Imposing Conflict: 
A Theoretical Approach to Foreign Imposed Regime Change and Civil War 

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States have often faced temptations to impose new regimes in states they have either defeated in conflict or perceive as troublesome to their strategic interests. By undertaking a foreign imposed regime change (FIRC), the targeted state will no longer have the perceived troublesome ruler in power and instead a regime that conforms to the interests of the great power who is intervening is put in place. FIRCs, while seemingly a new phenomenon, can be traced to the 1550s as states have continuously sought to promote favorable regimes in regions of interest.¹ More recently, FIRCs undertaken in Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, and Sierra Leone have led scholars to begin questioning what to expect from states who undergo FIRCs. Expectedly, states that are the target of a FIRC are much less likely to be involved in an interstate war, showing how FIRCs can pacify states that the intervener finds troubling.² However, much like any large regime change in a country, FIRCs can have destabilizing effects on a state.³ While there has been a sound statistical finding about an association between FIRCs and civil war, the internal dynamics FIRCs may cause a state to go through are not well defined. This leads us to ask: Under what conditions do FIRCs lead to civil violence?

I argue initial conditions of state infrastructural power and the subsequent reduced infrastructural power, coupled with changing institutional contexts explain the prevalence of civil war following a FIRC. Whether a state becomes or remains an autocracy, anocracy, or democracy creates different incentives for the former regime elements that are deposed. But in anocracies with weak institutions, there are incentives for states to

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¹ Owen notes that there has been three large phases of FIRCs in history, including the current
engage in repressive practices that present grievances for rebels to engage in civil violence. I begin my analysis by reviewing the current literature on FIRCs and their impact on civil war outbreak. Next, I argue how state infrastructural power and new state institutions create the conditions for civil wars to occur. Finally, I examine Guatemala and Hungary in the 1950s to examine if my argument has face validity.

**Foreign Imposed Regime Change and Civil Wars**

Foreign imposed regime change can be defined as “the removal of the effective political leader of a state as the behest of the government of another state.” FIRCs in practice are different from foreign institutional building and inducement, as this is overt action to depose an unfavorable leader and impose a favorable leader in their place. Inducements and institution building, instead, focus on aid and other positive inducements in an attempt to get institutional reform more favored by the inducer state. This is a distinct process that can occur before, after or completely separate from a FIRC and can cause endogenous regime change. Instead, the processes that emerge from FIRCs cause exogenous regime change and have distinct effects on the target state.

Early studies of foreign imposed regime change were focused on what conditions may lead states to undertake FIRCs. A common theme emerged about the willingness of a state to impose a regime as key in determining when states may decide to FIRC. Inside of an interstate war, if a state’s opponent has high power relative to the state, has won the war with low costs, and the regime type inside the state is different than the opponent, one should expect a FIRC to occur. Under these conditions, the opportunity and

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willingness of the intervener leads to the possibility of a FIRC occurring. Additionally, how states are situated in the international system can help determine the likelihood of a FIRC. In times when there are great powers who are seeking to expand their influence or contain the expansion of another great powers influence, the likelihood of FIRCs occurring will increase.\(^6\)

Great powers seeking to increase their influence will push to make other states in important areas their ideological allies, regardless if they are the same regime type.\(^7\) Interestingly, states will seemingly attempt FIRCs if they feel their interests will be served and the opportunity exists. However, while states will not always impose their own regime type in a state, they will always seek to impose a favorable leader.\(^8\) Interveners also seem to hope that undertaking a FIRC may create a “beacon of hope” in a strategic region where their interests can be promoted through the newly imposed regime.\(^9\) However, the chances of a bright beacon emerging in target states are very slim and FIRCs to create dim beacons can have disastrous effects.\(^10\)

FIRCs occur when states want to secure their interests. As such, states do not want states near their security interests becoming hostile and possibly creating security threats. A major reason for FIRCs to occur would be to pacify states to prevent them from engaging in interstate war. Thus, it makes sense when it is shown that states who

\(^6\) Owen IV, 2002.
\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Saunders argues that in the case of the US, how the president understands security will cause him to choose to impose institutions or undertake a transformative intervention. Abstracting this out to the international system, how states define security may impact what type of FIRC or institutions they may impose, sometimes their own, sometimes different. Saunders, E. N., Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions: Cornell University Press, 2011).
\(^10\) Ibid.
are the targets of FIRCs have post-war interstate peace last longer than states who are not the target of a FIRC following an interstate war.\textsuperscript{11} States want to ensure the opponent they just defeated in war remains compliant and does not re-start the war. Pacifying the target state through a FIRC is a brutal yet effective way to ensure this compliance.

