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EXPLAINING INTERNET REGULATION VARIATION
IN NON-DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES

ДЕМОКРАТИЯ ЕМЕС МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕРДІН ИНТЕРНЕТ БАСҚАРУ
ВАРИАЦИЯЛАР ТҮСІНДІРУІ

ОБЪЯСНЕНИЕ ВАРИАЦИЙ ИНТЕРНЕТ РЕГУЛИРОВАНИЯ
В НЕДЕМОКРАТИЧЕСКИХ СТРАНАХ

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by

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the role and impact of labor-free resources such as foreign aid and natural resources revenues on the level of internet freedom in non-democracies. Specifically, with help of the Freedom on the net score, which captures a level of internet freedom among 65 countries worldwide, a new dataset was collected to investigate whether non-labor resources can better explain empirical observations among non-democratic countries. By extending the selectorate theory (Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2005) and other concepts, the paper argues that a nondemocratic country has more restrictive internet freedom as resources rents or received foreign aid are high. To test the proposed hypotheses both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized. First, using panel data (2011-2016), the paper shows that labor-free revenues, namely foreign aid, might contribute to internet liberalization. However, the results are not statistically significant with the inclusion of various control variables such as GDP. Hence, with help of case studies, it was found out that not specifically labor-free resources but ongoing unrests provoke an incumbent to exercise a powerful impact on the Web. The findings of the paper barely can provide solid support of the presented theory and therefore layout that there is a need to collect data about non-democracies in terms of internet freedom and find a new way to measure the dependent variable. Nevertheless, a regime survival imperative in a context of authoritarian resilience is vital, where the latter impart urgency to restrict internet domain in times of socio-political instability.

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Chapter 1 Introduction: Dictator's Dilemma over the Internet Regulation

Internet use profoundly affects governments and their societies. The former is attracted by many promises of the Web. The fall of the communism in the late of the last century cemented enthusiasm that information and communication technology (ICT) holds a technological promise to bring various changes, in particular, political ones. New information and communication technology, especially internet, is one of the contradictory areas in political science and international relations. Conventional wisdom holds that internet extensively can undermine authoritarian rule that turned into truism (Kalathil and Boas 2002). However, as it will be elaborated further such a statement can be empirically contested.

From the perspective of a regime type, many democratic countries stick to the similar internet control policy by protecting and promoting internet freedom, whereas non-democratic regimes mostly impose a restrictive internet regulation policy. For autocrats the internet itself is a Janus-faced phenomenon: on the one hand, it is a vital development resource, on the other hand under certain circumstances it poses challenges to an incumbent's political survival. For example, domestic dissidents might overcome a problem of collective actions by means of social media (Diamond 2010). Such challenges can be resolved by many means and even serve state-shaped interests (Kalathil and Boas 2002; Rod and Weidmann 2015).

Many countries regulate the internet and fight against its destructive elements. For instance, Germany and Singapore were two of the first countries to impose restrictions on the spread of hatred speech, pornography or other forms of discrimination (Joshi 1996; L. Andrews 1997). One can assume that on surface democracies mostly worry about societal issues in this regard,

whereas non-democracies are anxious about political repercussions of online communication fostered by internet.

From this perspective, non-democratic regimes face a problem of disentangling "optimistic" and "pessimistic" views of the internet (Taubman 1998). Democratic leaders tend to be more open in the realm of the internet, while leaders of autocracies face the so-called *"dictator's dilemma"*, a dilemma when a leader wishes to benefit from the internet (e.g. economically) without risking regime stability. Specifically, on the one hand, implementation and active development of ICT can positively reconstruct an economy, on the other hand, the internet can be a powerful tool for opposition to set a population against regime elite and organize mass demonstrations. Thus, an incumbent should know benefits and drawbacks of an internet policy he plans to implement.

