for more than one or two generations. Following a peaceful settlement, the families at the heart of the new regime will be dependent on kin to strengthen their position, which will over time generate power and success that breeds new rivalries and resentments against that dynasty. So long as Yemen's political system remains so thoroughly dominated by kinship networks, the tendency toward dynastic violence will likely result in persistent outbursts of explosive violence fueled by sentiments of family honor and past grievances. The same dynastic system that is likely to serve as the main mechanism for resolving Yemen's current crisis is thus likely to lay the groundwork for a new phase of dynastic competition in future years.

## *Section II* *Discussion and Conclusion*

The case of Yemen, wherein a dynastic dispute over dominance of kinship networks has helped produce one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the present day, demonstrates the continued salience of dynasticism as not just a peripheral driver of civil war violence but also a central issue in modern transnational security. In this dissertation, I've sought to explore this issue and present evidence supporting two hypotheses. First, I've attempted to demonstrate that dynastic capture of institutions has a real and measurable impact on contemporary political security by systematically increasing dynastic political systems' vulnerability to civil wars. And second, I've sought to prove that kinship politics doesn't simply correlate to higher violence, but also tends to shape and direct violence along kinship-based lines. To show this, I first explored the case of transnational security in early modern Europe and argued that international relations between interrelated monarchs shows significant evidence that dynastic politics is primarily driven by constructivist mechanisms such as competing claims to ancestral legitimacy, entrenched familial rivalries, and breakdowns in trust both within and between extended kin networks. I then extended my analysis to the modern Philippines and argued that sub-state variation in outbreaks of violence in that country are consistent with the theory that the country's civil war conflicts are driven in part by intense competition between rival family networks competing to monopolize the same electoral offices. In the subsequent chapter, I examined rates of consanguineous marriage as a proxy for highly dynastic and kinship-based societies and argued that the global correlation between high rates of consanguineous marriage and civil war onsets may suggest that the interrelationship between dynasticism and civil war I observed in the Philippines may exist in a wide variety of other countries. Finally, in the first part of this chapter, I offered a recent historical analysis of the ongoing Yemen Crisis to demonstrate that the issue of dynasticism is not solely a peripheral concern but may in some cases play a central role in a civil war's onset and persistence. In such cases, a deep understanding of the dynamics and

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some backers in the UAE continue to support Ahmed Saleh, the former president's preferred heir, as a possible dark horse competitor for national leadership (Almosawa & Cowell 2017).

mechanisms of kinship politics may play a crucial role for those seeking to understand a conflict as well as for efforts to resolve the ensuing civil war violence.

### *Academic Implications*

My analysis in this dissertation presents a number of possible implications for academic audiences and poses a variety of questions worthy of further academic enquiry. First and foremost, it affirms the critical importance of taking family and kinship seriously in political science – including through the study of kinship’s salience for topics that aren’t typically understood to be dominated by family dynasties in contemporary times. While dynasticism’s importance to the political systems of earlier centuries is largely undeniable, it is critical for social scientists to recognize that the role of the family in politics may have transformed, but it has not disappeared from the political sphere. The widespread view that family ties have been marginalized and privatized in contemporary politics is not wholly inaccurate, especially in the developed world.<sup>116</sup> But this viewpoint nonetheless risks biasing research and enquiry by encouraging political scientists to study widely recognized modern political phenomena like class or ideology while overlooking less emphasized factors. In examining dynasticism in depth in this dissertation, I am far from the first political scientist to observe the importance of kinship networks in political issues, and in the previous chapters I have attempted to cite a variety of recent research demonstrating the wealth of insights that have emerged when researchers take the politics of kinship seriously. But at present, the literature on dynasticism and kinship in politics remains scattered and theoretically underdeveloped, with little sustained debate bridging different area cases or issues. In focusing on dynasticism and exploring its implications for warfare and political security in depth, it is my hope that this dissertation will be part of a broader push to revitalize academic focus on kinship politics in ways comparable to how prior trends in political science have helped revitalize academic interest in centralized states or political institutions.<sup>117</sup>