While FIRCs have been shown to reduce the chance of interstate war, the likelihood of intrastate war seems to be increased by the presence of a FIRC. Scholars have agreed upon this finding, but seem to slightly disagree about why it may occur. However, most scholars appear to agree that undergoing a FIRC makes a civil war more likely to occur in the targeted state. Two distinct logics have emerged regarding how state weakness emerges and manifests itself; namely the state power logic and the institutional logic.

First, Peic and Reiter argue that when a FIRC occurs, state infrastructural power is damaged and legitimacy is lost.\textsuperscript{12} Citing Mann\textsuperscript{13}, they argue infrastructural power refers to how much a state can penetrate civil society and extend its political actions across their territorial space. They argue that FIRCs weaken state infrastructural power, harming the ability of the state to crush protest events and extend their security forces throughout their territory to deter/defeat possible rebels. Thus, FIRCs weaken state power by harming the infrastructure a state may use to combat an insurgency should one develop.\textsuperscript{14} Additionally, Peic and Reiter argue that reduction in state power leads to basic  

\textsuperscript{11} Lo et al, 2008.
\textsuperscript{14} Fearon and Laitin argue that conditions that favor insurgency greatly increase the opportunity to have a civil war. Fearon, J. D. and D. D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," \textit{American Political Science Review} 97, no. 1 (2003), 75-90.
state functions becoming more difficult and it also becomes more difficult to extend all of
the services of the state across territory. If the bureaucracy is purged by the new regime
or somehow otherwise thrown in disarray, the ability of the state to carry out the same
functions might be difficult. They argue that this lack of infrastructural power is often the
result of an interstate war that occurs before the FIRC and weakens the power throughout
the state.

The loss of infrastructural power matters as scholars have examined how this lack
of infrastructural power propels civil wars to break out. Fearon and Laitin\textsuperscript{15} argue that
civil wars are likely to occur when state power to repress an incipient insurgency is
lacking and thus the state cannot prevent the growth of the rival group. Further, Goodwin
argues that it is a lack of infrastructural power that allows spaces for revolutionary
movements to grow and challenge the state.\textsuperscript{16} Similarly, scholars looking at separatist
conflicts argue that civil wars over secession are particularly likely to occur due to the
lack of penetration the state can make in the area.\textsuperscript{17} This is the political opportunity
school and argues that when the state does not have the capability of policing and
controlling those areas effectively, challengers to their rule may emerge.\textsuperscript{18}

However, Peic and Reiter operationalize a lack of infrastructural power occurring
following an interstate war, and use the existence of an interstate war as a proxy for a loss
of infrastructural power.\textsuperscript{19} This is problematic as a state may lack infrastructural power

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} CITATION
\textsuperscript{18} Sambanis, N., "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)," Journal of Conflict Resolution 45, no. 3 (2001), 259-282.
\textsuperscript{19} Peic and Reiter, Foreign-Imposed Regime Change, State Power and Civil War Onset, 1920-2004, 453-475
before a FIRC, and usually states without strong state infrastructural power might prove to be the most likely FIRC targets. So while all FIRCs might reduce the infrastructural power of the state somewhat, the preconditions of the state and the ability of the state to reassert its pre-FIRC level of state infrastructural power might be just as important or even more important than the relative loss of infrastructural power following an interstate war. Thus, while infrastructural power may be important in examining why civil wars occur, it is not clear that FIRCs themselves are the sole determinant of what post-FIRC infrastructural power will be.

The second logic scholars use to explain the prevalence of civil wars following FIRCs is the institutional logic. Scholars have often looked at how weak and changing institutions can lead to the outbreak of civil war. Huntington posited that when undergoing institutional change, institutions are usually weak and they cannot correspond to the expectations of the population. This makes the population disillusioned with the institutions and creates the conditions favorable for internal violence to occur. Hegre et al build on this argument and show how institutional change of any type is correlated with higher chances of civil war. The weak institutions create a disconnect between the governmental institutions and the public, and also allow different groups with different views of how state institutions should be set up to conflict over these institutional arrangements. Mansfield and Snyder in a different context argue that democratization can increase the probability conflict, specifically focusing on how weak institutions created during democratization allow for groups to fight for control over certain

Thus, large-scale change of political institutions allow for conflict between the populace, elites, and the new regime over how the new institutions will end up.