Taking into account that a political leader aims to stay in power as long as possible, the question of this paper is why do some non-democracies allow more liberalized internet regulation, whereas in other non-democratic states the internet is heavily regulated? The global spread of the internet evoked a list of empirical puzzles for scholars. While given the fact that all countries regulate the internet, I would like to shed light on the question of what factors explain the variation of the non-democratic way of the internet regulation. For instance, what can explain the variation of internet restriction of Uganda as a partially free country and Ethiopia as a not free state? This paper contributes to the literature on internet regulation by examining the impact of resources revenues and foreign aid allocations and their relation to internet regulation policy and authoritarian resilience.

The thesis proceeds as follows. After the introduction, chapter 2 examines the internet regulation related literature. Next, I present the theoretical framework of my thesis and derive two testable hypotheses. Chapter 3 introduces statistical analysis by testing the derived hypotheses, which is followed by chapter 4 that articulates case-study analysis of three countries. Finally, in chapter 5 I make final conclusions and discuss further research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review and Theory: Resources Rents and Foreign Aid

2.1 Literature Review

Much is written about political as well as economic rationales behind (e.g. maintain political stability or attract foreign investments), but less literature in this context is devoted to what else might drive political leaders in non-democracies to change internet policies. Few have systematically examined whether foreign aid or resources' revenues affect a rate of internet freedom. By identifying conditions under which a political elite feel free either to set limits on internet policy or provide more liberty, is the missing gap the paper seeks to fill.

The Internet itself is a decentralized network and only some of its infrastructural parts are under control and regulation. Though the internet is truly a global phenomenon, the domestic context is of importance. The domestic political system plays a crucial role in terms of internet control, not least because domestic actors (i.e. regime and/or political elite) in both democracies and autocracies generally deal with internet regulation differently. In nondemocratic countries unlike in democracies political leaders have "the keys" to the internet governance. With the dominant role of state playing in almost all aspects of political, socio-economic spheres, in particular, in internet aspect, a state extensively operates in interests of itself and/or political leader.

2.1.1 Regime Type and Internet Freedom

Before identifying the relationship between regime type and internet freedom, I should specify boundaries of various types of political regimes. According to Magaloni et al. (2013), if a

country fails to meet at least one of the following criteria, it is defined as a non-democracy: (1) a civilian government is the main source of policy making; (2) political leaders come from various and competitive parties; (3) checks and balances system; (4) free and fair political elections. Such regimes might be a monarchy, a military, a single party or a multi-party, which have various political institutions, political establishment and governance control. Thus, internet regulation might also differ from that regime perspective. However, such a distinction is not applied in this paper as the sample of non-democracies used in the statistical part is little in size.

One way or another the internet exists in an environment of regulation. However, such regulation can be different in its magnitude, applicability, and by initiators who impose a regulation (Reid Hunt 2014). Usually, scholars define three types of internet regulation: self-regulation, co-regulation, and command-and-control (Cave, Marsden, and Simmons 2008; Reid Hunt 2014). The most preferred type of regulation is self-regulation when regulation power and rules' implementation are concentrated in hands of private actors, although a state might punish them in a case of non-compliance by laws. Co-regulation includes an interaction of both, private and public actors; however, internet policy building is initiated and supervised by a state. In the third one, a government authority is in charge of everything in terms of internet regulation process. While most of the democratic states were occupied with the concept of internet self-regulation with minimum government control, autocracies take upon themselves the "strategy of containment" (Taubman 1998) or command-and-control type with significant government interference in the process.

Since the web was introduced, its regulation development made the way from the open internet to internet with contested access, which is operated to the present time. The four phases of

internet regulation (i.e. “open access, access denied, access controlled and access contested”) depict, how the internet control substantially changed since the beginning of its advent (Palfrey 2010). While Palfrey (2010) provided information from the perspective of internet regulator, Eko (2001) presents a more specific typology and the web functions in terms of country-specific characterizations (e.g. culture). The typology includes Multilateralist or International model, Neo-Mercantilist or E-Commerce model, Gateway model, Developmentalist model. All these models can be found in a mixed version either in democracy or non-democracy; however, in the latter the most frequent one is the Gateway model, when a government fulfills broad functions of the internet provider and its regulator.

