Watch the Company You Keep: Elite Networks and Political Repression[1]

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Abstract

Targeted repression of political elites is rife in countries across the globe, but individuals' fates within *such repressive regimes vary greatly. Why are some elite individuals more likely to suffer political repression than others? I extend existing arguments that focus on individual attributes by theorizing how collective identity and individuals' political networks shape rogue rulers' threat perception, which in turn influences the latter's resort to different forms of repression. Empirically, I leverage original data on the pre-independence political elite of 18 African countries to evaluate the effects of individual elites' pre-independence political networks, as well as the post-independence political status of their ethnic groups, on their risk of different forms of political persecution following independence. I find that elite individuals from politically excluded ethnic groups are over twice as likely as individuals from ruling groups to suffer repression whereas trans-ethnic connections reduce the risk of repression. Moreover, deadly repression mostly affects individuals with high degrees of cliquishness. I also present evidence for an effect of generational proximity on elite individuals' network connections.*

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Introduction

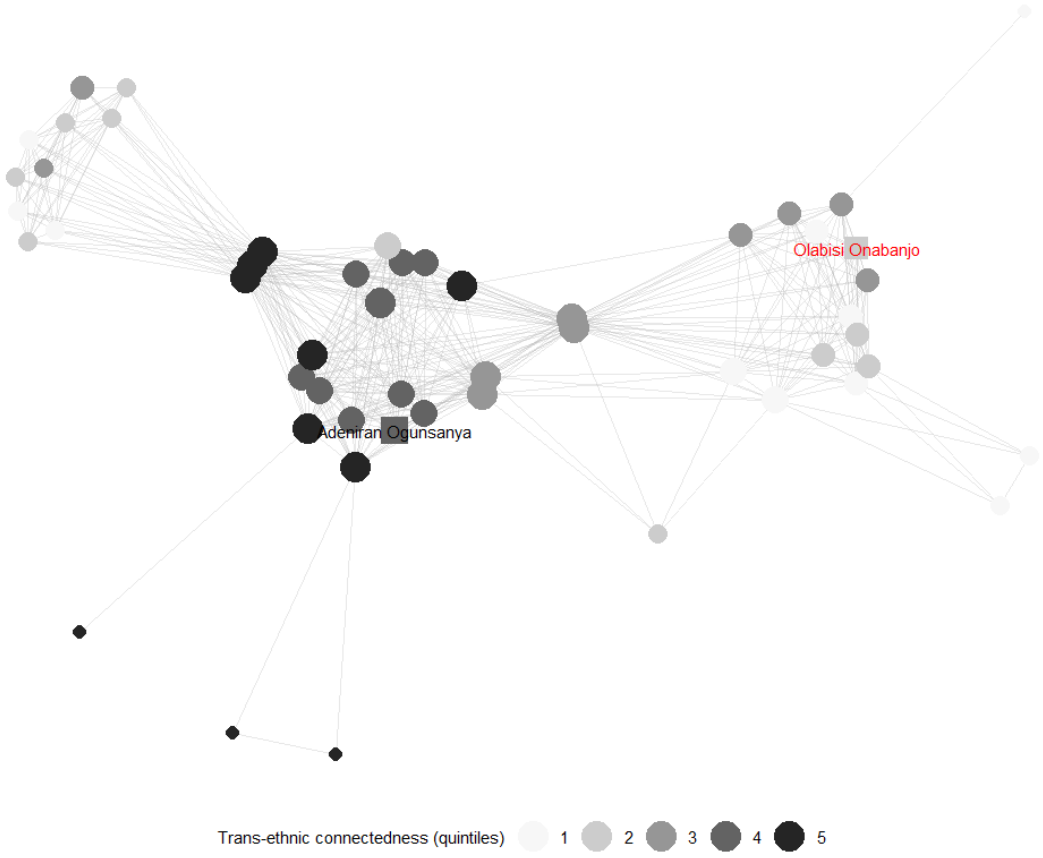
In many countries across the globe, politicians, opposition activists, and other prominent public figures live a dangerous life. They are regularly harassed by state security, purged from their positions, imprisoned, and occasionally killed. Especially where state institutions fail to limit rulers' power, regulate their rivals' ambitions, and reliably manage political competition, politics becomes a struggle for survival prone to turn violent and sometimes deadly. As observed by various empirical studies (e.g., Davenport 1996; Hill and Jones 2014; Keith 2002), politically motivated repression[2] flourishes in the absence of reliable rule of law. Yet, even in states with weak political institutions and highly despotic regimes, the fate of politicians and activists varies greatly: many carve out successful political careers for themselves and even some of those who dare to challenge rulers escape persecution (or at least death). This raises the question who suffers political repression – and who does not – in such weakly institutionalized states?

Take the example of the two late Nigerian politicians highlighted in Figure 1 below: Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya and Chief Victor Olabisi Onabanjo. Both of them were from the Yoruba ethnic group and born in Lagos. Both of them studied in the United Kingdom. Both started their political career before the country's independence, and both were still politically active during Nigeria's Second Republic in the early 1980s. On the face of it, the trajectories of these two politicians seem very similar – yet, their eventual political fates turned out to be very different. Indeed, Olabisi Onabanjo was jailed by the military regime of Major-General Muhammadu Buhari after the overthrow of the Second Republic in 1983 and held in prison for several years.

[2] Following Goldstein (1978, xxvii, cited in Davenport 2007: 2), I define political repression as the "actual or threatened use of physical sanctions" against individuals or organizations for the purpose of deterring them from activities and/or beliefs that could challenge the government.

In another West African country, Guinea, a Portuguese-led invasion of the country's capital, Conakry, in 1970 impelled then-president Ahmed Sékou Touré to strike against real and suspected opponents of his government. Yet, while many were targeted in the ensuing crackdown, the outcomes of the purges differed significantly across victims: some were executed whereas others kept their lives and were sent to prison instead. These distinct experiences of repression of elite individuals are at the heart of the puzzle that this paper addresses.

Figure 1: Trans-ethnic connectedness in Nigeria's pre-independence elite network and political persecution



Note: The figure shows Nigeria's pre-independence elite network, based on my elite sample (see "Elite Data" section below). Nodes refer to individual elites; edges denote political connections defined by joint organizational memberships. Adeniran Ogunsanya and Olabisi Onabanjo are highlighted by rectangles instead of circles. Color

codings rank individuals according to their quintile of trans-ethnic connectedness (i.e. the proportion of their network connections that link them to individuals from different ethnic groups), with darker colors indicating higher values.

A long-standing literature emphasizes the crucial role of political elites in determining the fate of their countries (e.g., Higley and Moore 1981; Higley et al. 1991; Lijphart 1977; Putnam 1976), and empirical studies of state leader assassinations similarly indicate that changes in who rules have important consequences for countries' governance and political stability (Iqbal and Zorn 2008; Jones and Olken 2009). Yet, despite this central political importance of elites, empirical research on the determinants of repression at the elite level is scarce. Most existing works explain the system-level conditions for the "whether" and "when" of purges (e.g., Boutton 2019; Sudduth 2017; van der Maat 2020) and assassinations (e.g., Chin et al. 2022; Iqbal and Zorn 2006) whereas individual-level studies tend to focus on the *consequences* of political repression of opposition activists (e.g., Sullivan and Davenport 2017).

A few recent studies have started to shed light on elites' varying experiences of repression (e.g., Bokobza et al. 2022; Esberg 2021; Goldring and Matthews 2023; Ketchley and Wenig forthcoming). For instance, Esberg (2021) finds that elected opposition politicians in Chile faced a higher risk of political persecution after Pinochet's coup compared to unelected candidates, but their prominence shielded them from violent forms of repression. Goldring and Matthews (2023) examine the risk of being purged and the post-purge fates of members of ruling institutions in authoritarian regimes. Theoretically, these studies tend to emphasize elites' individual attributes, such as their seniority, type of office or portfolio, and party affiliation, which may function as signals of the degree of threat or loyalty to rulers. However, most relevant acts of opposition are

collective enterprises, and while individual-specific proxies, such as seniority, can indicate the strength of social connections and support, they are likely to be noisy signals of collective mobilization capacity.

Moreover, empirically, these studies focus on purges of members of cabinets/executive institutions (Goldring and Matthews 2023), for example in the wake of failed coup attempts (Bokobza et al. 2022). Yet, much repression is preemptive, responding to potential *future* challenges, rather than political opposition in the present or past (e.g., Danneman and Ritter 2014), and rulers will need reliable signals of rivals' threat potential before such challenges occur. Opposition might also emerge from beyond the immediate ruling coalition and, indeed, threats to the ruler might be based on challengers' popular (i.e. non-elite) mobilization capacity. This requires us to consider both elite individuals' collective identity as well as relational factors, most importantly network connections, which shape individuals' capacity for collective action (Larson and Lewis 2017; Larson et al. 2019; Naidu, Robinson and Young 2021; Siegel 2009).

Building on insights from studies of ethnic conflict (Blaydes 2020; Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010) and social networks (Siegel 2009, 2011), I advance an argument on preemptive repression that explains how elites' collective identity and political networks influence their potential for different forms of collective action and, by extension, their threat potential in the eyes of rogue rulers, beyond their individual attributes. Individuals' ethnic identity should be particularly relevant for the perceived threat of popular mobilization and, thus, elites from politically excluded ethnic groups should have an increased risk of suffering repression. By contrast, a reputation of cross-group cooperation and loyalty signaled by trans-ethnic political connections should reduce that risk. Yet, rulers might feel even more worried about potential challenges from rival elite groups. In particular, cliques of other elites can come to appear so

dangerous that rulers conclude they can only ward off the threat by fully eliminating it, thus compelling them to resort to deadly repression against such clique members.

One main impediment to research on elite repression has been empirical. Whereas country-level studies can draw on readily available indicators of states' human rights abuses (e.g., Cingranelli and Richards 1999; Wood and Gibney 2010) and studies at the organizational (e.g., Cunningham 2011; Staniland 2021) or subnational (e.g., Sullivan 2014) levels offer the advantage of a clearly defined "universe" of units and potential repression targets, there are no equivalent existing datasets at the elite level. Even if systematic information on instances of elite repression were available, this needs to be accompanied by a meaningful "control group" of *potential* victims: elite individuals who *could* have suffered repression, but did not. We currently lack such data, especially across countries and time.[3]

I overcome this challenge by leveraging original micro-level data on the pre-independence political elite of 18 African countries, collected through a semi-automated coding of encyclopedic sources, that provide fine-grained information on the political trajectories of more than 800 elite individuals who were involved in their countries' politics before independence. I define political networks as relationships through political organizations and rely on information on elites' pre-independence organizational memberships to determine their network connections before independence. Figure 1 provides an example of these data, plotting Nigeria's pre-independence elite network and highlighting the positions of the two abovementioned politicians, to which I will return in the paper's empirical section.

[3] The few exceptions are limited to single countries (Esberg 2021; Ketchley and Wenig forthcoming; Liu 2022) and/or focus on specific institutions (e.g., cabinets) and regime types (Bokobza et al. 2022; Goldring and Matthews 2023).

I also coded individuals' ethnic identity – linked to the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset (Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010; Vogt et al. 2015) – and their experiences of different forms of political persecution in the post-independence era, along with a battery of control variables – such as individuals' participation in violent opposition – to probe alternative explanations. In line with my argument, I find that elite individuals from politically excluded ethnic groups are more than twice as likely to suffer political repression than individuals from ruling groups. Yet, individuals' political networks also matter. Trans-ethnic connectedness reduces the likelihood of repression whereas individuals with high degrees of cliquishness exhibit a particularly high risk of deadly repression.

Of course, elite networks, and individuals' positions therein, do not emerge at random. Therefore, the last part of my analysis examines the determinants of pre-independence elite alliances. I find a robust and consistent effect of generational proximity on political alliance formation. The greater their age difference, the lower the likelihood of any two (or three) individuals to come together in the same political organization. This effect also applies to trans-ethnic connections, in particular, suggesting that individuals who happened to be close in age to elites from other ethnic groups had better chances to form such bridging alliances before independence and, as a consequence, to remain (comparatively) safe from political persecution once their countries became independent. My findings dovetail with long-standing arguments in the ethnic politics literature on the link between ethnic group identity and violence and contribute to an emerging micro-level literature on repression while also shedding new light on the structural sources of elite alliances in key moments of state formation.

Elite Networks and Preemptive Repression

A key function of political institutions is to define the scope of government power and regulate the alternation of this power between different individuals. Where institutions are too weak to enforce or restrain the behavior of individuals – for example, due to a lack of collective agreement on them – political elites have both the opportunities and incentives to increase their personal power beyond the institutionally defined limits. Thus, rulers of such weakly institutionalized states might be tempted to prolong their reign as much as possible, but also face a persistent threat of being removed irregularly, either through mass mobilization or elite conspiracy. In this context, rulers likely will not only punish rivals for observed opposition but also resort to preemptive repression to mitigate potential future threats to their power.[4]

Whether in the form of coordinated elite action or popular mobilization, political or military challenges to the ruler are normally *collective* acts of contention and, thus, facilitated by what Tilly (1978: 63) calls "catness" and "netness": a shared identity category among (potential) participants and personal networks connecting them, respectively. Therefore, the characteristics used by rulers to determine individuals' threat potential and identify targets of preemptive repression will likely be related to their collective identity and personal political networks. In terms of individuals' identity, where ethnicity constitutes a politically salient cleavage and political alliances and armed or unarmed mobilization are ethnically based, as in most weak states (e.g., Bates 1974; Lemarchand 1972), elite individuals from ethnic groups other than the ruler's own should seem particularly threatening for three main reasons.

[4] Rulers can also resort to non-coercive means, such as targeted co-option, to undermine opposition (e.g., Arriola 2009; Bayart 1993), but the question which individuals are selected for co-option, rather than repression, goes beyond the scope of this paper.