In attempting to present a broad overview of dynasticism’s relevance for the study of contemporary civil wars, my dissertation has presented a broad and necessarily brief discussion of this complicated topic. There is thus ample room for future academic research to expand on, confirm, or reject arguments and theories I have presented herein.<sup>118</sup> Among the questions raised by my research that might benefit from future research, perhaps the most crucial is further analysis into my proposed independent variable – dynasticism and dynastic capture – to determine whether I have correctly identified the primary factor contributing to kinship-based political violence.<sup>119</sup> In my analysis of the Philippines, for example, I found that the correlation

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<sup>116</sup> As with other issues surrounding development and institutional transformation, the precise nature of this transformation remains subject to debate (Pieterse 2010). Certainly, a thorough analysis of kinship and dynasticism in the developed Western world would suggest that the family has not been as thoroughly transformed as earlier modernization literature might have suggested.

<sup>117</sup> March & Olsen 1983, Evans et al. 1985

<sup>118</sup> Much as Horowitz 1985 sparked a vastly larger debate on the nature and mechanisms of ethnic conflict, it is my hope that this dissertation, which merely offers a brief overview of the concept of dynastic conflict, might help inspire further future scholarship that will offer further detailed analysis of this issue and provide greater insights into the topic.

<sup>119</sup> Concept validity and its distinction from accurate measurement of operationalized indicators is discussed to some extent in Adcock & Collier 2002. For a complex topic like kinship, which overlaps with patterns of authority, cultural norms, and socio-economic development, there remains ample room for debate regarding the precise factors that might contribute to any observed correlation between dynasticism and political violence.



between violence and dynastic polarization is much more significant in the culturally distinctive region of Mindanao than in equally dynastic areas elsewhere in the country. This may suggest that there are distinct forms of dynasticism with varying degrees of bellicosity, or that dynasticism demonstrates interaction effects with other unknown variables. Mindanao's distinctiveness echoes my global statistical findings, which showed a close relationship between dynastic proxies like consanguineous marriage and demographic variables surrounding the prevalence of Islam. Further comparative analysis to disaggregate these concepts and specify more clearly which social or kinship characteristic might be most associated with a prevalence of violence would be of great value. Such research might especially benefit from carefully chosen cases that demonstrate significant variation in kinship characteristic or religious demography. India, with its wide variety of ethnicities with distinctive kinship practices, represents one promising option, as do a variety of countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Along with presenting dynasticism as a proposed independent variable of interest, I have also presented hypotheses in this dissertation laying out a general causal relationship (with dynasticism primarily contributing to greater political violence, rather than the reverse) and a proposed causal mechanism in the form of constructivist socialized loyalties and antagonism. Further in-depth research could explore both of these hypothesized relationships in greater detail to determine whether further evidence supports the arguments I have presented. As I've noted in earlier chapters, it's highly plausible that causal relationships surrounding kinship and its effects may be complex and multi-directional. Marriage and breeding are not remotely random processes and it's thus likely that, for example, both past and anticipated future patterns of conflict may influence individuals' kin relationships and create self-reinforcing patterns of violence.<sup>120</sup> Further dissection of the possible causal impact of kinship and violence on one another will likely require in-depth analysis of changes over time. Similarly, while I succeeded in presenting compelling evidence that European monarchical relationships were shaped to a large degree by normative and constructivist mechanisms, my decision to assume that these mechanisms continued to drive more recent forms of dynastic violence deserves further scrutiny.<sup>121</sup> Determining whether kinship-based violence is primarily sociological in nature, rather than being driven primarily by evolutionary psychology or individual self-interest, will also likely require extremely fine-grained analysis of specific kin networks and how individuals within them prioritize some kin over others. A particularly promising approach may be to focus on smaller and more detailed cases where detailed maps of kin networks can be created and analyzed in the context of local political behavior.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Establishing causation is a recurring problem in the study of political violence, since many of the plausible causes of conflict can also be exacerbated by further conflict, generating "conflict traps" of self-reinforcing violence (Collier 2003). This issue is compounded by the fact that many civil wars aren't singular events, but instead are recurring problems that often reemerge after periods of quiescence (Walter 2004).

<sup>121</sup> My contention that similar issues of honor, revenge, and competing claims to legitimate authority are likely to be a driver in modern civil wars is, it should be noted, not without independent precedence. Balcells 2010 and Sanín & Wood, for example, each argue that sociological and ideological factors are major motivators for violence in intrastate conflicts.