The question arises is not whether or not to regulate the Web, but how to carry the regulation in the most effective way depending on an incumbent’s political survival. Providing an answer to the question, Weckert (2000) considers both moral and technical aspects. Content restriction can be morally justified in case it captures pornography, hate speech and so on, which is applied to all sorts of countries despite their regime type. Lessig (1999) defines internet regulation, or “regulability”, as “the ability of the government to regulate the behavior of (at least) its citizens while on the Net”. Furthermore, internet control or regulation can be understood through the prism of access to the internet, its functionality (e.g. speed and bandwidth) and internet activity control. For both democracies and autocracies, internet watchdogs such as national intelligence institutions are crucial in terms of internet governance, however for various reasons (Eriksson et al. 2009). Whereas democracies arguably fight terrorism online, for instance, non-democracies in addition to it can fight their own citizens who might discredit the authority of a ruler. For example, the ruling elite of Singapore with help of a legislation tool, namely a web-site licensing

process, ensured that opposition cannot use internet as a medium for political communication (Kalathil and Boas 2002).

For democratic countries, internet openness means more political engagement, low cost of acquiring information and inclusion of marginalized groups in a political life (Tkacheva 2013). Within participatory politics, the internet itself became a tool to broaden electorate, when political parties and other politics-engaged groups by using marketing techniques strengthen their campaign with help of operations like controlled communication, mobilization and fund-raising during electoral campaigns (Chadwick and Howard 2010).

Meanwhile, for non-democracies, internet freedom works with a formula that it limits the ability of a political leader to perpetuate uncontested power. Hence, by better understanding political effects of the internet a leader leads a policy that positively favors his regime survival. Collective characteristics of the web, one of which is a free flow of information, including “democratic” one (e.g. opposite one), increases the probability of a leader who abuses power to be ousted. Contrary to Milner (2006) and Groshek (2009), Morozov (2012) argues, if properly used, the internet as a repressive technology in hands of autocrats might ensure durability and longevity of an incumbent. To sum up, the internet in an authoritarian environment mostly tends to amplify a regime’s brutality, whereas democratic political system mostly increases political and civil liberties of a population (Best and Wade 2007).

2.1.2 Non-democratic Regimes and the Internet

Different authoritarian regimes have a different level of tolerance for free speech. This should be clearly reflected in their internet policies, as the internet itself enhances access to information, including the so-called 'democratic' one, or information that can somehow undermine dictators' political survival. In non-democracies authorities mandate various repressive tools for one simple reason: to ensure political stability.

In the field of internet, the central dilemma any dictator (except North Korea) faces is to build a proper mechanism to maintain an iron grip on citizens and simultaneously ensure the growth of a country in terms of adoption of information and communication technologies. Taking into account the so-called 'control versus growth' or dictator's dilemma those in power design rules to their advantage by ensuring notables with joint spoils and crucially not allowing any rebels to escalate. All rulers face threats either from masses or his allies (i.e. with whom he shares domestic power). To guarantee a political survival a non-democratic ruler deals with the so-called 'problems of authoritarian rule'. Namely, it includes a problem of not allowing masses to revolt ("problem of authoritarian control") and a problem of making concessions to power elites ("problem of authoritarian power-sharing") (Svolik 2012). The literature concerns both issues (Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2005; Reuter and Gandhi 2011), however research of authoritarian ruler problems from the perspective of internet freedom is more sparse.

The internet, by definition, provides one of the most effective means of communication, learning, business dealing, tools for democracy and human rights advocacy. While one group of

countries might reap the benefits of it, another group barely can capitalize on the internet's positive effects. Only by contrasting the given lifestyle to the better one, dissatisfied actors might breach an incumbent's control monopoly (Urry 1973), but by regulating internet content and other internet capabilities a leader can effectively maintain stability in his favor (Taubman 1998). In fact, the growth of the internet as a source of information, communication etc. generated a debate over its impact on non-democratic countries leaders' political survival. Access to information and wide communication systems reshaped conventional rules and ruined old definitions. For example, some technological advancements like social media revolutionized the ability to communicate and undertake relatively rapid collective actions to rebel against incumbents (Diamond 2010; Kalathil and Boas 2002; Rod and Weidmann 2015).