Specifically in the context of FIRCs, scholars have focused on how institutional change might lead to civil war as well. Downes looked specifically at two different types of FIRCs, new leader and restoration, and found that new leader FIRCs were much more likely to devolve into civil war. Downes argues civil wars are likely due to new leader FIRCs impose institutions that lack legitimacy needed for the populace to support them. Restoration FIRCs bring back leaders who had previously ruled and thus have more legitimacy from the local population compared to a new leader who was imposed by a foreign power. This builds on the arguments by Huntington and Hegre et al about new institutions where the legitimacy of the institutions is integral to making the institutions stronger and more durable. Where the institutions lack legitimacy, the populace is more likely to react against them. Peic and Reiter also examine the new institution/legitimacy argument and find some support for the argument. They show that institutional change in a FIRC is correlated with civil war outbreak and democratic institutions have moderately less chance of leading to civil war due to increased legitimacy.

However, while the new institutional FIRC logic make intuitive sense and a lack of legitimacy can lead to disgruntled groups in society pushing to change the regime, it is not clear why new institutions with even less legitimacy than severely repressive regimes

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23 Downes, *Catastrophic Success: Foreign Imposed Regime Change and Civil War*, 1-43
would not lead to civil war. Examining Hegre et al, it is the movement towards new institutions in the middle of the democratic scale that is most associated with civil war. In fact, many scholars have found that both highly autocratic and highly democratic regimes have lessened civil war probabilities, and it is the middle regimes where civil war is most likely.\textsuperscript{24} If middle regimes are the most likely to see civil conflict emerge, lack of legitimacy of the new institutions might not be driving the outcomes. Instead, the lack of institutional strength and clarity, as Huntington would argue, might instead be driving these outcomes.

This might prove problematic because FIRCs have also been shown to move the democracy level of the targeted state towards a middle regime.\textsuperscript{25} Regardless of the regime type that is undertaking the FIRC and the regime type of the target state, a FIRC on average lowers the level of democracy in the target state by 33%.\textsuperscript{26} Great powers who are interested in undertaking FIRCs are concerned with the new regimes following their interests. Thus, it is intuitive they would prefer more autocratic rule that will ensure their interests over democratic rule that could go differently than they prefer.\textsuperscript{27} Promoting democracy leads to uncertain outcomes, which may work against the interests of the constituency in the intervening country. As such, democracies should be restricted and be expected to not emerge following FIRCs, as interveners will attempt to control the


\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{27} The recent concerns of US politicians about Islamist parties winning elections in the Middle East are emblematic of this issue. Democracy is preferred when the citizenry elects the politicians the great power prefers.
policy outcomes to please their constituents, to ensure future selection as the leader. In fact, Downes and Monten show the relative difficulty of imposing democracy following a FIRC even if a state wants to do so. Democracy is reduced following FIRC's and there seems to be incentives for this reversion to occur, and this may provide a motivation for civil violence to break out in a target state. However, it is not clear how this reversion or undermining of democratization may lead to civil violence inside of a target state.

**An Integrative Theory of FIRC's and Civil War**

Given this robust relationship between FIRC's and Civil Wars, it is apparent that there is clear correlation between the two events but not clear which causal mechanism provides the explanatory power. I argue that reduced infrastructural power following FIRC's coupled with weak institutions imposed lead to situations where civil war is more likely. I also argue that pre-existing weak infrastructural power is also important in explaining the prevalence of civil wars following FIRC's. This situation is particularly likely to start a civil war when new regimes attempt to use their weak institutions to impose their rule on citizens repressively, yet do not have the infrastructural power to control their territory completely.

First, weakened infrastructural state power does prevent the state from being able to control their full territory and creates opportunities for nascent insurgent movements to grow. When a state lacks the ability to control its territory, groups that have grievances against the state have an area where they are able to grow and prevent the state from

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28 Recent FIRC's in Afghanistan and Iraq have seemingly attempted democracy, however the intervening state has lamented their governments' unwillingness to promote all of their interests, and the constituents in the intervener's state have complained about the lack of progress in those states.

destroying their movement. Even if the state has the desire to repress the group, they will not be able to extend their coercive reach to repress them effectively. This is explains the findings of Fearon and Laitin and others that weakened state capacity is correlated with civil war occurrence, namely because the state allows areas for insurgencies to grow and civil wars to take off.

Specifically in the context of FIRCs, however, state infrastructural power is harmed in a variety of ways. Peic and Reiter correctly point out that lessened infrastructural power leads to increased civil war occurrence, but their reliance on just interstate war as a proxy is problematic. While interstate war might reduce infrastructural power, choices made by interveners following a war are just as important in explaining the lack of power. The choices made by the intervening state as to the post-war occupation and the former regime are critical in understanding infrastructural power dynamics. Namely, if the intervening state is occupying the state following the FIRC, they might be able to use their own power to provide the new regime with increased infrastructural power. However, also important is how the former regime elites and the security apparatus are integrated in society following the FIRC. If the security apparatus is dismantled and the foreign state is not occupying to provide the state an effective reach of their power, then infrastructural power will be quite weak. Thus, the level of infrastructural power that is harmed in a FIRC is determined by the choices of the intervener more so than the actual interstate war itself.