First, they might harbor personal grievances (Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010; Wimmer 1997). Second, their exclusion from government power also entails economic and psychological disadvantages for the rank and file of their group (Franck and Rainer 2012; Hechter 1975; Horowitz 1985), thus imposing pressure from below on these elites to engage in resistance and risk their political standing or even life. Third, the cultural distance between rulers and the rank-and-file members of different ethnic groups will make the latter less "legible" to the regime (Blaydes 2020), creating uncertainty over both the threat of popular mobilization and the possibility of containing it if it occurs. As a consequence, rulers will likely perceive elite individuals from non-ruling ethnic groups as particularly motivated to foment popular mobilization and, at the same time, judge such popular mobilization as particularly difficult to control. This threat perception puts such individuals at risk of preemptive repression, as expressed in my first hypothesis:

H1: *Elite individuals from non-ruling ethnic groups are more likely to suffer repression than elite individuals from ruling groups.*

If ethnic identity helps rulers distinguish friends from foes, individuals' *trans-ethnic* connections – i.e. the extent to which their personal political network includes connections to members of other ethnic groups – should also affect rulers' threat perception. Such trans-ethnic connections might serve as a signal of "non-ethnic", cosmopolitan attitudes as well as cross-group cooperation and loyalty. Thus, individuals with high trans-ethnic connectedness could be perceived as standing above ethnic rivalries (Adida et al. 2016: 641) and, therefore, as less likely

to participate in ethnically based mobilization, which should reduce their threat potential in the eyes of suspicious rulers. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: *The more trans-ethnic political connections elite individuals have, the lower their likelihood of repression.*

While ethnicity constitutes a particularly relevant indicator of the threat of popular mobilization, individuals' political networks shape their potential for coordinated action with other elites (e.g., Hillmann 2008; Naidu, Robinson and Young 2021). Specifically, cliques should facilitate conspiratorial action. Cliques are defined by direct connections between all individuals forming part of the clique and sparse connections to individuals outside the clique (Siegel 2009: 131). These two features not only make concerted action more likely, as the tight interaction between clique members strengthens their bond and increases mutual trust and loyalty – creating "enclaves of participation" (Siegel 2009: 130) – but also increase secrecy, as the sparse outward connections prevent information leakage while simultaneously shielding the clique from outside influence.

As a consequence, rulers will likely preemptively strike against such cliques as potential incubators of conspiracies. Moreover, clique members might be targeted with particularly heavy-handed repression for two reasons. First, rulers might generally be more concerned about challenges from rival elite groups (Roessler 2011) than from popular mobilization and, thus, be ready to use particularly severe measures to contain the threat posed by elite conspirators. While imprisonment does restrict potential challengers' room for maneuver (Goldring and Matthews

2023), it might often not be enough to fully disrupt the conspiratorial force of tightly knit cliques. In other words, such cliques can come to appear so dangerous to rulers that they conclude they can only ward off the threat by fully eliminating it through the use of deadly repression.

Second, repression is risky, as government actions against real or suspected opponents might incite increased (more numerous and/or more committed) opposition (e.g., Sullivan 2016; Sutton, Butcher and Svensson 2014), threatening rulers' political or even physical survival (Bove and Rivera 2015; Chin et al. 2022; Iqbal and Zorn 2006). Accordingly, rulers will likely choose less severe forms of repression against individuals whose targeting entails a higher risk of backfiring (Esberg 2021; Goldring and Matthews 2023). Deadly repression should be particularly likely to unleash anger and indignation among the friends, allies, and followers of the victims. Yet, due to their sparse outward connections, cliques are often relatively isolated in the overall network structure, reducing the risk of anger and indignation to spread widely. Thus, in addition to their increased threat potential, individuals in such cliques might also pose a lower risk of backfiring, especially if they do not have any "weak" ties to others outside their clique (Siegel 2011: 1002, 05). Together, this should make elite individuals in cliques particularly susceptible to deadly repression, as expressed in my last hypothesis.

H3: *The higher the degree of elite individuals' cliquishness, the higher their likelihood of deadly repression.*

Empirical Strategy

I test my arguments by examining the effects of individual elites' pre-independence political networks, as well as the post-independence political status of their ethnic groups, on their likelihood of suffering different forms of politically motivated repression following independence. The focus on Africa entails two key advantages. First, relatively late decolonization, around 1960, ensures the availability of the information necessary to identify political alliances independent of the outcome of interest. Specifically, focusing on pre-independence elite networks allows me to observe the crystallization of political alliances among the nascent African elites while the European colonizers still retained control over the coercive apparatus of the state. I then evaluate the effects of these pre-independence networks on individuals' experiences of repression *at the hands of native rulers* after the colonizers handed over power, which attenuates concerns of reverse causality compared to assessing elite networks *after* decolonization. Second, ethnic power relations tend to be more variable in Africa than in other world regions, with more frequent alterations in ethnic groups' inclusion in and exclusion from government power (Vogt 2019: 36-40), which allows me to exploit variation in the power status of individuals' ethnic group over time.

The statistical analysis relies on both cross-sectional and panel models. The former evaluate the impact of individuals' pre-independence political networks on their risk of (deadly) repression at any point after independence (H2-H3). The panel models test the effects of both individuals' ethnic group status (H1) and political networks (H2-H3) on their risk of (deadly) repression in a given post-independence year, using time-variant versions of my network indicators. I expect the structure of these pre-independence elite networks to exhibit a considerable degree of persistence. This is in line with arguments from political sociologists

studying national elites (e.g., Burton and Higley 2001) and with evidence from economics on the durability of corporate elite networks even in the face of major socio-economic transformations (e.g., Davis, Yoo and Baker 2003; Kogut and Walker 2001). Previous studies also indicate that Africa's "first-generation" elites often remained politically influential until many decades later (Ricart-Huguet 2021: 13). Thus, adapting Straus' (2015, 57) notion of "foundational narratives", I conceive of these pre-independence elite networks as "foundational networks" that were formed in a moment of profound transformation (Burton and Higley 2001) – the transition from colonial rule to independence – and remained consequential for elite relationships many years (or even decades) later.

Naturally, elite networks, and individuals' positions therein, are not random, and even when evaluating the effect of *pre*-independence networks on *post*-independence repression, I cannot make claims that individuals' network connections were an exogenous cause of subsequent repression experiences. Rather, my claim is that *once they were created* in the pre-independence period, the networks fulfilled a key function in the causal chain. Thus, my empirical analysis evaluates the endogenous causal role of these elite networks in generating the post-independence outcomes of interest while controlling for key alternative structural and institutional explanations. I subsequently examine the structural sources of individuals' network connections in the final part of my analysis.

Elite Data: Sources and Sample

Individual-level data on actual *and* potential victims of political repression, including those individuals who *could* have suffered repression, but did not, is rare. Indeed, there is no generally accepted empirical definition of elite individuals and no single established method of identifying a country's elite without drawbacks (Putnam 1976: 17). In this study, I draw on original micro-level data on pre-independence African elites from Vogt and Boix (2023). The dataset was constructed based on the series of Historical Dictionaries, which contain condensed information on significant persons, events, institutions, etc., in the history of each country. The Dictionaries provide short biographies of a wide range of individuals who have had an impact on their country's public life – including and beyond the country's top political leadership – such as presidents, government members, leaders of political parties or unions, members of parliamentary committees, leaders of violent and non-violent opposition movements, etc. Thus, identification of elites is based on a "reputational" approach (Putnam 1976: 16-7), focusing on individuals who have been judged by historians and country experts to be the most relevant figures in a country's political, economic, and social/cultural life.

The dataset covers 18 African countries: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Sudan. This diverse set of countries, spanning all parts of the continent and different colonial legacies, should provide a solid foundation for generalization. At the individual level, the sample includes all individuals who, according to the biography entries in the Historical Dictionaries, were politically active on the eve of their country's independence. Political activism refers to an individual forming part of a political organization, defined as any named non-state entity that participates in, or has an impact on, the

political life of a country, such as parties, political pressure groups, unions, etc. Individuals' organizational memberships were detected applying an automated coding scheme to the scraped Dictionaries texts, identifying individuals through regular expressions and determining the organizations they were associated with using the Stanford Named Entity Recognizer (Manning et al. 2014). The resulting individual-organization matches were then manually validated so that each match refers to an individual's membership in a unique political organization *before independence*.

Overall, the dataset includes 815 elite individuals who were active in 289 different political organizations before independence in the 18 countries included in the sample. The number of organizational memberships per individual ranges from 1 to 8, with an average of about 2. The list of recorded political organizations includes, for example, political parties, such as the Umma Party in Sudan or the Northern People's Party (NPP) in Ghana, ethnic organizations such as the Bwiti in Gabon (a secret society of the Fang group) or the Kikuyu Central Association in Kenya, professional associations like the Nigerian Bar Association, trade unions, or youth organizations, such as the West African Students Union (WASU) or the Union de la Jeunesse Congolaise in Congo-Brazzaville, thus encompassing a very diverse spectrum of political forces.

Since the "true" universe of relevant pre-independence African political elites is unknown, due to the lack of established definitions and data sources, it is impossible to conclusively validate the sample's representativeness. An alternative "positional" sampling approach identifies elites based on their positions in formal institutions (Putnam 1976: 15), which would seemingly provide a more objective demarcation of the elite universe. However, this positional approach entails three key substantive and methodological disadvantages compared to the reputational one. First, it limits the sample to a specific subset of elites and overlooks individuals

with informal and indirect influence, thus excluding a large portion of the elite population that is substantively relevant to my study. Second, when analyzing multiple countries, the loci of power and status tend to vary significantly across countries, forcing researchers to make subjective (and debatable) decisions about the relevant institutional positions in each country (Putnam 1976: 16).

Third, for the purposes of this study, the reputational approach to elite identification should be less sensitive to potential biases than a positional sample, given that the selection into such positions is likely driven by factors that also affect my outcomes of interest. For instance, a sample including elites who occupied positions in formal institutions during colonial rule might be skewed towards leaders deemed "cooperative" by the colonizers, a factor that likely influenced their subsequent relationship with post-colonial governments (and, thus, their experience of repression). Indeed, Table A1 in Appendix 1 reveals significant differences between individuals who held positions in the colonial state apparatus before independence and those who did not in terms of key individual characteristics, including their participation in violent opposition in the post-independence era. Thus, for the purposes of this study, the reputational approach on which my elite data are based should be preferable over alternatives. In the following section and in Appendix 1, I provide suggestive evidence that my sample is unlikely to be biased in terms of either my outcome of interest (repression) or the key attributes of ethnic group identity and age.

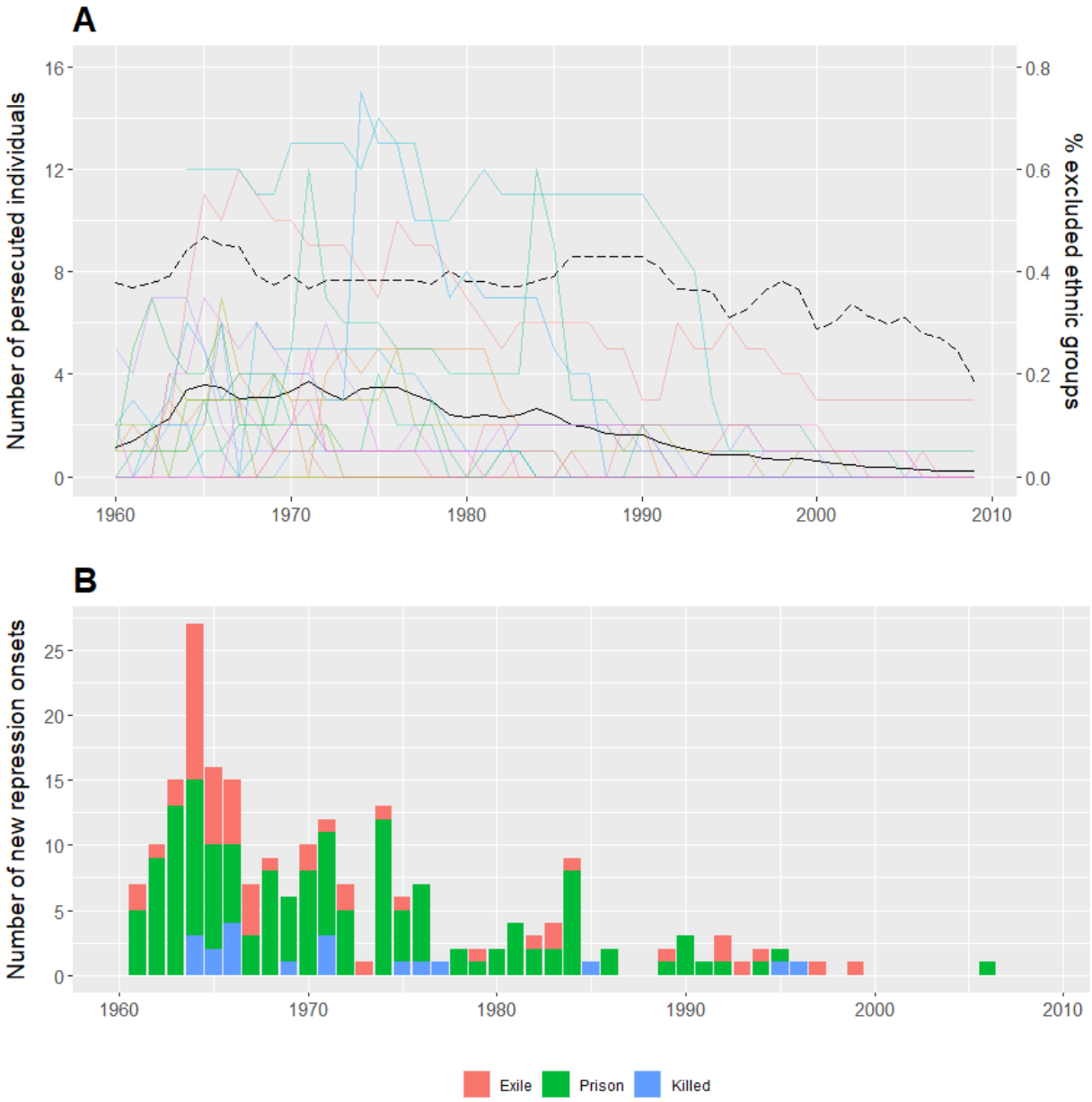
Measuring Individual-level Repression

The biographical entries in the Historical Dictionaries typically include individuals' years of birth and death, birth place, and a short summary of their public career (most importantly, their political activities and positions). In addition to time-invariant attributes (personal characteristics

and pre-independence institutional positions), this information was used to code a series of time-variant variables capturing individuals' post-independence political trajectories up to 2009.[5] Political repression is captured by three different dummy variables, referring to whether an individual was imprisoned/arrested, killed/disappeared, or exiled (i.e. forced to leave the country) for political reasons in a given year. Figure 2 shows the extent of elite repression in Africa between 1960 and 2009, overall and by country, according to my data. The figure reveals that elite repression was prevalent in Africa over the whole time period, increasing soon after independence and affecting almost all countries (except for Botswana) at some point. Unsurprisingly, patterns of repression vary considerably across countries, as indicated by the colored lines in Panel A. Panel B additionally distinguishes between the different forms of repression, illustrating that, as expected, deadly repression was far less widespread than the use of exile and imprisonment to target threatening individuals.