Non-autocratic leaders' fear of internet expansion and its consequences is justified. Dictators perceive oppositional internet as a threat to its survival, as digital technologies such as social media platforms demonstrated its mobilization potential, for example, during the Arab Spring (Stier 2017). Howard et al. (2011) found that in a time of the Arab Spring Twitter and/or Facebook were utilized not only to communicate between participants of uprisings, but such online conversations were preceding to 'on ground' protests. Nevertheless, some isolated cases should not make scholars to overestimate a role of internet's revolution facilitation. Even though social media played a particular role in series of uprisings in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region, Khondker (2011) warns that online communication technologies might play only 'supportive role' or as Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) name it 'instrumental role' to make revolutions successful. As specified by Bellin (2012), there are four factors, which determine rebels to revolt: long-term discontent, an emotional component, impunity for participation as a

rebel, access to social media (i.e. the internet). Taking an example of Burma, one might observe a situation of how activists of the Free Burma campaign used internet platform for mass mobilization of transnational activism, however not sufficient for palpable political changes in the country (Kalathil and Boas 2002). Next, a potential participant is concerned with one's participation costs coming from uncertainties of revolution and status quo payoffs (Shadmehr and Bernhardt 2011). However, such participation costs for insurgents are reduced when there is a total participation meaning that a rebel should be confident that a protest is supported *en masse* (Bueno De Mesquita 2010). By and large, new media indirectly and under certain conditions indeed poses serious threats to an incumbent, however evasive.

In order to draw any threats away from a dictator's political survival, a leader focuses on power extension from the standpoint of internet control and regulation (Gunitsky 2015; Kalathil and Boas 2002; Morozov 2012). Paradoxically, to reinforce authoritarian rule it is in the interest of a leader to provide internet access to citizens for several reasons. Gunitsky (2015) provides the most comprehensible mechanism of internet control by an authoritarian leader: (1) counter-mobilization; (2) discourse framing; (3) preference divulgence; (4) elite coordination. The author stresses that autocrats started to move towards a strategy called 'positive control' of the internet. Positive control sidesteps from strategies of censoring and blocking to using information in favor of the regime bolstering. Selective internet control is an approach most autocratic countries exercise. As exemplified in the Chinese censorship program, King, Pan, and Roberts (2013) argue that public expressions in social media and other platforms encourage the government to know preferences of citizens and if necessary to mollify masses. Last but not least is that with the help of social media a leader in an autocratic regime can ensure accountability of local elites.

Discontent and informational asymmetry at a local level that might undermine the legitimacy of an incumbent who can not be in touch with local circumstances might be solved and excluded by online monitoring of local elites. Depending on how effective authoritarian leaders restrict or provide access to the internet, it can be perceived either “liberation” or “repressive” technology (Rod and Weidmann 2015).

It is fair to say that the internet itself ushered in a new way of economic development and prosperity for many countries (Castells 2009; George 2003; Taubman 1998). Internet policy in such countries as Malaysia and Singapore was initially framed in economic terms. For example, Malaysia introduced the so-called Bill of Guarantees (BoGs), which has a point of no censorship of the internet for attracting advanced technology companies. Economic benefits may force leaders to adopt some changes like the implementation of e-government programs and provide conditions to attract potential investors and tourists without any danger to a leader’s political survival, which might even increase support of citizens (Kalathil 2003). However, it should be also pointed that sometimes a country’s attractiveness from the perspective of investment revenues defies the extent to which potential investors are ready to override political or any other disagreements with a government (Kalathil and Boas 2002). A good example is China with its 1.3 billion potential customers.