Nothing about this process relies on the occurrence of an interstate war. If a FIRC occurs without a war and the new regime purges former elites and security elements from the state, infrastructural power will also be damaged as the move to create new security
forces to replace those purged. The former security apparatus of the state would have had access to different networks and institutions in place to allow for more penetration into society. If an intervening state purges the state of former security service members and regime elites, setting up a new system for the new regime will take time and during that period the ability of the regime to penetrate all of society will be drastically reduced. For example, when the US engaged in the Iraq FIRC of 2003, following the FIRC the US decided to purge the state of all former Baathist elites and purge the Iraqi military. This drastically reduced the power of the Iraqi state as a new military had to be built from the ground up and did not have the ability to police and protect the citizenry around the state. Infrastructural power was not only destroyed by the war between Iraq and the US, but also decisions made following the FIRC were drastically responsible for this weakening of state power.

Additionally in the context of FIRCs, initial conditions prior to the FIRC might also help explain weak infrastructural power following a FIRC. While fighting an interstate war might weaken a state and choices made following a FIRC can drastically harm infrastructural power, the initial conditions of the state might prove to be more important in determining how infrastructural power is harmed following the FIRC. There are four possible combinations of infrastructural power before and after the FIRC. Strong and weak states prior to the FIRC and infrastructural power damaged by war or post-FIRC strategy or little infrastructural power lost. If a state has large infrastructural power before the FIRC, an interstate war can destroy some of the infrastructural power but the remaining power is still enough to penetrate all of the territory. However, with weak

infrastructural power before the FIRC, reduced infrastructural power could prove fatal as the civil war probability will only increase. Thus, focusing on the preconditions of FIRCs in terms of infrastructural power may prove just as important as the strategy of the FIRC itself.

When FIRCs occur is important in understanding the post FIRC context. FIRCs can either occur following interstate wars or just be undertaken by themselves, but two specific types of pre-FIRC conditions are especially problematic when thinking about post-FIRC dynamics. First, when infrastructural power is low, the ability of an intervening state to engage in a FIRC will be higher because the state does not have as much control over their territory. Thus, FIRCs may be undertaken in states where there is low infrastructural power to resist the power to begin with. Second, if the power of the state is tied to a really repressive regime, like the Baathist regime in Iraq, engaging in a FIRC might drastically reduce the infrastructural power of the state even more so than a normal FIRC following an interstate war. If the state institutions that give them their ability to project their power across the territory are tied to the regime, for whatever reason, replacing the regime with another might drastically reduce the ability of the new regime to project their power while the new institutions are set up. Thus, while interstate war might reduce infrastructural power of the state, the conditions of that infrastructural power before the FIRC are ultimately important in determining the lack of power following the FIRC.

As mentioned above, the type of institutions in place in a society might impact how well states are able to exert their power throughout their territory. Thus state power and institutions seem inextricably linked and attempting to determine whether weak
institutions or weak state power leads to potential civil wars seems problematic as the existing literature tries to parse between these two mechanisms. Instead, weak institutions following FIRC s exacerbate problems with weak state power following a FIRC and makes civil war more likely. Focusing on how the two work in tandem to produce the correlated outcome is preferable.

Weak institutions are correlated with civil war occurrence and changing institutions are often sine qua non with weak institutions. However, one aspect overlooked in the previous discussions of FIRC s and weak institutions is that FIRC s often impose semi-authoritarian regimes on an anocracy. While anocracy can mean a variety of different institutional arrangements and regime types, it is located between democracy and autocracy where the combination invites protest, participation, and government repression, making it unclear what exactly the rules of the society are. These different rules of the game for society are a symptom of the fact that anocracies do not possess strong institutions to enforce their own rules for society or meet the needs of society. These weak institutions emerge from different states and from different intervention strategies and goals, and the end result frequently is institutions that cannot meet the goals that are set for them. Instead, often institutions are set up that may contradict each other and produce anocracies as the intervening state encourages their preferred regime to stay in power no matter the conditions.

