

# The Torn Revolutionary: Overlapping Identity Dimensions and Political Violence

Akos Lada (Harvard University, Political Economy and Government program)

One liner: I explore how identity affects regime transition and violence, using game theory and the 1848 revolution in the Austrian empire

Identity is weird (=interesting):



In Transylvania in 1849, Hungarian nobles fought Romanian peasants, but nobles fought for liberalism, while peasants fought for the emperor

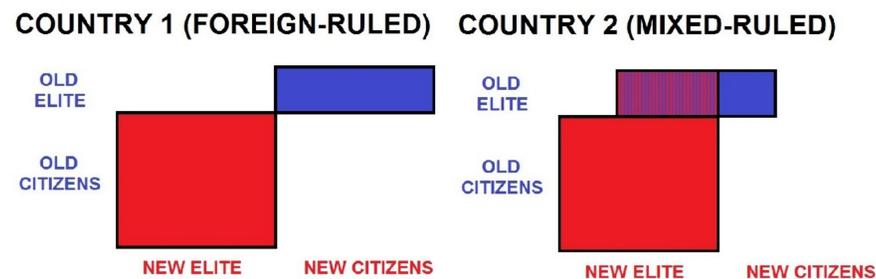
## Overview

1. A democratization model based on Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) finds that the overlap of the identity dimensions (e.g. language, religion) between the old and the new elite plays a key role
2. I test the theory by comparing the actions of the eleven nationalities that comprised the Austrian empire during the 1848 revolutions
3. I also contrast these nationalities with ethnic kins beyond the border of the empire
4. The case studies are augmented by content analysis of the Hungarian revolutionary poet Sandor Petofi's poems

## Main Findings

1. Societies which have a **bigger overlap** between the old elite and the new elite are **less likely to use repression**
2. Societies which have a **bigger overlap** between the old elite and the new elite are **less likely to undergo democratization**
3. Higher likelihood of **inclusivity of the old elite** makes **both democratization and repression less likely**
4. Higher likelihood of **inclusivity of the old citizens** makes **both democratization and repression more likely**

## How the Overlap Matters



In Country 2 some of the old elite remain in power after the transition. The size of this overlap determines the incentive of the citizens to overthrow the old elite. The bigger the overlap, the smaller this incentive is.

## Country 3 (Mixed with Minority)



In Country 3 'permanent citizens' may even fight *against* the revolution if they have to pay some cost after the revolution (e.g. change their language).

## Main Results

**Proposition 1** In the SPNE of the one-shot game repression will only be used as long as its overall cost is below a certain boundary:

$$c \leq \bar{c} = y_n \mu_n \frac{1 - e_o}{1 - e_o + e_{no}}, \quad (1)$$

where  $y_n$  is income in the new regime,  $\mu_n$  is revolutionary pressure,  $e_o$  is the size of the old elite,  $e_{no}$  is the size of the overlap

**Proposition 2** In the MPE of the infinite game democratization occurs whenever:

$$y_n \mu_n \geq y_o (1 - \beta(1 - h)) \frac{1 - e_o + e_{no}}{1 - e_o}, \quad (2)$$

where  $h$  is the probability of high pressure in each period and  $\beta$  is the discount factor

## The 1848 Revolutions in the Austrian empire



### LARGE OVERLAP SMALL OVERLAP SMALL OVERLAP + MINORITIES

Austria (Germans) Lombardy-Venetia (Italians) Croatia (Hun-Croats)  
 Hungary (Hungarians) Vojvodina (Hun-Serbs)  
 Bohemia-Moravia (Czechs) Slovenia (Hun-Slovenes)  
 Piedmont (Italians) Galicia (Poles-Ruthenes)  
 Serbia (Serbians) Transylvania (Hun-Romanians)  
 Romania (Romanians) Upper Hungary (Slovakians)

DEMOCRATIC PRESSURE	LOW	HIGH	MODERATE
REPRESSION	LOW	HIGH	HIGH
REPRESSOR	ELITE	ELITE	ELITE + MINORITY

- The Hungarian and the Italian revolutions lasted the longest and were the most bloody
- The Czech was less intense, but more intense than the German, which could not rally the peasants or the middle classes
- Minorities in the crown of Hungary fought against the Hungarian revolution
- Lombardy-Venetia experiences the most intense upheaval and violence in the Italian peninsula
- The Romanians and the Serbs outside the Austrian empire had weak liberal movements
- Petofi's poems show that the Hungarian revolution turned nationalistic, which reflects minorities' concerns:

	1847 to March 15th 1848	March 15th 1848 to July 1849
number of poems	187	101
revolutionary terms	1.07%	1.59%
'Hungarian-ness'	0.53%	1.81%
'Hungarian-ness' in revolutionary context	0.46%	2.56%