While the internet can pose some challenges to incumbent’s office, it still remains an attractive technology for rulers, and no dictator chooses to ignore its diffusion completely. By manipulating the control mechanisms of the internet, an autocracy can promote benefits to a regime and restrict domains of potential risks (Boas 2000), the latter include the dissemination of

oppositional ideas, a rise of insurgents who can actively use coordination and mobilization tools of the Web platform (Kalathil and Boas 2002; Morozov 2012). The benefits, on the other hand, are notable too. Economic prosperity in terms of e-commerce sector development, attraction of foreign investments, helping to market domestic products abroad and much more (Clarke 2005; Kalathil and Boas 2002; Reid Hunt 2014). For example, such e-commerce companies like the Chinese Alibaba make billions of dollars as profit and Communistic China with progressive tax rate has a sizable contribution to its state treasury (Alibaba n.d.). In addition, those governments that seek to disrupt telecommunication connections, even temporary ones, can experience a negative financial impact. For example, as it was estimated by the OECD, the decision to shut down the internet for five days during the Arab Spring uprisings cost Egypt 90 million dollars (Reynolds and Mickoleit 2011).

To some extent, control of the internet is control of the revolutionary process. Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2010) assert that in order to exclude a possibility to be deposed through revolutions or coups a leader can either increase public goods and appease a revolutionary mob or cut them by suppressing coordination goods (e.g. freedom of assembly, free press).[1] Leaders, who get foreign aid and rents from natural resources, suppress coordination goods and simultaneously still buy off the loyalty of his coalition, thus ensure their political survival (Mesquita and Smith 2009).

In terms of internet freedom, the Web platform as a coordination good can be suppressed if a nondemocratic leader is provided by resources coming from donors and/or resources rents. Much

[1] In this paper I consider internet freedom as a public good and/or coordination good.

scholarly literature investigated issues of internet freedom and democracy, internet diffusion and its regulation, but a few works engage in examining what factors impact internet regulation from the perspective of private and public goods provision. For instance, Mcglinchey and Johnson (2007) argue that internet regulation is dependent on who provides finances for its adoption: either internal or external actors. On the example of Central Asian countries, the authors come to the conclusion that in case if a state economically relies largely on natural resources rents, it has restrictive internet policy. The opposite is true for a case, when a state under conditionality receives foreign aid donations and donors "force" a regime to implement more liberal internet regulation. Here, by focusing only on one region the article lacks more evidence for any bold conclusions. Thus, in my paper, I am planning to examine, how foreign aid, as well as oil abundance, impact the likelihood of internet freedom restriction among non-democratic countries.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In this section I provide a discussion of my theoretical arguments based on the selectorate theory of Bueno de Mesquita, et al. (2005) and the concept of 'audience costs' (Weeks 2008). The theoretical framework of the thesis explores the relationship between government resources (i.e. resources rents and foreign aid) and internet freedom incorporating the logic of internet use among non-democratic countries.[2] First, I present the main principles of the selectorate theory. Next, I examine how implications of the latter can explain decisions of authoritarian rulers to censor or not censor the internet by presenting a simple theoretical model. In doing so, I would like to form a broader theory explaining how internet policies are created and whether such

[2] Note that terms non-democratic, authoritarian, autocratic, dictatorial are used interchangeably.

labor-free revenues as resources rents and aid support impact a leader's decision while taking into account the extent of reliance on energy sector or official development assistance.

First, according to the selectorate theory, I assume that polities consist of leaders and challengers, coalition members (or winning coalition), selectorate, and disenfranchised (Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2005). It is argued that while holding power, leaders have a goal to maximize their chances of staying in office (i.e. political survival). Challenger can remove an incumbent leader and take his place. An incumbent, in order to hold power, should keep loyal a sufficient number of coalition members. The pool of citizens who have a say in selecting a leader is the selectorate. The subgroup of the latter is the winning coalition (or simply coalition), who maintain a leader in power. For instance, for a case of monarchy, a leader (i.e. monarch) might need a support from a majority of the aristocracy (i.e. coalition members) to stay in power.