[5] Many Dictionaries do not reach beyond the first decade of the 2000s in their coverage. Thus, coding individual-level variables for the years after 2009 based on information from the Dictionaries would increase measurement error considerably.

Figure 2: Ethnic exclusion and elite repression in Africa over time



Note: In panel A, the colored lines show the number of elite individuals coded as politically persecuted by country over time, between 1960 and 2009, with each color representing a different country. The solid black line indicates the yearly average number of persecuted individuals across countries. The dashed line denotes the yearly mean of the relative number of politically excluded ethnic groups (compared to the total number of politically relevant groups) across countries, according to the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset. Panel B shows the number of new *onsets of repression by repression category over time.*

In the cross-sectional models, I use two dummy variables that indicate whether or not an individual suffered politically motivated repression of any kind (deadly, prison, or exile) and deadly repression specifically at any point after independence. Overall, 29.5% of all elite individuals in my sample who were still alive after independence were affected by repression at some point (N=223). 39 of them (about 5%) were killed for political reasons. The above-mentioned dearth of individual-level studies of elite repression means there is no "gold standard" to compare these percentages to. Goldring and Matthews focus on members of *ruling institutions* in sixteen different *autocratic regimes* and report about 3.8% of these elites as being killed and 5.4% as being incarcerated *within three years of being purged* (Goldring and Matthews 2023: 585). Limiting my sample to government members who exited government during authoritarian regimes, to replicate Goldring and Matthews's specific context as closely as possible, I find relatively similar percentages: 2.4% of this subset of my elites were killed and 8.3% incarcerated within three years following their exit from government.

The panel regressions rely on a repression onset dummy variable that is coded as 1 if an individual suffered political repression of any form in a given year without having been targeted in the preceding year, and as 0 if an individual was not politically persecuted. Ongoing years of repression are coded as missing. New onsets are coded after at least one year without repression. Using an onset variable is based on the rationale that the reasons for initial targeting might be quite different from those making repression persist or end, and my theoretical argument refers to the causes of the initial targeting of elite individuals.[6] Overall, there are 215 onsets of politically motivated repression recorded in the 18 countries included in the dataset between their

[6] See Kalyvas (2006: 82-3) for a similar distinction between civil conflict onset and duration: violence, once it has erupted, tends to produce endogenous dynamics.

independence and 2009. This amounts to just about 1% of all observations whereas 0.2% of all observations correspond to instances of political killings.

Elite Political Networks

Pre-independence political networks were determined based on elite individuals' memberships in the political organizations described above. Technically speaking, the data consist of a list of individual-organization matches for each country, with each line referring to an individual's membership in a given organization. In network analysis, the individuals and organizations represent the two modes – that is, the two different types of nodes – of a bipartite network in which the nodes in one mode (individuals) are connected to each other through the nodes in the other mode (organizations) (Borgatti and Everett 1997). Following standard practice, this bipartite network can be converted into a one-mode network of elite individuals through a count of individuals' overlaps in organizations – that is, the count of organizations that any two individuals jointly formed part of before independence – resulting in an undirected, weighted elite network for each country, with the weights of the network edges reflecting the overlap counts.

Based on these country-specific elite-to-elite networks, I first computed two different indicators that reflect individuals' positions in the original pre-independence networks of their respective countries. To test hypothesis H2, I use a measure of *trans-ethnic connectedness* denoting the relative number of an individual's trans-ethnic connections compared to all her/his connections. Trans-ethnic connections are defined as network ties between two individuals of different ethnic identity. The indicator ranges from 0 to 1, where 1 indicates exclusive connections to individuals of different ethnic groups and 0 means an individual only had

connections to members of their own ethnic group. Figure 1 above illustrates elites' pre-independence trans-ethnic connectedness in the case of Nigeria. The coloring of the nodes denotes network members' proportion of trans-ethnic connections, classified in quintiles, revealing a stark difference between the two politicians referred to in the introductory example. While Chief Olabisi Onabanjo is in the second-lowest quintile of trans-ethnic connectedness, Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya was part of an ethnically diverse network.

Importantly, given that an individual's relative number of trans-ethnic connections directly depends on the absolute number of network members from other ethnic groups, I use ethnic group-fixed effects in my statistical analysis, thus only exploiting variation in trans-ethnic connectedness among individuals from the same ethnic group. To test hypothesis H3, I also calculated each individual's *transitivity/clustering* value in these pre-independence networks to capture their level of cliquishness. Transitivity denotes the degree to which the adjacent nodes of a given network member (i.e. her/his neighbors) are themselves connected to each other. The higher the value, the more cliquish an individual's ego network.

In the second step, I then projected these pre-independence networks into time by recalculating individuals' network indicators for each post-independence year considering only network members who were still alive in that year. Technically speaking, for each year I multiplied the original connection matrix with a vector of 0/1 values denoting for each network member whether that individual was still alive in the corresponding year. This resulted in new, time-variant networks including only those individuals (and the connections between them) who were still alive in a given year. Thus, the time-variant trans-ethnic connectedness indicator denotes for each living individual and year the number of trans-ethnic connections who were still alive in that year relative to the number of all alive network "neighbors" while the time-variant

transitivity indicator specifies an individual's degree of clustering considering only network neighbors who were still alive in the year in question.

Ethnic Group Power Status

Elite individuals in the dataset were matched to the ethnic group categories from the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset (Cederman, Wimmer and Min 2010; Vogt et al. 2015), based on information from the Historical Dictionaries.[7] While EPR focuses on politically relevant groups only and thus represents a limited selection of ethnic groups, it has the unique advantage of providing time-variant information on groups' post-independence political status. Moreover, the focus on political relevance is appropriate for the purposes of this study because if rulers make judgments on individuals' threat potential through the lens of ethnic identity, these judgements will likely be based on the main ethno-political identities, rather than cultural boundaries that lack political relevance (Posner 2004).[8] With respect to the measurement of trans-ethnic connectedness, the use of EPR allows me to capture individuals' *pre-independence* connections across the group boundaries that would become politically salient *after* independence, thus again attenuating concerns of reverse causality. Ethnic identities are coded for 96% of all individuals in

[7] Where direct information on ethnic identity was missing, it was inferred from individuals' geographic origin by matching their geo-coded birth places with the ethnic group territories from the GeoEPR dataset (Wucherpfennig et al. 2011).

[8] For instance, the more extensive list of ethnic categories provided by Murdock's (1967) Ethnographic Atlas includes a great number of (sub-)groups that are unrelated to post-independence politics, such as various Hausa and Yoruba sub-groups in Nigeria. This would also have implications for measuring trans-ethnic connectedness by producing highly overstated values in many cases, thus impeding an adequate of test my argument.

the dataset (782 out of 815). Overall, 89 of the total of 96 ethnic groups listed in EPR for the 18 countries in the sample are represented by at least one elite individual in the dataset.

EPR's time-variant power status coding follows a roughly ordinal scale, ranging from actively discriminated to monopoly power, based on the degree of group leaders' access to executive state power. Depending on the specific context, this can be the presidency, the cabinet, the army command in military dictatorships, or the ruling party leadership. Ethnic groups are coded as politically included in a given year if leaders exert meaningful influence on the executive's decision-making or as excluded otherwise. Panel A in Figure 2 above shows the prevalence of ethnic exclusion, measured as the proportion of politically excluded groups compared to the total number of groups, in the countries of my sample over time. The degree of ethnic exclusion fluctuates over time, with a pronounced decline starting in the late 1990s, and overall mirrors the prevalence of elite repression, suggesting that the latter might indeed often be linked to ethnic identity.

To test hypothesis H1, I distinguish between three levels of ethnic groups' access to power, captured by separate dummy variables. First, the *ruling group dummy* indicates for each individual and year whether the individual's ethnic group was the politically most powerful group in the country in that year. This is the case if EPR classifies the group as the "senior partner" in a power-sharing regime, as "dominant" or as enjoying a "monopoly" over political power in a given year. Second, the *coalition partner dummy* is coded as 1 if an individual's ethnic group is included in executive power in a given year, but does not constitute the most powerful group ("junior partner"). These two dummies are compared to the baseline category of exclusion, which is the case when an individual's ethnic group does not have access to executive decision-making power.

Estimation

The cross-sectional models rely on the pre-independence values of the two main network indicators and include all individuals in the dataset who were still alive after independence. The units of analysis in these models are individuals, and I use ethnic group-fixed effects to reduce unobserved heterogeneity across units. The fixed effects absorb all basic characteristics of the overall network (such as its size and density), lasting differences in colonial legacies (e.g., between French and British colonialism), differences in ethnic demographics (which directly affect individuals' trans-ethnic connectedness), and other time-invariant characteristics of individuals' ethnic groups and the countries they inhabit. They also neutralize different reporting styles and levels of precision in biographical information across the series of Historical Dictionaries (which were composed by different authors).

The panel models make use of the time-variant versions of my network indicators (lagged by one year) and test the effects of both individuals' ethnic group status and network connections on their risk of (deadly) repression in a given year. In line with the time frame of the elite dataset, the analysis covers the years between countries' independence and 2009. The units of analysis in the panel models are individual-years, and I use year-fixed effects in addition to the ethnic group-fixed effects to absorb any time-specific continental developments and shocks, as, for example, significant changes in global commodity prices. I prefer group-fixed effects over individual-fixed effects in the panel models for two reasons. First, the key variation in the time-variant network indicators remains cross-sectional, resulting from differences between individuals' network positions before independence, which are mechanically projected into time.

Second, given my argument's focus on the combination of collective identity and individual networks, the substantively relevant comparison is between individuals of the same ethnic group.

Following Naidu, Robinson and Young (2021), in some models, I also employ network community-fixed effects based on individuals' membership in a specific community within the network. Communities were detected based on a modularity maximization approach (Brandes et al. 2008) and denote mutually exclusive clusters of individuals with particularly dense connections among each other and significantly less connections to individuals in other clusters. Assuming that individuals "flock" together due to (potentially unobserved) commonalities, exploiting only variation among individuals within such communities should further reduce unobserved heterogeneity across units. In addition, I also present robustness tests with organization-fixed effects, which limits the comparison to even smaller and more homogenous sets of elites (who formed part of at least one joint organization before independence), neutralizing additional unobserved heterogeneity.

In both the cross-sectional and panel analysis, I rely on linear probability models (LPM), which allow me to retain all observations without any within-group or within-year variation on the dependent variable despite the fixed effects. Even though they predict values beyond 0 and 1, I prefer the LPM to logistic regressions because the latter would limit variation on the dependent variable (e.g., excluding all ethnic groups with no individuals who suffered repression), possibly introducing selection bias. Yet, following Beck (2020), I also present robustness models with the subset of groups and (and years in panel models) with variation in the repression outcomes across individuals. The panel models include a cubic polynomial of individual-years without (deadly) repression to account for temporal dependence (Carter and Signorino 2010). Since

individuals within the same country (and, therefore, overall network) are likely to have similar variances, I use Huber-White standard errors clustered on countries in all models.

Alternative Explanations and Control Variables

Given that the biographies in the Historical Dictionaries are ex-post facto representations of individuals' political careers, it seems possible that individuals who suffered politically motivated repression received particularly detailed coverage, affecting their network characteristics in my data, which would raise concerns of reverse causality. To mitigate this issue, I control for both the length of the Dictionary entry on a given person and the number of organizations that an individual formed part of before independence. The latter also serves to distinguish the specific effect of individuals' network positions from the mere degree of political activism. Biography length is measured with an ordinal variable, ranging from 1 (less than a third of a page) to 5 (more than two pages). I also control for gender, which could affect both biographical coverage and political opportunities.

In addition to the ethnic group, network community, and year-fixed effects, I consider four sets of control variables, discussed in more detail in Appendix 2. The first set covers alternative network measures that could be related to both my key explanatory variables and the outcome of interest. Among others, this includes individuals' degree centrality, to distinguish the specific effects of trans-ethnic connectedness and clustering from mere network centrality, as well as the prevalence of repression in an individual's network neighborhood, measured as the proportion of network neighbors that suffered political repression in a given year, which helps me neutralize spatial dependencies in the network. The second set of control variables captures time-invariant individual attributes that could have affected both individuals' network connections and their

post-independence political trajectories. Most importantly, I calculated the proximity of individuals' birth places to the nearest European mission, the coast, and the pre-independence territorial capital, respectively, as measures of individuals' (potential) exposure to colonialism. I also control for their age and their pre-independence institutional positions (in the colonial state apparatus or pre-independence security forces) and educational endowments (in the form of university education).

It should be noted, though, that these institutional appointment variables could themselves be a *function* of my network indicators. For example, individuals could be appointed to/elected into, or barred from, colonial state positions *because* of their political network connections. Thus, the effects of the network indicators should be seen as conservative estimates given the inclusion of these potential post-treatment variables. With respect to age, given that the variable might have a curvilinear effect on post-independence political opportunities, with particularly low and high ages possibly both having a negative impact, I also include a quadratic term of the variable.