<sup>122</sup> Research into the influence of social networks on political violence is a highly promising field of study (Perliger & Pedahzur 2011). Preexisting social ties likely influence how and when individuals become involved in conflicts (Parkinson 2013), and the specific network structure of a given insurgent or belligerent group likely influences that group's strategies and effectiveness (Staniland 2012). Kinship, as a phenomenon that naturally displays a network structure dominated by strong interpersonal ties, is a particularly promising topic for such research.

Finally, future researchers might use the results presented in this dissertation as inspiration for new and even more nuanced analyses of kinship's impact on dynasticism. One recurring trend worthy of further investigation, for example, has been the repeated occurrence of curvilinear trends across many different cases examined in this dissertation. In early modern Europe, relatedness tended over time to increase conflict between monarchs due to their overlapping inheritance claims, but in the short-term marriage unions do appear to have temporarily coincided with lower levels of warfare. In the Philippines, multiple competing dynasties in a province correlated to higher incidents of civil war, but monopolistic control by a single dynasty instead correlated with greater stability. And in my global analysis of consanguineous marriages, I found the practice tended generally to correlate to higher likelihood of civil war onset, but that this relationship tended not to progress linearly and was more pronounced at some degrees of prevalence compared to others. My focus in this dissertation has been on the general trend of increased violence with higher dynasticism, and I have avoided speculating too heavily on these curvilinear trends to avoid overfitting my analysis to potential outlier trends. If these trends persist in future research, however, they may represent a fruitful source of further analysis. Understanding these dynamics in greater detail creates the opportunity for deeper strategic analysis of marriage choices or the policy tradeoffs involved in weakening dynastic rule versus allowing the practice to persist while pursuing other political reforms.

### ***Policy Implications***

The results presented in this dissertation are of value for not only academic audiences, but also for policymakers and transnational political actors whose work involves the politics of highly dynastic and kinship-focused societies. While the Philippines and Yemen are undoubtedly outliers in terms of how central dynasticism has been to their political institutions, other countries throughout the developing and even developed world still routinely intertwine kinship ties with political processes and coalitions. Governments, NGO's, and other political actors operating in these dynasties would be well-advised to think more rigorously and systematically about how kinship networks alter political strategies and the incentives for violence and conflict. Failing to account for these dynamics or misunderstanding the patterns of dynastic conflict can lead to unintended consequences or a failure to adapt to local conditions. The Middle East, to take one notably dynastic region as an example, has seen national political outcomes regularly shaped by the intricacies of dynastic relations and alliances.<sup>123</sup> Perhaps the most notable example of a foreign power failing to grasp the pitfalls of dynastic politics in the region came from the United States' overestimation of the monarchy's support base in Iran, leading to significant overreliance on an institutionally weak dynastic government.<sup>124</sup> But more recently, the various uprisings associated with the Arab Spring also showed a consistent dynastic dimension similar to the issues I described above in the context of Yemen. In a number of these countries, aging dictators seemed set to transfer power over to sons who lacked their fathers' built-in credibility, resulting in a breakdown in support both within the regime itself and among the outside populace.<sup>125</sup> The Arab Gulf monarchies largely weathered these storms, likely due mainly to their regional wealth but also potentially because of their success in building up monarchical

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<sup>123</sup> Khoury & Kostiner 1991.

<sup>124</sup> See Jervis 2010 for an in-depth exploration of this policy failure.

<sup>125</sup> Sadiki 2010. The prevalence of dynasties among the Arab republics has been extensive enough to spawn its own Arabic pun: *jumlukiyya*, a portmanteau of *jumhurriya* (republic) and *malakiyya* (monarchy).

legitimacy and in bolstering power through kin alliances.<sup>126</sup> But among these monarchies, examples of fraying alliances and internal divisions may also suggest that overreliance on kin alliances has made these regimes vulnerable to future intra-kin conflicts over power.<sup>127</sup> Alongside at times overestimating the power and support-base of central dynasties, outside powers have also repeatedly been stymied by underestimating or misunderstanding the importance of smaller, more localized kin and tribal networks.<sup>128</sup> The United States' attempts to establish a new government in Iraq have been regularly hindered by the difficulties involved in pacifying restive tribal populations, who were strengthened in the years prior to the 2003 invasion by Saddam Hussein's "neo-tribal" policies.<sup>129</sup>