Second, the selectorate and the winning coalition, according to authors, are two groups or factors that govern incumbent's policy decisions (i.e. spending decisions, institutionalization, taxing etc.). Leaders provide public and private goods. Whereas from public goods (e.g. civil liberties, peace etc.) benefit all citizens, the private ones (e.g. legal impunity) are distributed only among members of the winning coalition. As the size of the coalition increases, provision of private benefits decreases, then a leader is expected to expand allocation of public goods. Thus, how much revenue to be spent on "buying" support of the selectorate or the coalition depends on their sizes and availability of revenues.

The incumbent can derive revenues from taxation and/or natural resources rents. From an incumbent's perspective, taxation is one of the most important functions a society fulfils.

However, in terms of budget constraints, foreign aid is also considered.[3] In case there is a small winning coalition, which is usually a case of nondemocracies, a leader focuses on allocating private goods mostly. For the opposite scenario, when the coalition is relatively large, incumbents' effort is shifted to public goods' provision.

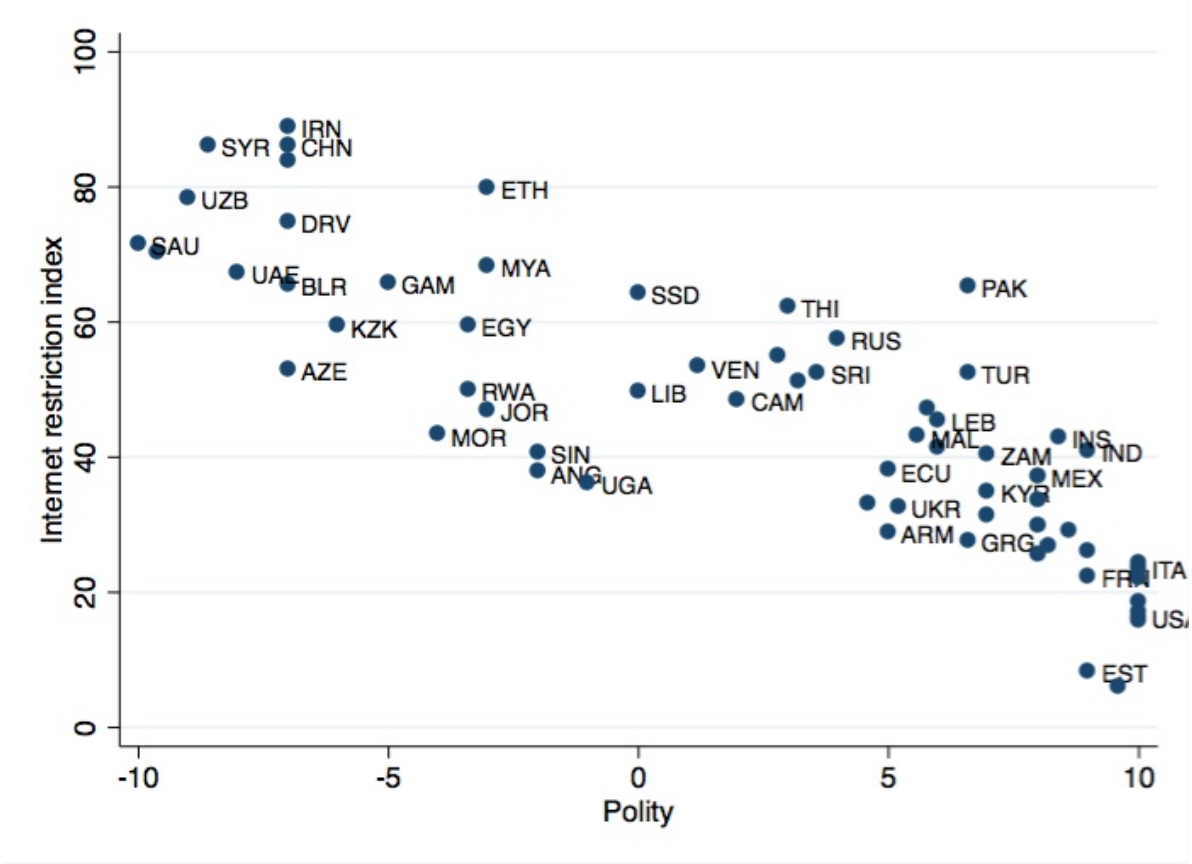
Furthermore, Weeks (2008) claims that apart from dealing with international counterparts a non-democratic leader also has to consider potential costs of backing down domestically. As this thesis is mostly centered on domestic politics, the audience in autocracies, which is proxied by the domestic elite or in the selectorate theory parlance by winning coalition, might have incentives to punish an incumbent leader. Both Bueno de Mesquita, et al. (2005) and Weeks (2008) agree that for ensuring political survival authoritarian leaders should gain the support of the winning coalition or domestic group. However, if a dictator has an ability to monitor and coerce his backers for the sake of his own livelihood, he can control his elites' actions. Thus, for present leaders, it is vital to exert control via internet capacities and simultaneously to buy a continuation of his power by allocating scarce resources to hold the winning coalition's loyalty.