When an anocracy emerges following a FIRC, it is unclear what exactly the new rules entail. If the former regime was authoritarian and has moved, after the FIRC, to an anocracy, there is now more political space for different protest activity and the role that

32 A good description of the contradictions of semi-democracies can be found in Hegre et al, 2001.
different political movements can play is unclear. If the former regime was democratic, it
would be unclear what rights still exist with the new regime and whether political
movements still have a role in the state. Finally, if the former regime was already an
anocracy, it is unclear what may be different about this new regime. However, it is
possible that a formerly patrimonial regime is now a more constitutional anocracy or
some other form. In all of these cases, the previous institutions are broken down and the
expectations of the populace in how to interact with the populace are unclear.

With the imposition of autocracy and democracy, the rules of the game and the
incentives for how the populace is to interact with the new institutions are clear.
However, the imposition of an anocracy provides less clear incentives for former regime
elements, as well as average citizens and the new regime in power. Different pathways
inside of anocracies are possible, but generally the different incentives and uncertainty
inside of the new regime leads to the former regime not knowing whether to contest or
not contest the imposed regime, the imposed regime not knowing whether to continue to
repress the former regime or allow their participation, and the citizenry not understanding
exactly what rights they have and who possesses power.

This leads to a state where inconsistencies are abundant and internal security
threats can abound. Repression has been found to be highest in states where the citizenry
are not clear about when they can and cannot protest.\(^{33}\) Higher levels of repression are
good signals that the repressive apparatus of the state are not effective at influencing
behavior as they would like. As Huntington would argue, when institutions do make

\(^{33}\) Leaders in anocracies seem to view opposition and protest events as more direct threats and
thus increase their use of repression. Regan, P. M. and E. A. Henderson, "Democracy, Threats
and Political Repression in Developing Countries: Are Democracies Internally Less Violent?"
clear how the expectations of the populace will be translated into outcomes, instability can arise. This allows former regime elements or different rebel groups to begin organizing in different manners attempting to contest the newly imposed leaders and institutions. If it appears that organizing politically may not be viable, force may be an option they decide to pursue. While there is no deterministic pathway inside an anocracy for former regime elements to take, there are opportunities, contradictions, and reversions which may push them to pursue violent action or cause the new regime to attempt a severe crackdown and spark a violent uprising itself. Thus, it is likely to see civil conflict when anocracies are implemented following a FIRC due to the responses from the new government, and these responses and re-organization can lead to violent outcomes.

However, it is not clear to what extent weak institutions are not reflections of a lack of infrastructural power, which fails to impose their preferred institutional outcomes across society. In some examinations of federalism, scholars have argued that it is due to this lack of infrastructural power that federalism occurs in certain states because they cannot impose their institutions across society. It seems that weak institutions manifest themselves in anocracies where the rules of the game are unclear and repression is more likely to occur. However, while severe repression is likely, the state lacks power to extend their reach to all areas of the state and spaces exist where groups who oppose the installed regime can prosper. Often a conundrum occurs where new institutions are installed which are weak, and the process of installing the institutions weakens state power as well. Thus, the cocktail of a repressive regime with weak institutions and the

lack of state power to deny opportunities for rebellion make civil war much more likely in post FIRC contexts.

Overall, FIRCs can make civil wars more likely to occur in states, but the preconditions of the state’s power and institutions before the FIRC are often important in determining whether civil war will break out. If state power is tied to the regime or is relatively weak before the FIRC, the FIRC will make this situation drastically worse. Additionally, if the institutions are pushed towards anocracy and/or were dependent upon a patrimonial regime, weak institutions will emerge that further create problems for regime stability. The institutions created by some FIRCs produce the need for state repression to ensure the new regime stays in power, but the reduction in power produced by the FIRC can often lead towards nefarious outcomes. Thus focusing on how the pre-existing conditions mix with the FIRC dynamics themselves, a relationship between FIRCs and civil wars can be discerned.

1950s FIRCs

Seeing as FIRCs are correlated with the occurrence of civil wars, what explains how some cases become embroiled in civil war and others do not? A quick plausibility probe illustrates my argument by contrasting the FIRC by the US of Guatemala in 1954 and the FIRC of Hungary by the USSR in 1956. Following the FIRC of Guatemala in 1954 by the United States, a series of counter coups failed and a variety of rebel movements emerged in Guatemala, starting a 30-year civil war. The United States removed a regime with weak infrastructural power and imposed a similarly weak regime, while also not supplementing their weak power with their own power. They were content with a weakly institutionalized, non-communist state. In 1956, following an uprising in
Budapest, the Soviet Union rushed to reinstall the leader of Hungary and impose their preferred regime back to power in Hungary. However, even with a repressive regime reinstalled and a protest movement that lead to the initial uprising still bubbling, no civil war emerged in Hungary following the FIRC. I argue that the Soviet Union reinstalled the Kádár regime and used its military strength following the FIRC to supplement the already stronger infrastructural power of the Hungarian state. Thus the conditions leading to the FIRC and the strategy following the FIRC help predict the outcome of Civil War.