For those attempting to design or implement policy in highly dynastic societies, the research presented in this dissertation offers a number of lessons. Perhaps the most important theme in my results has been the persistence of dynastic violence, and the tendency of dynasticism over time to engender future conflicts even in those cases where it seems to promise short-term stability. Dynastic societies often tend to develop elaborate mechanisms of constraint that are designed to mobilize kin networks away from violent contestation. Examples of these mechanisms range from reliance on tribal sheikhs as mediators and negotiators to the arrangement of marriages to settle disputes.<sup>130</sup> But my research suggests that entrenching dynastic authority structures in this way and relying on them as a mechanism for conflict resolution merely serves to propagate further sources of conflict in future generations. Mobilizing dynastic relationships to resolve kinship-based violence presents a risk of "devil's bargain" scenarios for policymakers dealing with dynastic institutions and authorities, where

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<sup>126</sup> Monarchies in the Middle East have garnered a fair amount of academic attention, owing to their prevalence compared to other regions. See Anderson 1991, Herb 1999, Lucas 2004, Kechichian 2008, and Yom & Gause 2012. Nonetheless there is still ample opportunity for further investigation into the dynastic politics of these regimes and how these politics intersect with broader political or sociological trends.

<sup>127</sup> At the time of writing, the frictions in Saudi Arabia generated by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's efforts to centralize control has been a recent source of attention (Ignatius 2018, Sullivan et al. 2018). The Saudi royal family sprawls out to encompass several thousand princes, many of whom exercise some degree of direct or indirect influence over political decision-making. Herb 1999 notes that the "family regimes" common to the Gulf region distribute power across a wide variety of stakeholders, and compellingly argues that this explains the robustness of monarchism in the region. However, my observations concerning the persistence of intra-kin conflicts suggest that such distribution of power across a kin network may be a flawed long-term strategy. Over time, divisions are likely to emerge in even the most effective family network, with rival heirs having strong but irreconcilable claims to authority. Such splits are not unknown in the Saudi royal family – one of the most severe examples came in the midst of the North Yemen Civil War, when a handful of "free princes" defected to side with pan-Arab republican forces (Dekmejian 2003). Whether the current Saudi regime and other Gulf states will be transformed by such infighting remains to be seen, but the possibility and long-term consequences of serious internal schisms are likely underestimated by most observers.

<sup>128</sup> Ahmed 2013 observes that the United States' War on Terror has resulted in the country becoming deeply enmeshed in tribal conflicts in a variety of distinct Muslim countries, often with policies based on only a superficial understanding of the dynamics underlying these conflicts.

<sup>129</sup> Following the First Gulf War, it was widely noted that Hussein transformed his state ideology from one nominally driven by pan-Arab nationalism to a more explicitly tribal identity. Hussein built up the power of loyal Sunni tribes and relied increasingly heavily on his own Abu Nasir tribe along with members of neighboring tribes from the Tikrit area (Baram 1997, Jabar 2000). This set the stage for widespread Sunni insurgent activity following the American invasion of Iraq, which only abated after the United States' gradual adaptation to strategies that better recognized the importance of tribal actors (Biddle et al. 2012).

<sup>130</sup> Evan-Pritchard & James 1951 calls these countervailing stabilizing forces a pattern of "fusion" that emerges amidst the "fission" of persistent feuding. Gluckman 1955 refers to the phenomenon as "the peace in the feud."

short-term benefits may come with subtle but pervasive consequences.<sup>131</sup> A widespread trend among NGO's and other transnational organizations in recent years has been an (often laudable) effort to work more closely with informal authorities, local traditional leaders, and other institutions that are often based heavily on kinship ties. Among groups attempting to resolve local conflicts and civil war attacks, modern strategies often involve working with local leaders and using traditional practices such as restorative justice traditions.<sup>132</sup> For those working toward economic development or political reform, it can often seem productive to strengthen stable local dynasties in the interest of achieving other reforms. But the research presented here suggests that policymakers making these decisions should be keenly aware of the long-term costs that may be associated with strengthening and entrenching dynastic rulers and elites. Positive benefits in the present may be counteracted by increased incentives for violent or intense competition for family privileges or prestige in future generations.<sup>133</sup>