The third set of control variables captures alternative time-variant sources of individuals' threat potential. This includes individuals' *personal* engagement in violent opposition against the government, but, given the importance of collective identity in my argument, also the involvement in a rebellion or a non-violent resistance campaign of an individual's ethnic *group*. In addition, I control for individuals' own inclusion in the cabinet and their *connections* to other individuals who formed part of the cabinet. The fourth set of controls gauges the time-variant level of opposition in the country as a whole as well as rulers' general governing strategy. I control for the occurrence of coups and national-level elections, plus the level of democracy as a measure of respect for civil liberties more broadly (beyond the elite level). In terms of rulers'

governing strategy, co-option is measured by the total number of individuals from my elite sample who were included in the government, whereas the degree of elite repression is captured by the total number of individuals from the sample who were politically persecuted in a given year. The latter also allows me to isolate the effects of my main explanatory variables from global patterns of repression in the overall network.

Tables A2 and A3 in Appendix 2 present summary statistics of all independent variables. In the panel models, all right-hand side variables are lagged one year.

Results

Elite Networks, Ethnic Group Status, and Repression

Table 1 presents the regression results, focusing on the effects of my main explanatory variables. The full results are reported in Table A4 in Appendix 3. Starting with the cross-sectional analysis, Model 1 evaluates the impact of elites' pre-independence political networks on their post-independence experience of repression in general (i.e. of any kind), controlling for alternative network-related explanations and other time-invariant individual attributes. The results of the model provide support for hypothesis H2. The coefficient of the trans-ethnic connectedness variable is negative and statistically significant, indicating that individuals whose political alliances before independence bridged ethnic group divides faced a lower risk of politically motivated repression after independence. In fact, a move from the 25^{th} to the 75^{th} percentile of the variable more than halves individuals' risk of post-independence repression (49% vs. 19%). The effect of pre-independence transitivity on the risk of post-independence repression in general is positive but does not reach statistical significance.

The introductory example of Nigeria in Figure 1 aptly illustrates the importance of trans-ethnic connections where rulers' threat perception is strongly influenced by ethnic group identity. Interestingly, besides the previously mentioned similarities of the two Yoruba politicians, they were also both relatively centrally located in the country's pre-independence elite network, as indicated by the size of the nodes in the network graph. However, as described above, they differed markedly in the extent to which their political connections included ties to members of other ethnic groups. In line with the statistical results, their political trajectories after the coup d'état on December 31, 1983, diverged drastically. Onabanjo, along with other politicians considered to be a threat to the military regime, was charged with corruption and sentenced to 22 years in prison (though pardoned after five years). By contrast, Ogunsanya became Attorney General of Lagos and later the Commissioner of Education.

Model 2 focuses on deadly repression only, which is much less frequent and which rulers likely only use as a last resort. The results provide support for hypothesis H3. Individuals who exhibited a high degree of cliquishness in their countries' pre-independence elite networks were exposed to a significantly higher risk of political assassination after independence than their peers who belonged to more open network clusters. Moving the transitivity indicator from its 25^{th} to the 75^{th} percentile increases the post-independence assassination risk by over 50%, from 4.1% to 6.4%. By contrast, the coefficient of the trans-ethnic connectedness variable shrinks close to 0 and turns insignificant in this model.

Table 1: Elite networks, ethnic group power status, and political repression. Regression results

	Cross-sectional		Panel models			
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**
	All repr.	Deadly	All repression		Deadly repression	
Trans-ethnic connectedness (pre-ind.)	-.48 (.22)*	-.03 (.04)				
Transitivity (pre-ind.)	.06 (.16)	.16 (.07)*				
Group status: coalition partner			-.01 (.00)	-.01 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Group status: ruling group			-.01 (.00)*	-.01 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Trans-ethnic connectedness (time-var.)			-.03 (.01)*	-.03 (.01)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Transitivity (time-var.)			.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.00)*	.01 (.00)**
N	561	561	9,040	9,040	14,126	14,126
Adjusted R^2	.197	.089	.026	.026	.011	.012
Ethnic group-fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year-fixed effects			X	X	X	X
Community-fixed effects				X		X
Cubic polynomial of years w/out persecution			X	X	X	X

*Note: Standard errors, clustered on countries, in parentheses. + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

To evaluate the impact of both individuals' ethnic group status and network connections on their post-independence fate over time, I now turn to the panel analysis. Models 3-4 again focus on repression in general. Model 3 includes ethnic group and year-fixed effects while Model 4 additionally employs network community-fixed effects (which are orthogonal to ethnic group membership). The results of both models provide support for hypotheses H1 and H2. Ethnic group identity matters for individuals' risk of political persecution in multiethnic states: in particular, individuals from ruling ethnic groups are significantly less likely to suffer politically motivated repression than individuals from politically excluded groups. The risk of repression is more than twice as high for individuals from excluded ethnic groups (1.8%) as for those who belong to the ruling group (0.8%). The coefficient of the coalition partner dummy is also negative, but does not reach standard levels of statistical significance (p=0.17).

Importantly, the effect of ethnic group status is not only net of a series of basic individual attributes (such as gender, geographic origin, education, etc.) but also independent of whether individuals formed part of the government themselves. This suggests that rulers' threat

perceptions and, therefore, the risk of repression are shaped as much by collective identities as by individual characteristics and behavior. The importance of collective identity is further emphasized by the effects of the two control variables for opposition activities. I find that individuals face a higher risk of becoming the target of political repression if their ethnic *groups* are engaged in opposition (of either violent or non-violent form) to the government. By contrast, the coefficient of the indicator of individuals' previous involvement in violent opposition activities is positive, but not statistically significant.[9]

Yet, again, beyond individuals' collective identity, their political network connections also matter. In particular, moving the trans-ethnic connectedness indicator from its 25th to the 75th percentile results in a fivefold decrease (from 2.5% to 0.5%) in repression risk. My argument attributes this effect to a reputation of cross-group cooperation and loyalty, derived from trans-ethnic political connections, which reduces the perceived threat potential. Table A5 in Appendix 4 provides tentative evidence for this theorized causal mechanism, showing that it is trans-ethnic connectedness as such, rather than connections to the ruling ethnic group for members of politically excluded groups or ethnically homogenous cliques, that causes the effect.

Table A4 in Appendix 3 shows that key country-level control variables, such as coups, elections, or the degree of democracy, do not exert a consistently significant effect on the outcome variable, indicating that while they might influence the overall prevalence of (elite) repression, they are much less decisive in determining *who* among the potential victims of repression will be targeted and how. Nor do I find evidence for a diffusion effect of repression

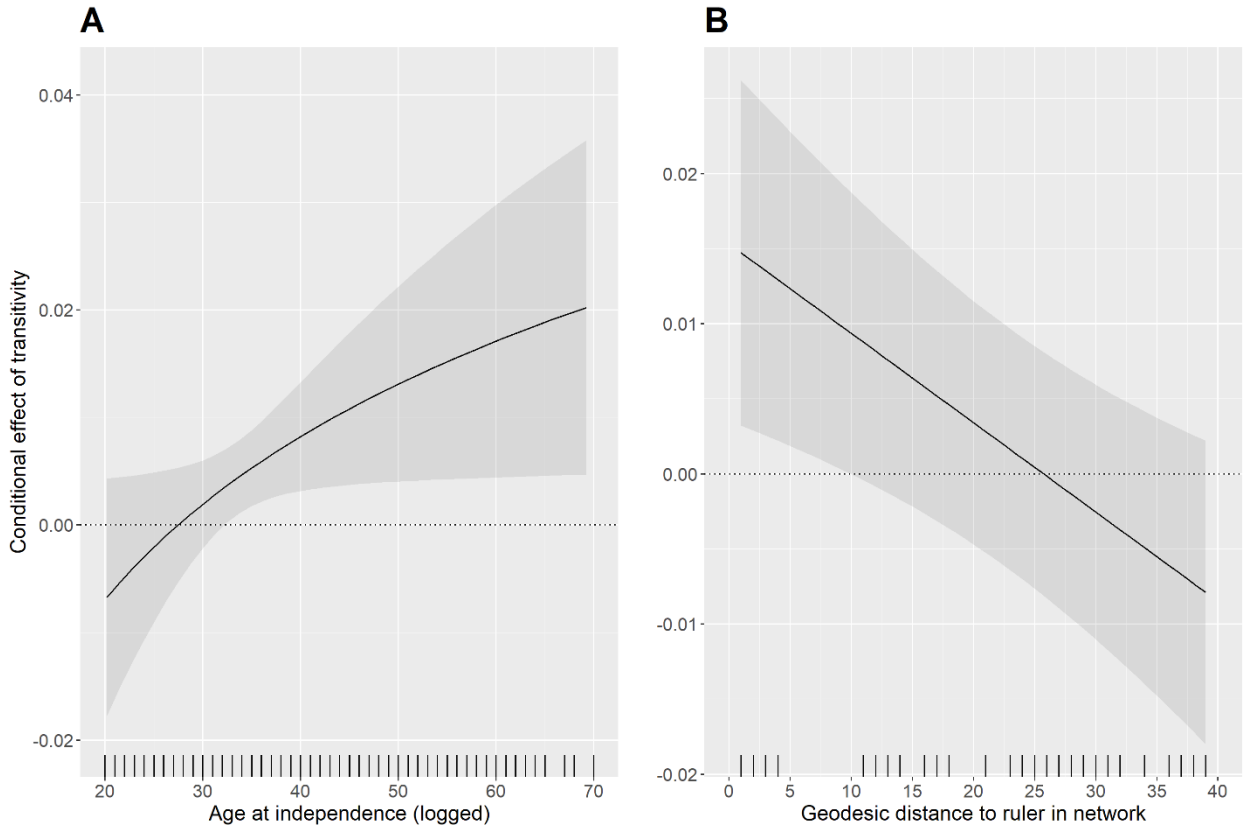
[9] This also suggests that some of the individual-level attributes controlled for in the models determine both individuals' likelihood of engaging in violent opposition and their subsequent risk of punishment (see also Table A1 in Appendix 1).

(as measured by the prevalence of preceding repression in individuals' network neighborhood and in the overall network). Thus, in many cases, it might be enough for rogue rulers to target just one person to send a signal of deterrence to others in the same network.

Models 5-6 shift the focus to the likelihood of deadly repression over time, with Model 6 again including network community-fixed effects in addition to the ethnic group and year-fixed effects. In line with the cross-sectional Model 2, the results provide further support for hypothesis H3. Individuals' cliquishness has a significant positive impact on their risk of political assassination. Moving the transitivity indicator from its 25th to the 75th percentile increases the risk by about 46%. Thus, while members of cliques are not necessarily more frequent targets of repression in general, *if and when* targeted, they face a particularly high risk of assassination.

Figure 3 and Table A5 in Appendix 4 provide suggestive evidence that the effect of cliquishness on deadly repression more likely stems from a magnified threat perception than from a lower risk of backfiring due to isolation. For one thing, the effect of the transitivity indicator increases with individuals' age, as shown in Panel A of Figure 3. Given that age should proxy both public visibility (as older individuals tend to have been in politics for longer) and authority (especially in gerontocratic societies), this suggests that rulers target the most visible clique members and suspected kingpins. Moreover, Panel B reveals that the effect of the transitivity indicator on the risk of deadly repression also increases the shorter the geodesic distance in the network between an individual and their country's current ruler, which again speaks in favor of a magnified threat perception and against network isolation as the causal mechanism underlying the relationship between cliquishness and deadly repression.

Figure 3: Age and distance to ruler as moderators of the effect of transitivity on deadly repression



Note: The graph shows the conditional effect of transitivity on the risk of deadly repression as a function of individuals' age (panel A) and geodesic distance to the current ruler of a given year (panel B), respectively.

Tables A6-A8 in Appendix 5 report a series of robustness tests, using alternative repression measures (for example, excluding instances of exile, which could reflect individuals' ability to anticipate repression), testing the sensitivity of my results to both model specification and variations in the panel sample, and checking for the influence of outliers by dropping one country at a time from the analysis. My results remain robust in all models.

Origins of Pre-independence Elite Alliances

Finally, I turn to examining the determinants of pre-independence elite alliances. Why do elites join forces in the political arena with some peers, but not with others, eventually leading to different degrees of clustering and trans-ethnic connectedness? Appendix 6 explains my empirical approach in detail. I mainly rely on dyadic linear probability regressions, with pairs of individuals within a given country as units of analysis, which allows me to account for both monadic and dyadic explanatory factors and, thus, to simultaneously evaluate why some individuals were able to forge more (trans-ethnic) political alliances than others and why some *pairs* of individuals became connected, but not others.