First, in 1954 the US government (along allegedly with US company United Fruit) was concerned with the growing communist tendencies of the Árbenz regime in Guatemala and decided to sponsor a coup to overthrow the regime and place a more US friendly military regime in place.  

Árbenz was one sponsor of a massive land redistribution scheme, aimed at redistributing unfarmed but arable land owned by the upper elite to landless peasants which made up most of the population. This was massively unpopular with elites and the upper echelons of the military, as well as the United Fruit Company (Handy 1994). Eventually, this led to claims that Árbenz was weak on communism and suffering from Soviet influence. Operation PBFO

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began to arm anti-Árbenz rebels and prepare them for an invasion of Guatemala in 1952 but was never completed. However in 1954 Operation PBSUCCESS was instituted to begin the process of overthrowing the allegedly communist regime in Guatemala through spreading of disinformation, instituting a blockade, supporting the rebel mercenaries, and ultimately getting the military to turn against the regime. Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas was selected by the United States to be installed as the next president of Guatemala leading the more pro-US military regime in Guatemala. The US was pleased at the success of the coup in removing the perceived communist regime from their hemisphere and did not have to use their military in an interstate conflict to overthrow the regime. Thus a FIRC occurred in Guatemala without an interstate war but in the context of a state with weak infrastructural power due to the power of elites and the military and society as well as institutions that were relatively new.

Following the FIRC, the new military regime of Armas began brutally repressing the peasants who were opposed to the newly imposed military regime that was rescinding the land reform scheme instituted by the previous regime. However, while the previous regime lacked relative infrastructural power, the FIRC created a regime that lacked even further infrastructural power as many peasants were opposed to losing their land reform process and the military regime could not reach to quash the rebel movements forming against it in the hills of eastern Guatemala. Additionally the regime allowed spaces for rebel movements to grow, but also the newly anocratic regime was severely repressive to the peasants and the supporters of the former populist regime. The repression of various

37 Cullather, Secret History: The CIA’s Classified Account of its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954
38 Immerman, Guatemala as Cold War History, 629-653
sectors of society created grievances against the government and prevented the necessary societal support to make the new institutions strong. This coalesced into a revolutionary movement MR-13 which was formed by a group of leftist military officers who failed to overthrow the government in 1960 and had been hiding in the hills of eastern Guatemala for two years building their resources.\(^{40}\) This group organized with other rebel groups and dissident groups in Guatemala and eventually formed a rebel movement that clashed with the government for 30 years in a bloody civil war.

The weak institutions that were created during the FIRC incentivized the Armas regime to severely repress dissident movements and create grievances against the government since they could not express their political will. However, the lack of infrastructural power that was already present in Guatemala coupled with the destroyed infrastructural power of the US backed FIRC further created spaces for the Guatemalan rebels to grow and create a challenge for the military regime of Guatemala. The US decision to launch a FIRC on Guatemala where a lack of infrastructural power made a FIRC easy to begin with, and then installing a military with weak institutions and lack of support from society was a perfect recipe for civil war outbreak. As Goodwin describes it, the combination of a severely repressive regime (installed by a FIRC) with weak institutions and lack of infrastructural power (made worse by a FIRC) to repress all of the potential rebels effectively, made this civil war likely to occur.\(^{41}\) In this case, the US FIRC of Guatemala destined the state to a 30-year civil war due to the preexisting weak state power and weak institutions imposed on the state.


\(^{41}\) Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*
In Hungary, however, a similar event was largely met with a very different outcome. In 1956, starting with a student uprising in Budapest, a revolution against communist rule spread through Hungary, eventually deposing Prime Minister Hegedüs and Communist Party First Secretary Gerő.\(^{42}\) In Budapest, close quarters fighting broke out where revolutionaries clashed with Soviet tanks, while in the countryside revolutionary councils were set up to take back control of the governing of their political communities from the Soviet imposed communist regime. While the revolution spread throughout Hungary for about 10 days, a new government was set up and demands for free and fair elections seemed to be finally being met. A nationwide labor strike and revolutionary councils announcing their support for Prime Minister Nagy led many to see Hungary as successfully breaking away from the communist regime and pushing forward with the revolution.\(^{43}\) Further, the new parliament drafted legislation to remove itself from the Warsaw Pact, declare itself neutral and called on the UN to support its claim.\(^{44}\)