Instead, my research suggests that policymakers should make it a priority to pursue policies and strategies that reduce the role of extended kinship networks in political institutions. Even in societies where violence and feuding are not currently pronounced, it is likely that rapid development and changes in economic or political conditions could exacerbate kinship conflicts and incentivize violence in the future.<sup>134</sup> To avoid this outcome, a number of policies might be pursued that over time reduce the likelihood of heightened conflict between powerful rival families. Most directly, anti-dynasty laws such as those perennially suggested in the Philippines might be pursued. But the complex nature of kinship ties, and the degree to which dynastic societies often rely on patronage and alliances between families, likely means that any such laws could be circumvented just as the earlier Philippine term limits were. Instead, policymakers might be more successful in further emphasizing efforts to eliminate wide gulfs in wealth and educational access between elite families and the general population. So long as access to political power and influence are heavily determined by one's circumstances of birth, it is likely inevitable that political processes will gradually become more intertwined with kin relationships – and thus to the rivalries and violence that dynastic politics is prone to. Alongside prioritizing inequality as a security concern, policymakers should also encourage the entrenchment of

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<sup>131</sup> Examples from this dissertation are numerous. The short-term benefits of dynastic marriages in early modern Europe produced offspring with dangerously overlapping inheritance claims. Dynastic dominance of a single dynasty in a Philippine province appears, at times, to be more stable than increased electoral competition which brings rival dynasties into conflict. The stability of the Saleh era collapsed after a new generation exploited their dynastically entrenched power to fight for dominance. And even patterns of consanguineous marriage, which appear to generally correlate with higher conflict, are not uniform in their destabilizing effects across all levels of prevalence. These patterns of limited stability amidst generally destabilizing practices are reminiscent of the dilemma faced by strong states pondering intervention in the affairs of weakly institutionalized neighbors. While such intervention can have short-term humanitarian benefits, they risk entrenching toxic institutions and generating perverse incentives for weak states and local actors to free ride (Jackson & Rosberg 1982, Fearon & Laitin 2004).

<sup>132</sup> Buur & Kyed 2006, Boege et al. 2009, Ginty 2011, Belloni 2012. The logic underlying many of these arguments is unquestionably compelling. Evidence does indeed suggest that excluding powerful actors from peace agreements or post-conflict governments can heavily increase the likelihood of further conflict (Call 2012).

<sup>133</sup> Millar 2014 offers a similar critique of governing and peacekeeping strategies that rely on hybrid political orders, focusing on the unpredictability of attempts to merge formal and informal governance institutions.

<sup>134</sup> Huntington 1968 describes how rapid economic and political changes can induce greater instability, while Gurr 1970 argues that improvement in material conditions can nonetheless promote conflict when the benefits alter the relative social standing of different groups. Both issues routinely exacerbate dynastic tensions, as when new resources are discovered on traditional communal lands or when rapid development causes some families to radically outperform their neighbors, relatives, or rivals.

formal, clearly defined institutions, parties, and legal codes that reduce the possibility for credible challenges to legitimacy or ownership based on ancestry. It is often tempting for reformers and policymakers to encourage compromise positions that rely on a combination of formal rules and informal traditions and which entrench the dynastic power of amenable elites. Local political families and traditional dynastic hierarchies can often seem to be valuable allies for reformers in societies that lack strong political parties, institutions, or legal regimes. But entrenching dual systems of authority and legitimacy likely leads over time to increasingly fierce competition over legitimacy and credibility, and thus risks reinforcing persistent patterns of violence.