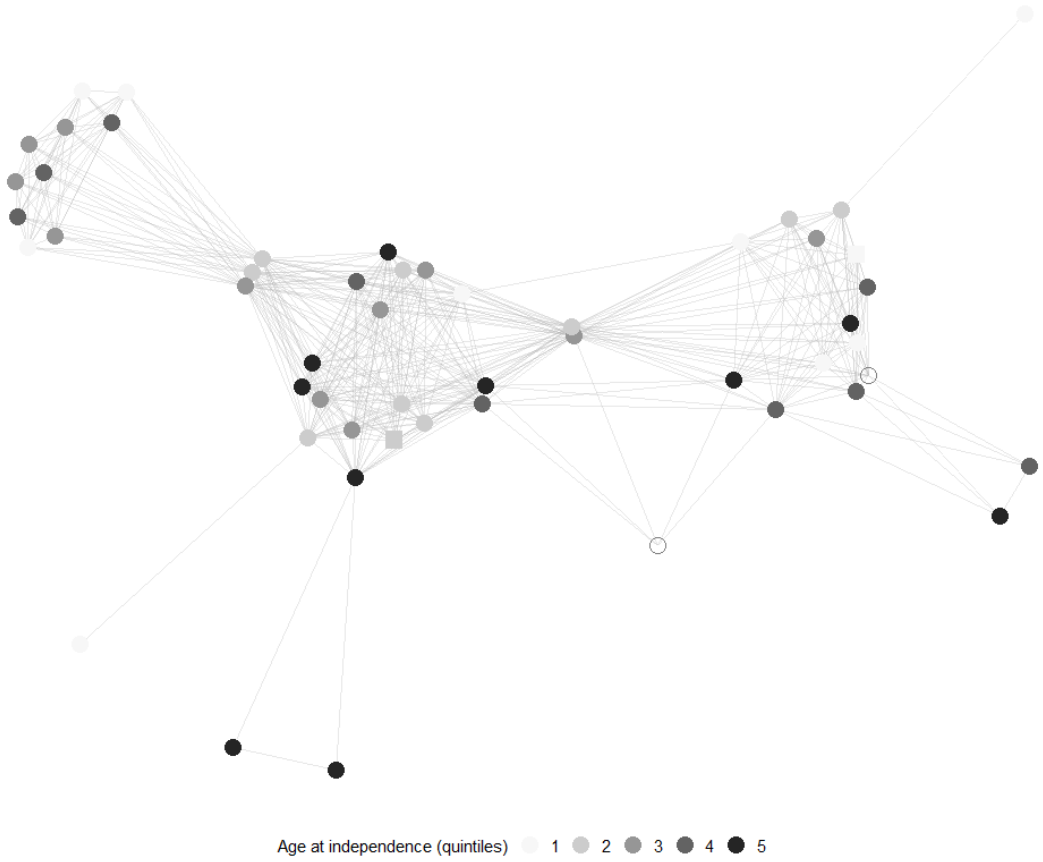
Table A9 in Appendix 6 summarizes the results. I find a robust and consistent effect of generational proximity on political alliance formation. The greater their age difference, the lower the likelihood of any two individuals to come together in the same political organization. An increase in the variable from its 25^{th} to the 75^{th} percentile is associated with a decrease of eight percentage points in the likelihood of a political connection, from 55% to 47%. By extension, this also means that if closeness in age makes it likely that two individuals become politically allied, other individuals who are of similar age will then equally be likely to become connected to both of the two, and, thus, cliques in the overall network emerge as a function of the "fragmentation" in generational origins, that is, when *some* individuals are much closer in age to *each other* than to everyone else in the network.

I also examine the determinants of trans-ethnic connections specifically, limiting the sample of dyads to non-co-ethnic pairs within a given country. Again, difference in age reduces the likelihood of trans-ethnic political connections. Reversely, individuals who happened to be close in age to elites from other ethnic groups had better chances to form such bridging alliances

before independence. Figure 4 visualizes this generational effect in the case of my original example of Nigeria. The figure again plots Nigeria's pre-independence elite network, with the coloring of the nodes now referring to network members' age at the country's independence, classified in quintiles. While many cross-generational connections existed, there is a marked tendency of clustering according to age. Being 33 years old at Nigeria's independence, Chief Olabisi Onabanjo was part of the lowest age quintile whereas Chief Ogunsanya was nine years older (42 years at independence), and indeed, the latter's age quintile contained less elite peers from his own Yoruba ethnic group.[10] This suggests that part of Onabanjo's misfortune was to belong to an ethnically less diverse age cohort, lowering his chances of forging trans-ethnic political connections in the crucial transformative moment before the country's independence, with far-reaching consequences for his future political fate.

[10] The same observation applies when breaking age down into deciles instead of quintiles. Appendix 1 shows that my pre-independence elite sample generally is representative in terms of individuals' age. Remember also that all models of repression above control for age.

Figure 4: Age and political connections in Nigeria's pre-independence elite network



Note: The figure shows Nigeria's pre-independence elite network, based on my elite sample. Nodes refer to individual elites; edges denote political connections defined by joint organizational memberships. Color codings rank individuals according to their quintile of age at independence, with darker colors indicating higher values and empty nodes marking missing values.

Conclusions

Politically motivated repression abounds across the globe. Elites by definition have a disproportionate influence over the fate of their country, yet we still know surprisingly little about who among a country's political elite – including politicians, social activists, organization leaders, etc. – suffers political repression and why. Beyond punishing acts of violent and non-

violent dissent, rogue rulers keen on unduly increasing or prolonging their personal power likely consider the potential for future challenges when striking against potential rivals. In turn, given that political or military challenges to the ruler – whether in the form of coordinated elite action or popular mobilization – are normally *collective* acts of contention, rivals' threat potential is likely judged at least partly based on their collective identity and their political networks. In this article, I used novel micro-level data on a diverse set of elite individuals across 18 different African countries and their political trajectories over various decades to evaluate how these elites' ethnic identity and pre-independence political network connections affected their risk of different forms of political persecution after independence.

The empirical results confirm the relevance of collective identity for rulers' threat perceptions and, therefore, targeting choices. Even when controlling for a series of individual attributes (such as geographic origin, education, etc.), measures of individual behavior (participation in government or opposition), and network community membership, elite individuals from politically excluded ethnic groups are more than twice as likely to suffer political repression than individuals from ruling groups. This finding dovetails with findings from the civil war literature that ethnic group identity often constitutes a key driver of civilian victimization (Fjelde and Hultman 2014). Rulers might also purge elites from particular ethnic groups from positions of political power to shield themselves from ethnically based palace coups (Roessler 2011). Interestingly, my results indicate that if at the group level, political exclusion in weakly institutionalized states is targeted at groups with low (collective) threat capabilities relative to the ruling group (Roessler and Ohls 2018), rulers still feel impelled to intimidate or eliminate potential rivals from such excluded groups through repressive measures at the individual level.

I also find support for the theorized effects of individuals' network connections. Higher relative numbers of trans-ethnic connections reduce the risk of repression. Moreover, individuals with high clustering scores exhibit a particularly high risk of deadly repression. Again, these effects are not only net of individual attributes and measures of individual behavior but also independent of network community and even organizational membership. Existing research on social networks has largely focused on the latter's impact on outcomes of cooperation and (contentious) collective action (e.g., Kim and Pfaff 2012; Larson and Lewis 2017; Larson et al. 2019; Naidu, Robinson and Young 2021; Siegel 2009). Yet, given that rulers often repress preemptively – in anticipation of such contentious action (or cooperation) – social networks should also influence patterns of repression. In line with this assumption, my results indicate that even at the elite level, inter-personal relationships can make the difference between life and death.

Finally, I find clear evidence for an effect of generational proximity on elite individuals' network connections. The greater their age difference, the lower the likelihood of any two individuals to come together in the same political organization. Individuals within the same age cohort are repeatedly brought together across a variety of social settings – from school classes to wedding tables. These social foci provide opportunities for interaction that can foster lasting relationships (Burt 2005: 12-3). As a result, "fragmentation" in generational origins (i.e. individuals' age) among elites produces cliques in the overall elite network. Proximity in age also increases the likelihood of political connections across ethnic group boundaries. Thus, individuals who happened to be close in age to elites from other ethnic groups had better chances to form such bridging alliances before independence, providing them with crucial social capital to protect them from political persecution following independence. In this sense, my article also

contributes to a long-standing literature on elite cohesion or fragmentation (e.g., Higley and Moore 1981; Higley et al. 1991; Lijphart 1977; Putnam 1976; Slater 2010) by shedding new light on the structural sources of elite alliances in key moments of state formation.

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Appendix 1: Elite Sample Representativeness

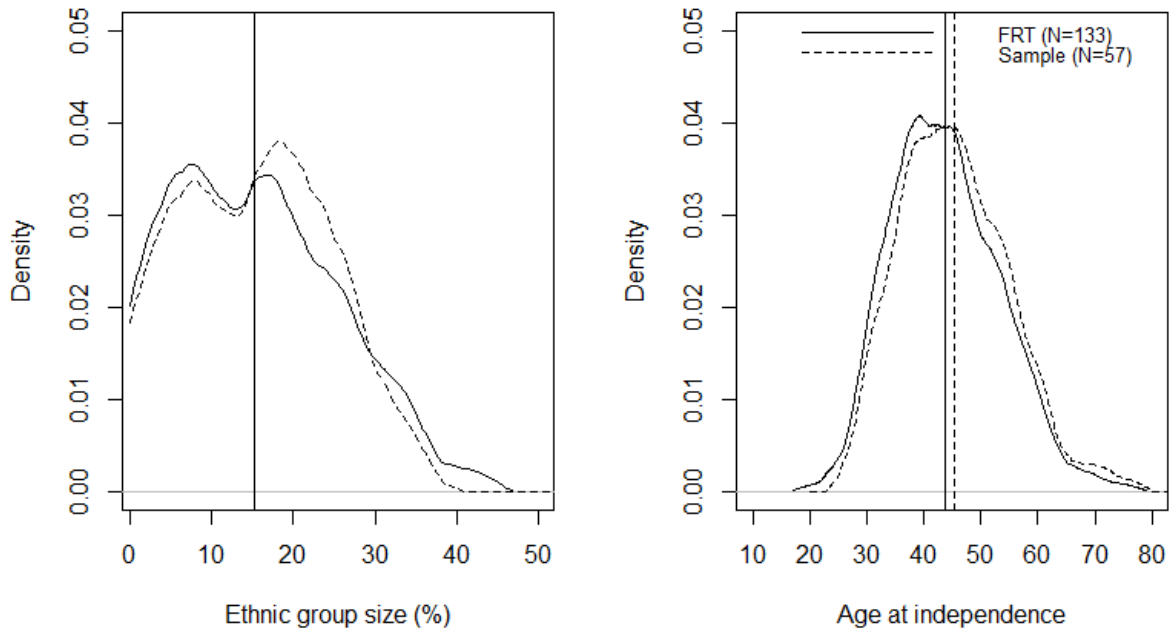
Vogt and Boix (2023) rely on the data on post-independence government members from Francois, Rainer and Trebbi (2015) to conduct a partial test of representativeness of their pre-independence elite sample. As previously mentioned, there is no generally accepted empirical approach to identifying elite individuals and no existing datasets on pre-independence African elites across countries. Thus, since the "true" universe of relevant pre-independence African political elites is unknown, it is not possible to conclusively validate the representativeness of the sample. Moreover, the data on government members by Francois, Rainer and Trebbi (FRT) only cover the post-independence period, and the further away from independence a given cabinet was, the more leaders it included who had *not* been politically active before independence (for example, because they were too young) and thus are not representative of the *pre*-independence elite. Vogt and Boix (2023) mitigate this issue by focusing only on individuals from the FRT data who formed part of the government in the *first* year of their countries' independence, which comes as close to the pre-independence period as possible.

The FRT data do not cover the whole of Africa, but there are ten countries that form part of both their set of countries and Vogt and Boix's: Benin, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Overall, about 43% of all first post-independence cabinet members in these countries (57 out of 133) are included in the Vogt and Boix sample of pre-independence elites. Most importantly, the FRT data include two relevant variables that allow for a comparison of these individuals included in the sample with the full "universe" of first post-independence cabinet members: the relative size of individuals' ethnic groups and their birth year (and, thus, their age at the time of their countries' independence). This comparison then provides at least a partial test of the representativeness of

the Vogt and Boix sample, for the important subset of future government members and in terms of two individual characteristics (age and ethnic group size) that are highly relevant to the argument of this study.

Figure A1 compares the distributions of individuals' ethnic group sizes and of their age at independence in the full FRT universe and in the Vogt and Boix sample. The solid lines in both panels refer to the full set of individuals who formed part of the first post-independence cabinets in the ten countries listed above, according to FRT, while the dashed lines correspond to those individuals who are included in the sample. The vertical lines denote the means of the respective distributions. The plots reveal that the distributions of both variables in the sample mirror the distributions in the FRT universe quite closely. The mean of ethnic group sizes in the sample (15.2%) is practically identical to that in the full universe (15.1%). The curve of the age variable is also practically identical, though shifted a bit to the right (by about two years), which is to be expected given that age is directly dependent on the timing of the sample: even the first post-independence cabinets likely included some individuals who were younger than the average of elites active before independence. Overall, this comparison reveals that at least for a highly important subset, the sample is unlikely to be biased in terms of the key socio-political factors of ethnic identity and age.

Figure A1: Test of sample representativeness based on first post-independence cabinet members



Note: The graph shows the distributions of the ethnic group size and age at independence variables among the first post-independence cabinet members in the data from Francois, Rainer and Trebbi (2015) (solid lines) and compares them to the distributions of the same variables for the subset of those first post-independence cabinet members who are included in the Vogt and Boix (2023) pre-independence elite sample (dashed lines). Vertical lines denote the means of the respective distributions.

Next, I contrast the reputational approach to elite identification used in the Vogt and Boix sample with an alternative positional one, which identifies elites based on their positions in formal institutions. In the context of this study, one such positional sample could for instance include elites who occupied positions in formal institutions during colonial rule. Therefore, Table A1 compares individuals who formed part of the colonial state apparatus before independence to those who did not. It shows that there exist significant differences between these two groups of individuals in key characteristics, such as university education, age at independence, geographic origin, participation in violent opposition in the post-independence era, etc. This suggests that for

the purposes of this study, the reputational sampling approach likely offers advantages over alternative samples based on individuals' institutional positions.

Table A1: Differences in individual characteristics as a function of pre-independence colonial state office

Pre-ind. domestic political office	**No**			**Yes**			
Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Test**
Distance from coast (logged)	252	1	.81	439	1.3	.86	F=22.09***
Distance from capital (logged)	252	.12	1.7	439	.11	1.8	F=.005
Distance from mission (logged)	252	-1.4	1.9	439	-1.2	1.9	F=.88
Gender	277	1.1	.28	479	1	.12	F=22.13***
Age at independence	229	38	12	441	44	10	F=49.79***
Pre-independence military	277	.09	.28	479	.07	.26	F=.45
Pre-independence university education	277	.3	.46	479	.43	.5	F=13.99***
Connection strength with first ruler	277	1	1.1	479	.87	.71	F=3.68*
Post-independence participation in violent opposition	277	.069	.25	479	.023	.15	F=9.686***

*Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

Appendix 2: Control Variables and Descriptive Statistics

In addition to the ethnic group, network community, and year-fixed effects, I consider four sets of control variables. The first set covers alternative network measures that could be related to both my key explanatory variables and the outcome of interest. In the cross-sectional models, I control for individuals' degree centrality (number of connections) in their countries' pre-independence networks to distinguish the specific effects of trans-ethnic connectedness and clustering from mere network centrality. I also include a time-invariant indicator of the strength of an individual's connection to the country's first post-independence ruler, measured as the number of their joint pre-independence organizational memberships. The more organizations an individual jointly formed part of together with the later ruler, the stronger their political bond, which in turn could have had long-lasting effects on that individual's "threat reputation".