However, on November 4th 1956, the Soviet Union decided to invade Hungary and carry out a FIRC to re-install the communist regime. Seventeen Soviet divisions under the command of Marshal Konev marched towards Budapest with the goal of establishing a "Revolutionary Workers'-Peasants' Government of Hungary" and


\(^{43}\) Békés, Byrne, and Rainer, *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents*

eliminating the counter-revolutionary elements that had taken over the Hungarian regime. Even with the Hungarian Army largely on their side, Soviet forces basically overran Budapest by November 9th and the resistance was largely stopped by November 11th.\footnote{Györkei, Jenő and Miklos Horvath, \textit{Soviet Military Intervention in Hungary, 1956: Central European University Press, 1999).} Communist Party First Secretary Kádár became the de facto head of state and the revolution was ended, with huge numbers of Hungarians leaving as refugees or being arrested, deported, or executed by the new regime.\footnote{Lomax, \textit{The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the Origins of the Kádár Regime, 87-113}} The Soviets maintained a decently high military presence and ensured that the new communist regime maintained its strength.\footnote{Kramer, Mark, "The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland: Reassessments and New Findings," \textit{Journal of Contemporary History} (1998), 163-214.} Following the revolution, the communist regime maintained its rule until the downfall of the regime in 1989, but no civil war broke out even after the severely repressive communist regime was imposed following the FIRC.

Why did Hungary not descend into civil war in the years following the FIRC? Namely, it was due to the strong infrastructural power base given to the communist regime by the Soviet Union and the relative strong institutions created with the communist structure already in place that were not changed with the regime change. First, the infrastructural power of the state, supplemented by the Soviet military allowed for the state to reach throughout the territory of Hungary and not allow spaces for rebel groups to grow. The infrastructural power of the state was decently high before the FIRC and was made stronger by Soviet presence following it. Carrying out the FIRC involved a large Soviet military force, which is largely equivalent of interstate war and the capital of Hungary was home to street to street fighting, yet the power of the state remained high. Second, the institutions in place never really changed during the FIRC; just new leaders
were placed in those institutions. Thus the institutions themselves never really lost their strength. As Downes notes, restoration FIRC's are much less likely to produce civil wars because the institutional base is largely the same and do not have the deficiencies associated with new and weak institutions.\footnote{Downes, \textit{Catastrophic Success : Foreign Imposed Regime Change and Civil War}, 1-43} Further, there was no ambiguity about the new regime being an anocracy and what the rules would be. Instead, it was clear the new regime would be a full authoritarian regime and the rules against dissident political action were clear. Due to strong state power and the maintenance of strong state institutions, civil war was not likely to occur in Hungary.

Comparing the two cases, it is the case of Guatemala where there was less of an interstate war presence that actually reduced infrastructural power the most; combining that with weak institutions that could not adequately respond to the political demands of the populace led to a civil war. Previous perspectives’ assertions that focusing on just the institutional framework following a FIRC or just the interstate war as a means to destroy infrastructural power misses the dynamics of infrastructural power and state institutions working together to create spaces for civil wars to emerge. In this case, the pre-existing weak state power of Guatemala was enough that an interstate war was not needed to engage in a FIRC, but also the rebel elements were not able to be repressed effectively. Further, weak institutions created meant that repression as the norm in society and society was not supportive of the new regime. In Hungary, the Soviet FIRC replaced new leaders in strong institutions already in existence. Further, their power supplemented the new Hungarian regime and allowed for the repressive apparatus to extend across the state. Thus, preconditions of the states and the interaction between power and institutions are important ways to view the prevalence of civil wars following FIRC's.
Tentative Conclusions and Implications

If this theory holds true, it provides some sober implications. First, if a state wishes to engage in a FIRC, the chances that the targeted country will become democratic and stable are quite small. More likely, a state that is the target of a FIRC will move towards anocracy and instability will be more likely. Moving towards autocracy is also an option; however, autocracies, while seemingly less repressive, have their own problems. As recent history shows, foreign support for autocratic rulers may come back to harm relations between states in the long run. Because of this, states today who wish to engage in a FIRC have incentives to push for some democratic institutions but cannot fiat a full democratic regime into place or decide to stop short of a full democratic regime. This is a cautionary tale for states who wish to engage in a FIRC in a strategic region of interest. The probability that engaging in a FIRC will end up making that region or state more volatile and unstable is higher than the chances of introducing stability. States should only wish to engage in FIRCs if they think the uncertainty and lack of stability is in their long term interests. Most states favor certainty and stability over uncertainty and instability however, and even though they may engage in a FIRC to promote stability, in the end, it will usually make the region less stable.

