

Born This Way: Authoritarian Regime Origins and Survival

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ABSTRACT: Political regimes vary in their founding events. We develop a new 2x2 typology of regimes that distinguishes between (1) violent and nonviolent origins, and (2) creation by regime insiders versus regime outsiders. The resulting categories of regime origins are coups (violent/insiders), rebellions (violent/outside), rule changes (nonviolent/insiders), and popular protests (nonviolent/outside). Statistically, authoritarian regimes founded by coups are the most fragile and rebel regimes are the most durable. Popular uprisings are the most likely to produce democracies. Existing typologies based on post-founding institutions (e.g., party, military, personalist) cannot account for these findings, in particular because personalist regimes frequently emerge from each origin category. Furthermore, classifying regimes based on origins avoids various conceptual, measurement, and endogeneity concerns inherent to assessing the consequences of post-founding regime institutions.