In the panel models, I include a count variable of individuals' number of network neighbors who were still alive in a given year as a time-variant measure of their network centrality. I also account for the prevalence of repression in an individual's network neighborhood, measured as the proportion of network neighbors that suffered political repression in a given year, which helps me neutralize spatial dependencies in the network. Finally, I include a time-variant measure of the network's overall modularity, that is, its overall degree of division into communities as described above. The more individuals assemble in internally densely connected, but separated clusters, the higher a network's modularity. Thus, this indicator allows me to distinguish a given individual's degree of clustering from the overall cliquishness of the network.

The second set of control variables captures time-invariant individual characteristics that could have affected both individuals' network connections and their post-independence political

trajectories. For one thing, the infrastructural presence of the colonial state and the length of colonial rule varied greatly within the territory of a given colony, producing unequal infrastructural and cultural endowments (as well as exposure to repression and exploitation) across individuals (Huillery 2009; Young 1994). Thus, I control for individuals' (potential) exposure to colonialism, using three different indicators: the proximity of their place of origin to the nearest European mission (Nunn 2010), the coast, and the pre-independence territorial capital, all calculated based on individuals' geo-coded birth places. Given the skewed distributions, I use the natural log of these variables.

Drawing on the biographical information in the Dictionaries, I also control for individuals' pre-independence institutional and educational endowments. To capture the latter, I include a dummy variable indicating whether an individual had obtained a university education before independence. In terms of institutional endowments, I consider whether an individual occupied a position in the domestic colonial state apparatus (either elected or as civil servant) before independence and whether she/he formed part of the pre-independence security forces (e.g., the colonial army), respectively. It should be noted, though, that these institutional appointment variables could themselves be a *function* of my network indicators. For example, individuals could be appointed to/elected into, or barred from, colonial state positions *because* of their political network connections. Thus, the effects of the network indicators should be seen as a conservative estimate given the inclusion of these potential post-treatment variables. In addition, I control for the mean distance between an individual's birth place and the territories of all other ethnic groups in the country as a measure of individuals' cultural capital obtained from early-life exposure to other ethnic groups, which could affect both my indicator of trans-ethnic connectedness and individuals' political trajectory.

The final individual characteristic relates to age and generational effects. Individuals might be particularly likely to associate with individuals of the same age cohort while age should also influence individuals' post-independence political opportunities. I thus control for both individuals' age at independence and their average age difference to all other individuals in the country. Given that age might have a curvilinear effect on post-independence political opportunities, with particularly low and high ages possibly both having a negative impact, I also include a quadratic term of individuals' age at independence.

The third set of control variables, used in the panel models, captures alternative time-variant sources of individuals' threat potential. Given that my argument focuses on preemptive repression, based on rulers' assessment of rival elites' threat potential over and above their observed behavior in the past, I account for individuals' engagement in violent opposition against the government. Violent opposition is defined as individuals participating in a coup or armed rebellion, and I coded for each individual and year a cumulative indicator that counts the number of previous years in which that individual had been engaged in such opposition activities, according to the Historical Dictionaries. Given the importance of collective identity in my argument, I also consider opposition activities at the level of individuals' ethnic groups. I include a dummy variable that is coded as 1 if an individual's group was involved either in a rebellion, according to the ACD2EPR dataset (Wucherpfennig et al. 2012), or in a non-violent mass resistance campaign. Information on the latter stems from NAVCO 2.0 (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013) and Pischedda (2020).

In addition to opposition, I also control for individuals' personal participation in government. For that purpose, I matched my elite dataset with yearly data on individual government members from the WhoGov dataset (Nyrup and Bramwell 2020) and from François,

Rainer and Trebbi (2015), thus identifying which individuals in my elite sample formed part of their country's post-independence government in which year.[11] I rely on a dummy variable that indicates for each observation whether the corresponding individual was a member of government in that year. Moreover, rulers' perception of rival elites' threat potential (and the risk of backfiring) could also be affected by the latter's *connections* to individuals who form part of the government. Thus, I computed for each individual and year the number of connections who were included in government in that year relative to the number of all network neighbors who were still alive.

The fourth set of controls, used in the panel models, gauges the time-variant level of threat in the country as a whole, in the form of violent and non-violent opposition, as well as rulers' general governing strategy. I include a dummy variable that records whether the country experienced a coup in a given year, based on Powell and Thyne (2011). To capture non-violent political competition that could affect rulers' threat perception I include a dummy variable marking years in which a national-level election took place, taken from Version 6 of the NELDA dataset (Hyde and Marinov 2012).

Furthermore, I draw on three time-variant variables to gauge the degree of rulers' use of co-option and repression. Co-option is measured by the total number of individuals from my elite sample who were included in the government in a given year (according to the WhoGov dataset and François, Rainer and Trebbi), whereas the degree of elite repression is captured by the total

[11] Note that the WhoGov data only record government members from 1966 onward, thus missing the first post-independence years of most countries in my sample. Therefore, I complement these data with those from François, Rainer and Trebbi, which cover 15 African countries of which 10 are included in my sample (Benin, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone). This allows me to include the immediate post-independence years of these 10 countries in the panel regressions.

number of individuals from my elite sample who were politically persecuted in a given year. Again, the latter also allows me to isolate the effects of my main explanatory variables from global patterns of repression in the overall network. In addition, I include V-Dem's liberal democracy variable (Coppedge et al. 2015) as a measure of respect for civil liberties more broadly (beyond the elite level).

Finally, I include a dummy variable that indicates whether a country's ruler in a given year still hails from my pre-independence elite sample as transitions to political newcomers from outside the original elite network could reflect significant changes in the overall power constellations and disrupt the effects of my network variables. Tables A2 and A3 below present summary statistics of all independent variables for the cross-sectional and panel analyses, respectively. In the panel models, all right-hand side variables are lagged one year.

Table A2: Summary statistics of independent variables, cross-sectional models

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Trans-ethnic connectedness (pre-ind.)	722	.53	.60	.31	0	1
Transitivity (pre-ind.)	693	.92	1	.14	0	1
Degree centrality (pre-ind.)	756	31	21	28	0	101
N of pre-ind. orgs.	756	1.80	1	1.20	1	8
Connection strength with first ruler	756	.92	1	.86	0	6
Distance from coast (logged)	691	1.20	1.30	.86	0	2.80
Distance from capital (logged)	691	.11	.69	1.70	-5.90	4.40
Distance from mission (logged)	691	-1.30	-1	1.90	-6.60	3.80
Avg. distance to other groups (logged)	683	1	.98	.55	0	4.40
Gender	756	1	1	.20	1	2
Age difference to other individuals	668	8.90	7.50	6.80	.05	46
Age at independence	670	42	41	11	19	91
Biography length	756	2.50	3	1	1	5
Pre-ind. domestic pol. office	756	.63	1	.48	0	1
Pre-ind. military	756	.08	0	.27	0	1
Pre-ind. university education	756	.38	0	.49	0	1

Table A3: Summary statistics of independent variables, panel models

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Group status: coalition partner	20,993	.31	0	.46	0	1
Group status: ruling group	20,993	.41	0	.49	0	1
Trans-ethnic connectedness (time-var.)	22,112	.52	.60	.34	0	1
Transitivity (time-var.)	20,092	.93	1	.14	0	1
N active neighbors	23,137	23	17	22	0	95
Network modularity (time-var.)	23,137	.11	0	.18	0	.75
N of pre-ind. orgs.	23,889	1.70	1	1.10	1	8
Connection strength with first ruler	23,889	.92	1	.87	0	6
Distance from coast (logged)	21,917	1.20	1.30	.86	0	2.80
Distance from capital (logged)	21,917	.10	.67	1.70	-5.90	4.40
Distance from mission (logged)	21,917	-1.20	-1	1.80	-6.60	3.80
Avg. distance to other groups (logged)	21,651	1	.98	.52	0	4.40
Gender	23,889	1	1	.21	1	2
Age difference to other individuals	20,375	8.70	8	6.20	.05	46
Age at independence	20,455	39	38	10	19	91
Biography length	23,889	2.50	3	1	1	5
Pre-ind. domestic pol. office	23,889	.59	1	.49	0	1
Pre-ind. military	23,889	.07	0	.26	0	1
Pre-ind. university education	23,889	.39	0	.49	0	1
Government member	21,332	.09	0	.29	0	1
History of violent opposition	23,138	.05	0	.44	0	9
Ethnic group opposition dummy	23,889	.12	0	.32	0	1
Persecuted neighbors	15,579	.07	0	.14	0	1
Killed neighbors	22,649	0	0	.01	0	.50
Neighbors in government	21,393	.11	.03	.16	0	1
N persecuted elites	23,137	2.90	2	3.60	0	15
N elites in government	21,332	3.90	2	4.10	0	15
Liberal democracy	22,903	.15	.10	.13	.01	.66
Coup occurrence	23,111	.14	0	.47	0	2
Election year	23,889	.22	0	.42	0	1
Ruler from pre-ind. network	23,770	.67	1	.47	0	1

Appendix 3: Full Regression Results

Table A4 reports the full regression results corresponding to Table 1 in the main text.

Table A4: Full regression results for Table 1 in main text

	Cross-sectional		Panel models			
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**
	All repr.	Deadly	All repression		Deadly repression	
Trans-ethnic connectedness (pre-ind.)	-.48 (.22)*	-.03 (.04)				
Transitivity (pre-ind.)	.06 (.16)	.16 (.07)*				
Group status: coalition partner			-.01 (.00)	-.01 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Group status: ruling group			-.01 (.00)*	-.01 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Trans-ethnic connectedness (time-var.)			-.03 (.01)*	-.03 (.01)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Transitivity (time-var.)			.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.00)*	.01 (.00)**
Degree centrality (pre-ind.)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)				
N active neighbors			.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Network modularity (time-var.)			.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	-.02 (.01)
N of pre-ind. orgs.	.01 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)+
Connection strength with first ruler	.03 (.02)+	.04 (.02)+	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)+
Distance from coast (logged)	-.06 (.05)	.00 (.04)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Distance from capital (logged)	-.02 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)+	.00 (.00)+	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Distance from mission (logged)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Avg. distance to other groups (logged)	-.01 (.03)	-.04 (.02)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Gender	-.02 (.07)	-.04 (.04)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Age at independence	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Age at independence (squared)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Age difference to other individuals	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Biography length	.13 (.03)***	.00 (.01)	.01 (.00)*	.01 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. domestic pol. office	-.06 (.04)	-.01 (.03)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. military	-.02 (.05)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. university education	-.01 (.06)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Government member			.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
History of violent opposition			.01 (.00)	.01 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Ethnic group opposition dummy			.02 (.01)**	.02 (.01)**	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)*
Persecuted neighbors			.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)		
Killed neighbors					-.01 (.05)	-.06 (.05)
Neighbors in government			.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.00)*	-.02 (.01)*
N persecuted elites			.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		
N killed elites					.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
N elites in government			.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)*
Liberal democracy			-.04 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Coup occurrence			.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Election year			.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)*
Ruler from pre-ind. network			.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)+	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
N	561	561	9,040	9,040	14,126	14,126
Adjusted R^2	.197	.089	.026	.026	.011	.012
Ethnic group-fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Year-fixed effects			X	X	X	X
Community-fixed effects				X		X
Cubic polynomial of years w/out persecution			X	X	X	X

*Note: Standard errors, clustered on countries, in parentheses. + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

Appendix 4: Tests of Causal Mechanisms

Table A5 examines the causal mechanisms underlying the effects of elites' political networks on their risk of post-independence repression. First, Models A1-A2 refer to the link between trans-ethnic connectedness and repression in general. My argument attributes this effect to trans-ethnic political connections endowing individuals with a reputation of cross-group cooperation and loyalty, which reduces their threat potential in the eyes of rogue rulers. However, given the relevance of ethnic group status, it also seems possible that the effect derives from members of politically excluded ethnic groups gaining protection from their connections to members of the ruling ethnic group (which, by definition, are trans-ethnic connections). Model A1 evaluates this alternative causal mechanism by testing the effect of an interaction between an alternative time-variant indicator of individuals' proportion of connections to members of the current ruling ethnic group and a simply dummy variable marking individuals from politically excluded ethnic groups. If the effect of trans-ethnic connectedness were a function of such protective connections, we would expect the interaction between group exclusion and connections to ruling group members to be significant. However, the results of Model A1 do not support this notion.

Another alternative causal mechanism is related to the particular threat emanating from network cliques. Considering again the relevance of group identity, it seems possible that rulers would expect the conspiratorial potential of cliques to be magnified in the case of ethnically homogenous cliques. Thus, the more ethnically homogenous a clique, the higher the threat potential and, by extension, the risk of preemptive repression. This implies that elite individuals with high cliquishness and few trans-ethnic connections should face a particularly high risk of repression. Model A2 examines this alternative causal mechanism by testing the effect of an interaction between the transitivity and trans-ethnic connectedness indicators. (Otherwise, the

model is the same as Model 3 in Table 1 in the main text.) Again, the results do not provide support for the alternative mechanism. Overall, Models A1-A2 suggest that it is trans-ethnic connectedness *as such* that decreases elite individuals' risk of repression, providing tentative evidence for the theorized reputation mechanism.