49 The support for authoritarian leaders in the Middle East seems to be harming current and future relations in the Middle East following the Arab spring.
50 Even if autocracy is imposed and the region seems to be in order, if the autocracy falls, then the strategic resources the region may hold will be lost to the intervener.
51 Theoretically, it is possible to think of a situation where a state may want to provoke a civil war in a region, but it remains unlikely.
Second, if a state still wants to engage in a FIRC, and wants to promote stability, a different calculation for action needs to be created. Security and integration of former regime elements and a focus on strong inclusive institutions need to be thought about along with the new regime. Too often, interveners decide to completely eliminate any traces of the former regime, and not work to reintegrate them into society and take advantage of the strong institutions built over the years.\textsuperscript{53} Instead, interveners should attempt to plan before and during their intervention how to integrate the former institutional elements back into the state, if their goal is prevent instability and conflict.

Two concepts are helpful in attempting to plan these goals. First, security sector reform is a concept that argues the former military and intelligence service members of the deposed regime need to be reformed into the new regime.\textsuperscript{54} In cases across the world, former military and security personnel, following regime change and moves from authoritarian rule, become private experts in violence, becoming Mafiosi\textsuperscript{55}, forming insurgencies\textsuperscript{56}, and overall acting as destabilizing violent forces in society. If security sector reform is taken seriously from the beginning of an intervention, the former security personnel will be able to integrate itself back into society, and act as a stabilizing force rather than a de-stabilizing force.

Second, attempting to create credible commitments on both sides for former regime elements to be integrated into new political processes is a struggle that will need to be undertaken. A major concern for the new regime will be that any former regime

\textsuperscript{53} A perfect example is the process of de-Ba’athification undertaken in Iraq.

\textsuperscript{54} This idea is introduced by Toft where she argues the key to prevent war recurrence in security sector reform. Toft, M. D., \textit{Securing the Peace: The Durable Settlement of Civil Wars}: Princeton University Press, 2009).

\textsuperscript{55} Former KGB agents becoming Russian mobsters is a great example.

\textsuperscript{56} See the Taliban in Afghanistan.
elements or anti-regime elements who are participating politically remain committed to the political process and try not to subvert the regime. Similarly, anti-regime elements will have to feel that any new regime is credible in allowing them to participate in the political process and not marginalize or repress them. Both sides then have incentives to renege on the commitment before the other and the new regime could repress while the former regime works to subvert. Thus, a commitment problem emerges in the new regime that an intervener has to account and plan for if they aim to prevent instability.  

Unfortunately, the uncertainty inherent in anocracy exacerbates these commitment problems making the most likely form of modern FIRC potentially hazardous. There are different prescriptions for ameliorating commitment problems, but if interveners do not think about how to deal with the issues at the intervention’s onset, the solution may not be viable.

Engaging in FIRC to impose stability or depose a leader is a problematic exercise that usually backfires. Unless the state has strong institutions and state power before the FIRC, engaging in a FIRC that produces those two outcomes is unlikely. In cases where they do exist, a large interstate war is probably needed to engage in the FIRC, making prospective intervening states less likely to engage in a FIRC. Thus, it appears that the same qualities that make FIRC attractive outside of interstate wars is exactly the same reasons that post-FIRC civil war risk is so high. More care should be taken when thinking about foreign imposed regime change and the post-war dynamics that may emerge. Looking at the Libyan case, it was argued that Libya presented the best conditions for a successful FIRC.

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57 For an account of how commitment problems emerge see Fearon, James D., "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 03 (1995), 379.

58 For examples see Walter, Barbara F., "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (Summer, 1997), 335-364.
case scenario for a successful FIRC\textsuperscript{59}, and yet today the Libyan state is in constant civil
war.\textsuperscript{60} Great powers should be cognizant that what makes these cases attractive for a
FIRC are exactly why the post war dynamics will develop towards civil war, and be
weary when making decisions about whether to engage in FIRCs. Overall, FIRCs are
often an attractive foreign policy action, but understanding why they appear attractive
might make us re-evaluate the efficacy of engaging in FIRCs against bothersome
regimes.

\textsuperscript{59} Pape, Robert A., "When Duty Calls: A Pragmatic Standard of Humanitarian Intervention,"
\textsuperscript{60} Daragahi, Borzou, “Libya’s civil war chaos draws in remote south,” \textit{Financial Times}.
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/bcb1226e-62a9-11e4-aa14-00144feabdc0.html>