These cautions are obviously primarily focused on the consequences of dynasticism in the developing world, where state institutions are weak and violence over political or familial disputes is relatively more common. But the lessons from this dissertation might equally suggest that more developed and democratic societies should perhaps devote more energy to reducing the influence of dynastic politics and persistent kin-based political and economic advantages. Modern democratic societies exhibit significantly higher levels of dynasticism than is often acknowledged, and developed economies still show heavy intergenerational wealth transfer that inevitably leads to a powerful familial influence on economic fortunes.<sup>135</sup> Persistent intergenerational inequalities have become more, rather than less, severe in recent decades – a trend driven by both economic inequalities in general and by assortative mating patterns that increasingly limit the number of marriages across class lines.<sup>136</sup> While these trends are highly unlikely to lead to the types of violence analyzed in this article, less visible problems such as increased corruption and patrimonialism are highly plausible consequences of these trends. The research presented in this dissertation suggests that the long-term consequences of dynastic capture of institutions are subtle, pervasive, persistent, and difficult to resolve once entrenched. The more policymakers are able to divorce political institutions from the ever-shifting networks of familial ties and kin loyalties, the less vulnerable political systems will be to generational changes and rivalries born of competing dynastic claims to authority.

### Conclusion

The title of this dissertation, *An Unforgetting Wrath*, refers back to the myth of Orestes and his murder of his mother Clytemnestra in revenge for her slaying of his father Agamemnon. In the version of this myth cycle transcribed in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, this cyclical act of kin-slaughter and retaliatory killings awakens the wrath of the Furies, who personify the drive for vengeance against those who betray their family honor. In Aeschylus' telling, it is only when Orestes is put on trial by Athena that this pattern of retributory violence can come to an end. By appealing to a higher virtue in the form of rule of law and an impartial, unbiased system of justice, the Furies' wrath is appeased, and a settlement becomes possible that is capable of ending an endless cycle of bloodshed. This myth, written in a period and society where blood

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<sup>135</sup> Piketty 2014 predicts that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century capitalist system may naturally lend itself to further stratification via inherited wealth, as the anticipated low rate of growth in the developed world will likely privilege inherited wealth. If accurate, many developed economies will increasingly become ones in which “the past tends to devour the future: wealth originating in the past automatically grows more rapidly, even without labor, than wealth stemming from work... Almost inevitably, this tends to give lasting disproportionate importance to inequalities created in the past, and therefore to inheritance...” (p. 377).

<sup>136</sup> Mare 1991, Greenwood et al. 2014.

vengeance and kinship-based violence were still widespread,<sup>137</sup> evocatively captures the destabilizing nature of familial honor and duty in the absence of broader constraining institutions. The research presented in this dissertation serves to demonstrate that such kinship-based violence follows a unique pattern that requires focused investigation to understand in detail. At their core, kin feuds and vendettas emerge from the paradox of kinship itself. Kin relationships are, on the one hand, a source of intense loyalty and passion that easily drive individuals to violence in defense of kin or the identities actors derive from those kinship ties. But, at the same time, kinship is an inherently amorphous and indistinct system of relationships, one that expands ever outward into an increasingly vague periphery of relatedness and that is also subject to constant reinterpretation by members as they adapt to changing circumstances. This combination of passion and uncertainty lends itself easily to conflict as different kin networks feud over the precise boundaries of each family's rightful claims or bruised honor, and as members within the same kin network regularly split when disputes or changes in fortune lead to contestation over resources or status within the clan.

These dynamics are rarely studied among political scientists researching contemporary civil wars or similar issues in the developing world. But as I have argued throughout this dissertation, there is ample reason to suspect that such kinship-based patterns of conflict have a real and measurable impact on ongoing political violence across the world today. Fully understanding this dynamic, whether out of simple academic interest or with the hope of ultimately resolving such conflicts, necessarily means first casting aside the assumption that the vengeance and bloodthirst embodied in Aeschylus' *Furies* are merely products of a bygone era with no relevance for political issues today. In countries across the world where broad political institutions are weak and local familial and kin networks are strong, politics is necessarily shaped by the logic and loyalties of kinship. And when dynasties grow powerful enough to dominate political contestation, this in turn means that the vendettas to which kinship networks are prone can grow strong enough to drag weaker states and their populations into warfare and widespread conflict. This dissertation has sought to demonstrate that this pattern is clear enough to warrant increased attention and more rigorous theoretical discussion. While in many ways only a cursory investigation into the phenomenon of dynastic violence and its relationship with broader civil wars, it is my hope that this project can contribute to further research delving into this important and understudied aspect of political conflict.

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<sup>137</sup> Visser 1984.

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