Table A5: Elite networks and political repression. Testing the causal mechanisms

	Model A1 All repression	**Model A2**	**Model A3** Deadly repression	**Model A4**
Group status: coalition partner		-.01 (.00)		
Group status: ruling group		-.01 (.00)*		
Trans-ethnic connectedness (time-var.)		-.03 (.02)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.01)*
Transitivity (time-var.)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	-.07 (.04)+	.02 (.01)*
Politically excluded group	-.19 (.12)			
Connections to ruling ethnic group	.02 (.01)			
Excluded group * connections to ruling group	.02 (.02)			
Trans-ethnic conn. * transitivity		.00 (.02)		
Age at independence (logged)			-.02 (.02)	
Age at ind. (logged) * transitivity			.02 (.01)+	
Geodesic distance to ruler				.00 (.00)
Geodesic dist. to ruler * transitivity				.00 (.00)**
N active neighbors	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Network modularity (time-var.)	-.05 (.02)*	.01 (.02)	-.07 (.09)	.01 (.01)
N of pre-ind. orgs.	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Connection strength with first ruler	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.03)	.00 (.00)**
Distance from coast (logged)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Distance from capital (logged)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)+	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Distance from mission (logged)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Avg. distance to other groups (logged)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.03)	.00 (.00)
Gender	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.02)	.00 (.00)
Age at independence	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)
Age at independence (squared)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)
Age difference to other individuals	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Biography length	.01 (.00)	.01 (.00)*	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. domestic pol. office	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. military	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.04 (.03)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. university education	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.00)
Government member	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)
History of violent opposition	.04 (.01)***	.01 (.00)	-.05 (.06)	.01 (.01)
Ethnic group opposition dummy	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)**	-.04 (.03)	.00 (.00)
Persecuted neighbors	-.05 (.02)*	.02 (.03)		
Killed neighbors			.36 (.53)	-.05 (.67)
Neighbors in government	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)	-.03 (.06)	-.02 (.01)*
N persecuted elites	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		
N killed elites			.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)
N elites in government	.00 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*
Liberal democracy	-.08 (.02)**	-.04 (.03)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)
Coup occurrence	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.02 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Election year	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)*
Ruler from pre-ind. network	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.02)	
N	4,919	9,040	14,635	9,977
Adjusted R^2	.057	.026	.011	.008
Year-fixed effects	X	X	X	X

	Model A1	Model A2	Model A3	Model A4
	All repression		Deadly repression	
Ethnic group-fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Cubic polynomial of years w/out persecution	X	X	X	X

*Note: Standard errors, clustered on countries, in parentheses. + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

Second, with respect to rulers' resort to deadly repression, specifically, my argument invoked both rulers' magnified threat perception due to their fear of elite conspiracies incubated in tightly knit cliques and a potentially lower risk of backfiring when targeting clique members who might be more isolated in the overall network. Models A3-A4 assess these potential mechanisms by examining *who within* cliques (or among "cliquish" individuals) is most likely to be targeted. Model A3 interacts the transitivity indicator with individuals' age. Especially in gerontocratic societies, age is a strong indicator of authority and leadership. In politics, age can also be a proxy for visibility as, *ceteris paribus*, older individuals have been "around" for longer and, thus, are more recognized in the mind of the public and of other elites. Thus, within cliques, older individuals are likely perceived as clique leaders whereas younger individuals could be considered "tagalongs". The results of Model A3, visualized in Panel A of Figure 3 in the main text, demonstrate a significant positive conditional effect of age: the older an individual, the stronger the effect of cliquishness on deadly repression. This suggests that rulers target the most senior and visible clique members.

Next, Model A4 interacts the transitivity indicator with a measure of the geodesic distance between a given individual and their country's current ruler in a given year. For this purpose, the model limits the sample to observations in post-independence years in which countries' rulers hailed from the original pre-independence elite networks included in my dataset. (Note that I exclude observations pertaining to the rulers themselves.) The geodesic distance measure then counts the number of steps in the network between a given individual and the ruler, considering,

as in the case of the other network indicators, only individuals who were still alive in that year. The lower this measure, the closer the individual's political connection to the current ruler. The results of Model A4, visualized in Panel B of Figure 3 in the main text, show that, contrary to the idea of isolation and in line with the notion of heightened threat, the effect of cliquishness is stronger the closer an individual was to their country's current ruler. Thus, together, the results of these two models speak in favor of a magnified threat perception and against network isolation as the causal mechanism underlying the effect of cliquishness on deadly repression.

Appendix 5: Robustness Tests

Tables A6-A8 below report a series of robustness tests. Table A6 tests the robustness of the results to alternative measurements of the outcome variable and to model specification. First, individuals' escape into exile often occurs in anticipation of *expected* (rather than actual) targeting and also contains an element of opportunity on the side of the individual (who has the means to flee her/his country or not). This could distort the analysis, especially if specific network characteristics reflect individuals' ability to anticipate repression and avoid it through exile, rather than their perceived threat potential as theorized in my argument. Thus, Model A5 replicates Model 4 in Table 1 in the main text (including community-fixed effects) using a different repression outcome variable that only considers incidents of imprisonment and assassination. The results remain robust, with the second group status indicator, the coalition partner dummy variable, now also reaching statistical significance.

Furthermore, the main models in Table 1 distinguished between any kind of repression (including deadly repression) and deadly repression only. Yet, if my argument about varying degrees of threat perception is correct, the effects found in the former specification should also hold when considering only non-deadly repression (i.e. exile or imprisonment and excluding deadly repression). Hence, Model A6 uses an alternative outcome variable of non-deadly repression only. The effects found in Model 4 in Table 1 remain robust.

Table A6: Sensitivity to measurement and model specification

	Model A5 Excl. exile	**Model A6** Non-deadly	**Model A7** All repression	**Model A8**	**Model A9**	**Model A10** Deadly
Group status: coalition partner	-.01 (.00)*	-.01 (.00)	-.01 (.00)+	-.01 (.00)	-.01 (.00)+	.00 (.00)
Group status: ruling group	-.01 (.00)*	-.01 (.00)*	-.01 (.00)*	-.01 (.00)*	-.01 (.01)*	.00 (.00)
Trans-ethnic connectedness (time-var.)	-.02 (.01)*	-.03 (.01)*	-.01 (.01)		-.04 (.01)*	.00 (.00)
Trans-ethnic geodesic proximity				-.01 (.00)		
Transitivity (time-var.)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.01 (.02)	.01 (.00)*

	Model A5 Excl. exile	**Model A6** Non-deadly	**Model A7** All repression	**Model A8**	**Model A9**	**Model A10** Deadly
N active neighbors	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Network modularity (time-var.)	-.03 (.03)	.01 (.02)		.00 (.02)	.01 (.03)	-.01 (.01)
N of pre-ind. orgs.	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Connection strength with first ruler	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.02 (.01)*	.00 (.00)
Distance from coast (logged)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Distance from capital (logged)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Distance from mission (logged)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Avg. distance to other groups (logged)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Gender	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Age at independence	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Age at independence (squared)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Age difference to other individuals	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Biography length	.01 (.00)*	.01 (.00)*	.01 (.00)+	.01 (.00)*	.01 (.00)*	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. domestic pol. office	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. military	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. university education	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Government member	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)
History of violent opposition	.00 (.00)	.01 (.00)	.01 (.00)	.01 (.00)	.03 (.03)	.01 (.01)
Ethnic group opposition dummy	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)*	.03 (.02)	.02 (.01)**	.02 (.01)**	.00 (.00)*
Persecuted neighbors	.00 (.03)	.00 (.02)	.05 (.02)*	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	
Killed neighbors						-.04 (.05)
Neighbors in government	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)
N persecuted elites	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	
N killed elites						.00 (.00)
N elites in government	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)+
Liberal democracy	-.04 (.03)	-.03 (.03)		-.03 (.03)	-.04 (.02)	.00 (.01)
Coup occurrence	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Election year	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*
Ruler from pre-ind. network	.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)+		.02 (.01)+	.02 (.01)+	.00 (.00)
N	8,945	9,042	9,052	9,040	9,040	14,126
Adjusted R^2	.017	.026	.108	.025	.034	.024
Year-fixed effects	X	X		X	X	X
Ethnic group-fixed effects	X	X		X	X	X
Organization-fixed effects					X	X
Community-fixed effects	X	X		X		
Country-year fixed effects			X			
Cubic polynomial of years w/out persecution	X	X	X	X	X	X

*Note: Standard errors, clustered on countries, in parentheses. + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

Third, in order to exploit more variation in ethnic group status, Model A7 relies on country-year fixed effects, instead of separate group, year, and network community-fixed effects. Even in Africa, where ethnic power relations are more fluid than in other world regions, variation in ethnic group status is much less pronounced over time than across groups. Thus, the country-year fixed effects allow me to evaluate the effect of power differentials across groups within the same country (and year). The results confirm the relevance of individuals' group identity on their risk of politically motivated repression. Individuals whose ethnic groups are

politically included – and especially individuals from ruling ethnic groups – face a significantly lower risk than their peers from politically excluded groups. Unsurprisingly, the effect of trans-ethnic connectedness turns insignificant in this model. Given that individuals' relative number of trans-ethnic connections directly depends on the absolute number of network members from a given ethnic group, trans-ethnic connectedness can only be meaningfully compared across individuals from the same group.

Fourth, Model A8 examines whether the effect of trans-ethnic connectedness is limited to individuals' first-degree neighbors or can be generalized to more indirect connections (i.e. the neighbors of their neighbors). To this end, I replace the indicator of the proportion of trans-ethnic neighbors with an alternative "spatial" indicator that denotes individuals' geodesic distance to all non-co-ethnics in the network relative to the geodesic distance to all individuals who were still alive in a given year. I normalized and inverted geodesic distances to arrive at a geodesic *proximity* indicator that ranges from 0 to 1, with lower values denoting *longer* distances (incl. no connection) and higher values referring to shorter distances. Thus, the higher the trans-ethnic geodesic proximity value, the *closer* the individual is to other individuals of different ethnic groups in the network. The results of Model A8 indicate that this more indirect measure of trans-ethnic connectedness does not systematically affect individuals' risk of politically motivated repression. This suggests that the theorized social capital effect – based on the reputation of "cosmopolitanism" and cross-group cooperation and loyalty – derives mostly from individuals' immediate network connections.

Fifth, Models A9 and A10 replicate Models 4 and 6 in Table 1 replacing the network community-fixed effects with organization-fixed effects. Given that individuals could form part of multiple different organizations before independence, I attributed each individual to the

smallest organization she/he formed part of (in terms of the total number of elite individuals associated with a given organization in my data). This approach thus limits the comparison to even smaller and more homogenous sets of elites (who formed part of at least one joint organization), neutralizing additional unobserved heterogeneity. The results remain robust.

Next, Table A7 tests the robustness of the results to variations in the sample used in the panel analyses. First, my argument assumes elites' pre-independence political networks – once created – and their effect on the risk of political repression to exhibit a relatively high degree of path dependence. However, these personal political networks might be particularly (or only) consequential as long as the country's ruler stems from the same set of pre-independence elites. While new rulers might be aware of such pre-existing networks, they might perceive them as less of a reliable signal of potential rivals' threat potential. Hence, Models A11 and A12 replicate Models 4 and 6 in Table 1 limiting the sample to observations in those post-independence years in which a given country's ruler hailed from the original, pre-independence elite network included in my dataset.

Table A7: Sensitivity to variations in panel sample

	Ruler from pre-ind. network		Excluding prior violence		Politically active individuals	
	Model A11 All repr.	**Model A12** Deadly	**Model A13** All repr.	**Model A14** Deadly	**Model A15** All repr.	**Model A16** Deadly
Group status: coalition partner	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	-.01 (.00)+	.00 (.00)	-.01 (.01)+	.00 (.00)
Group status: ruling group	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	-.01 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	-.02 (.01)*	-.01 (.01)
Trans-ethnic connectedness (time-var.)	-.05 (.02)*	.00 (.01)	-.03 (.01)*	.00 (.00)	-.05 (.02)*	.01 (.01)
Transitivity (time-var.)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.01)*	.01 (.01)	.01 (.00)*	.00 (.02)	.02 (.01)*
N active neighbors	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Network modularity (time-var.)	-.03 (.06)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	-.05 (.03)+	-.01 (.02)
N of pre-ind. orgs.	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Connection strength with first ruler	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)+	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)+
Distance from coast (logged)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Distance from capital (logged)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)+	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)+
Distance from mission (logged)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Avg. distance to other groups (logged)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Gender	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)

	Ruler from pre-ind. network		Excluding prior violence		Politically active individuals	
	Model A11	**Model A12**	**Model A13**	**Model A14**	**Model A15**	**Model A16**
	All repr.	Deadly	All repr.	Deadly	All repr.	Deadly
Age at independence	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Age at independence (squared)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Age difference to other individuals	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Biography length	.01 (.00)+	.00 (.00)	.01 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.01 (.00)*	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. domestic pol. office	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. military	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Pre-ind. university education	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Government member	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)
History of violent opposition	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)			.02 (.01)**	.00 (.01)
Ethnic group opposition dummy	.06 (.02)**	.00 (.00)+	.02 (.01)**	.00 (.00)*	.05 (.01)***	.01 (.00)*
Persecuted neighbors	-.02 (.04)		.01 (.03)		-.02 (.03)	
Killed neighbors		.05 (.15)		-.04 (.06)		.01 (.04)
Neighbors in government	.00 (.03)	-.01 (.01)+	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	-.02 (.01)
N persecuted elites	.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)		.00 (.00)	
N killed elites		.00 (.00)+		.00 (.00)		-.01 (.00)
N elites in government	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)+
Liberal democracy	-.21 (.09)*	-.01 (.01)	-.04 (.03)	.00 (.01)	-.06 (.08)	.01 (.03)
Coup occurrence	-.02 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)
Election year	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)+	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)+	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)+
Ruler from pre-ind. network			.02 (.01)+	.00 (.00)	.03 (.01)*	.00 (.00)
N	5,925	9,987	8,921	13,782	5,325	7,770
Adjusted R^2	.040	.065	.026	.009	.033	.017
Year-fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ethnic group-fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community-fixed effects	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cubic polynomial of years w/out persecution	X	X	X	X	X	X

*Note: Standard errors, clustered on countries, in parentheses. + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

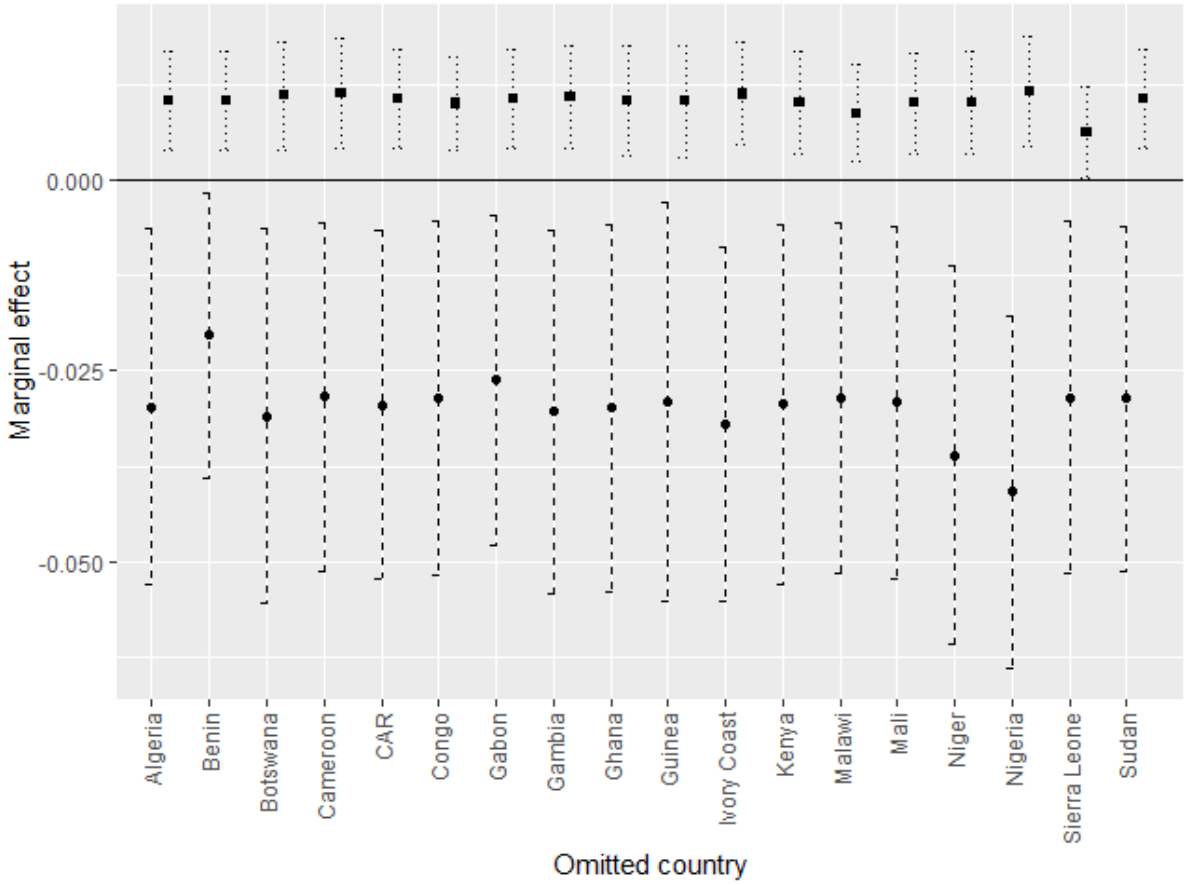
Second, my argument focuses on preemptive repression and assumes elite individuals' collective identity and their political networks to be signals of their threat potential, independent of their past behavior. While all main models controlled for individuals' prior engagement in violent opposition against the government, Models A13 and A14 conduct a stricter test, evaluating the effects of my main explanatory variables considering only individuals who never previously engaged in violent opposition (thus limiting the sample to observations corresponding to such individual-years). Otherwise, the models are equivalent to Models 4 and 6 in Table 1.

Third, Models A15 and A16 replicate Models 4 and 6 in Table 1 limiting the sample to individuals who were still politically active – not just alive – in a given post-independence year. I relied on information from the Historical Dictionaries to construct a series of dummy variables

on whether the individuals in the original elite sample engaged in specific political activities following independence (e.g., forming part of the government, holding another bureaucratic post, serving abroad, engaging in violent opposition, etc.). If any of these activities is coded positively for an individual in a given year, the individual is considered politically active in that year. I then computed all time-variant network indicators based only on those individuals (and the connections between them) who were still politically active in a given year. For example, the time-variant transitivity indicator in this limited sample denotes for each politically active individual and year the degree of clustering considering only network neighbors who were still politically active in that year.

The results of Models 4 and 6 in Table 1 in the main text remain robust in all these models, except the effect of ethnic group status in Models A11 and A12. The latter is unsurprising given that these models only include years with rulers from the original pre-independence elite networks in which individuals' network connections likely constituted a significantly more relevant indicator of threat than their collective identity in the eyes of those rulers. Furthermore, to check for the influence of outliers, I re-ran Models 4 and 6 of Table 1 dropping one country at a time. Figure A2 plots the coefficients of the two key network indicators (trans-ethnic connectedness and transitivity), along with the corresponding 95% confidence intervals, from all these models, confirming that the effects of the variables remain robust to the omission of any single country, with relatively little variation in the size of the coefficients.

Figure A2: Evaluating the influence of individual countries



Note: Figure plots the coefficients of the trans-ethnic connectedness variable with the corresponding 95% confidence intervals (black circles and dashed lines) and the coefficients of the transitivity indicator with the corresponding 95% confidence intervals (black squares and dotted lines) from running both Models 4 and 6 of Table 1 in the main text eighteen times, each time dropping a different country, as listed on the x-axis.

Finally, Models A17-A20 in Table A8 further test the sensitivity of my results to model specification. Following Beck (2020), I replicate Models 1, 2, 3, and 5 of Table 1 in the main text with only the subset of ethnic groups (and years in the panel models) that display variation in the general and deadly repression outcomes. This reduces the number of observations considerably. Consequently, while the coefficients of the two key network variables increase in

size in the cross-sectional models A17-A18 compared to Models 1-2 in Table 1, they are less precisely estimated. Otherwise, all results of Table A8 are equivalent to those in Table 1 and confirm the main findings.

Table A8: Sample limited to ethnic groups and years with variation in outcome

	Cross-sectional		Panel models	
	Model A17	**Model A18**	**Model A19**	**Model A20**
	All repression	Deadly	All repression	Deadly
Trans-ethnic connectedness (pre-ind.)	-.50 (.25)$^{+}$	-.02 (.06)		
Transitivity (pre-ind.)	.05 (.19)	.39 (.19)$^{+}$		
Group status: coalition partner			-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Group status: ruling group			-.01 (.01)$^{+}$	.00 (.02)
Trans-ethnic connectedness (time-var.)			-.04 (.02)*	.01 (.01)
Transitivity (time-var.)			.01 (.01)	.05 (.01)***
Degree centrality (pre-ind.)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		
N active neighbors			.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Network modularity (time-var.)			.02 (.04)	-.11 (.03)**
N of pre-ind. orgs.	.00 (.03)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Connection strength with first ruler	.03 (.02)$^{+}$	.07 (.03)*	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Distance from coast (logged)	-.05 (.05)	.03 (.10)	.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Distance from capital (logged)	-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)*	.00 (.00)
Distance from mission (logged)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Avg. distance to other groups (logged)	-.01 (.03)	-.07 (.04)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.02)
Gender	-.02 (.07)	-.05 (.07)	.01 (.01)	-.03 (.02)
Age at independence	.02 (.03)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Age at independence (squared)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Age difference to other individuals	.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Biography length	.15 (.03)***	.01 (.02)	.01 (.00)**	.00 (.01)
Pre-ind. domestic pol. office	-.07 (.05)	.01 (.07)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)
Pre-ind. military	-.02 (.05)	.00 (.06)	.00 (.00)	.01 (.02)
Pre-ind. university education	-.01 (.06)	.03 (.04)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.00)$^{+}$
Government member			.02 (.01)$^{+}$	.00 (.01)
History of violent opposition			.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)
Ethnic group opposition dummy			.03 (.01)**	.03 (.01)**
Persecuted neighbors			.02 (.03)	
Killed neighbors				.39 (1.06)
Neighbors in government			.02 (.03)	-.01 (.01)
N persecuted elites			.00 (.00)$^{+}$	.00 (.00)
N elites in government			.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Liberal democracy			-.03 (.04)	.01 (.05)
Coup occurrence			.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)
Election year			.00 (.00)	.01 (.01)
Ruler from pre-ind. network			.02 (.01)*	.02 (.01)$^{+}$
N	486	261	6,494	1,314
Adjusted R^2	.154	.053	.028	.005
Ethnic group-fixed effects	X	X	X	X
Year-fixed effects			X	X
Cubic polynomial of years w/out persecution			X	X

*Note: Standard errors, clustered on countries, in parentheses. + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

Appendix 6: Origins of Pre-independence Elite Alliances

Why do individual elites join forces in the political arena with some peers, but not with others, eventually leading to different degrees of clustering and trans-ethnic connectedness? To identify the determinants of elite alliances I mainly rely on dyadic linear probability regressions, with pairs of individuals within a given country as units of analysis and a connection dummy as the dependent variable. The variable indicates whether the two individuals of a given pair jointly formed part of at least one political organization before independence. These models allow me to account for both monadic and dyadic explanatory factors and, thus, to simultaneously evaluate, on one hand, why some individuals were able to forge more (trans-ethnic) political alliances than others and, on the other hand, why some *pairs* of individuals became connected, but not others.[12]

Table A9 summarizes the results. Model A21 is the baseline model and includes the time-invariant individual characteristics that are causally antecedent to individuals' network positions as well as four dyadic variables related to these structural conditions: a dummy variable denoting whether or not the two individuals of a given pair hailed from the same ethnic group, the physical distance between their birth places, the difference in the distances between their respective birth places and the colonial capital (which serves as an indicator of the extent to which both individuals are from peripheral vs. central locations), and their age difference. The model also includes country-fixed effects. The results suggest that, unsurprisingly, individuals derived political advantages from being born close to the colonial capital. The further away from the capital an individual was born, the less likely they were to become politically connected to any other individual in their country. With respect to dyadic factors in the form of structural

[12] I refrain from using Exponential Random Graph Models (ERGM) in my analysis as I am not aware of an ERGM solution to examining the formation of network structure across *multiple* separate networks.

similarities between individuals, generational proximity appears to be the most relevant determinant of alliance formation.

Table A9: Determinants of elite political connections. Regression results

	Model A21 Dyadic connection	**Model A22**	**Model A23** Full triad	**Model A24** Trans-ethnic connection
Distance from coast (logged)	.05 (.06)			-.02 (.07)
Distance from capital (logged)	-.01 (.00)*			-.01 (.01)
Distance from mission (logged)	.01 (.01)$^{+}$			.02 (.01)*
Gender	-.12 (.15)			-.12 (.20)
Age at independence	.02 (.01)			.01 (.01)
Age at independence (squared)	.00 (.00)$^{+}$			.00 (.00)*
Biography length	.03 (.03)			.02 (.03)
Same ethnicity	.06 (.03)$^{+}$	.06 (.03)	.03 (.03)	
Birth place distance	.00 (.01)	-.01 (.00)$^{+}$		-.01 (.01)
Difference in distance from capital	-.01 (.00)$^{+}$	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.01)
Age difference	-.01 (.00)***	-.01 (.00)***	.00 (.00)***	-.01 (.00)***
N	15,836	15,836	320,181	9,217
Adjusted R^2	.193	.622	.653	.243
Country-fixed effects	X			X
Individual-fixed effects		X	X	

*Note: Standard errors, clustered on countries, in parentheses. + p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.*

Model A22 replaces the country-fixed effects with individual-fixed effects, thus only exploiting variation across the dyadic observations of a given individual. Holding all individual characteristics constant, the model evaluates the impact of dyadic similarities to other individuals on the probability of alliance formation. The results confirm the relevance of generational proximity. The greater their age difference, the lower the likelihood of any two individuals to come together in the same political organization. An increase in the variable from its 25th to the 75th percentile is associated with a decrease of eight percentage points in the likelihood of a political connection, from 55% to 47%. By extension, this also means that if closeness in age makes it likely that two individuals become politically allied, other individuals who are of similar age will then equally be likely to become connected to both of the two, and, thus, cliques in the overall network emerge as a function of the "fragmentation" in generational origins, that

is, when *some* individuals are much closer in age to *each other* than to everyone else in the network.

Model A23 further tests the robustness of this finding expanding the analysis from dyads to triads. Triads consist of three vertices (in this case, individuals) and the potential connections between them. The presence or absence of such connections defines the different types of triads. As such, triads are the "molecules" of networks (Kadushin 2012: 24). With respect to network cliques, triads consisting of three mutually connected vertices are particularly relevant, given that such "full" triads constitute the smallest possible clique (Kadushin 2012: 47). Thus, the units of analysis in Model A23 are all possible triads of individuals within a given country, and I rely again on LPM with a dummy variable denoting whether or not a given triad is fully connected as the dependent variable.[13] The results confirm the previous finding. The greater the age difference between any three individuals, the lower their likelihood of forming a clique.

Finally, Model A24 examines the determinants of trans-ethnic connections specifically. While the coefficient of the co-ethnicity variable was positive in Models A21-A23, the effect did not quite reach standard levels of statistical significance. Model A24 replicates Model A21 but limits the sample to non-co-ethnic pairs within a given country. Again, difference in age reduces the likelihood of trans-ethnic political connections. Reversely, individuals who happened to be close in age to elites from other ethnic groups had better chances to form such bridging alliances before independence and, as a consequence, to remain (relatively) safe from political persecution once their countries became independent. Interestingly, greater distances from a colonial mission are also associated with higher trans-ethnic connectedness. If proximity to such missions serves

[13] I also ran models with an ordinal "strength" variable indicating the degree of connectedness of a triad (ranging from empty to full) as the dependent variable. The results remain unchanged.

as an indicator of individuals' (potential) educational endowments, this suggests that more educated elites tended to have more *intra*-ethnic political connections.[14]

[14] I find the same negative effect of education on trans-ethnic connectedness when including my pre-independence university variable in the model.