As a democracy level falls, an autocrat needs more control over the domestic group, his winning coalition. Figure 1 clearly illustrates an incentive of an incumbent with help of the Web to limit the internet freedom and exclude any possibility to destabilize political situation. Yet there is variation of internet freedom even among non-democratic states. Such countries as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have 'partially free' internet and there are some regimes like the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan with 'not free' internet domain. Nevertheless, there is a negative monotonic correlation. By and large, the lower the democracy index - the clearer is the

[3] From the point of "buying off" argument resources rents are equivalent to aid or any other forms of government's income (Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin 2009).

repression of online sphere in a country. For example, Saudi Arabia, an autocratic kingdom that promote internet as an economic development tool rigorously try to silence any critical voices online dragged under antiterrorism and cybercrimes laws (Saudi Arabia n.d.).

Figure 1 Democracy and Internet Restriction (Both Averaged for 2011-2016)[4]



Source: Freedom House and Polity IV Project data

The idea that democratic countries are less likely to violate human rights sounds reasonably and can be supported by a number of empirical evidence. On the contrary, the nature of non-

[4] Democracy is the Polity IV's variable Polity2 ranging from −10(perfect autocracy) to 10 (perfect democracy). internet freedom score is Freedom House's 'Freedom on the net' score. Freedom House classifies internet freedom into free (0-30), partially free (31-60), and not free (61-100).

democracy suggests that citizens can barely exercise their political rights, for instance, to vote in electing a political leader. Two scenarios can take place in such a case: (1) rigged elections or formal reelection of an incumbent; (2) revolution or removal a leader from power. In case a rigged election is a success for an incumbent, citizens still can decide, whether to revolt or not (Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin 2009). Positions taken by autocracies in the realm of internet control suggest that leaders of those countries face a vital choice: expand the internet freedom, leaving it free from hefty government control, or restrict its diffusion, taking total control of the Web. Note that by expanding the internet freedom a political ruler might increase his chances to be deposed by an "online revolution". In such cases, authoritarian leaders face the so-called "dictator's dilemma" (Best and Wade 2007; Boas 2000; Kedzie 1997) and here internet policy is a part of a state's bureaucracy's incentive scheme. Starting out from the dictator's dilemma I will elaborate leaders' decision either to decrease or increase the internet freedom, indicating trade-offs an incumbent comes across for an each given scenario.

In evaluating the process of internet regulation in non-democracies, it is helpful to consider why countries sometimes block communication and technology changes. The potential for destabilization of the existing system followed by such technological changes understandably might haunt leaders, which in result can erode their political advantage (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). From another angle, such technological welcome can increase economic prosperity (e.g. lure foreign investment into a country) and revenues for private/public distribution as well as revenues for their discretionary use. Non-democratic rulers show their interest in obtaining benefits of new technologies (e.g. Burma and Cuba promote tourism online) and simultaneously to make the internet remain political reliable when necessary (Kalathil and Boas 2002).

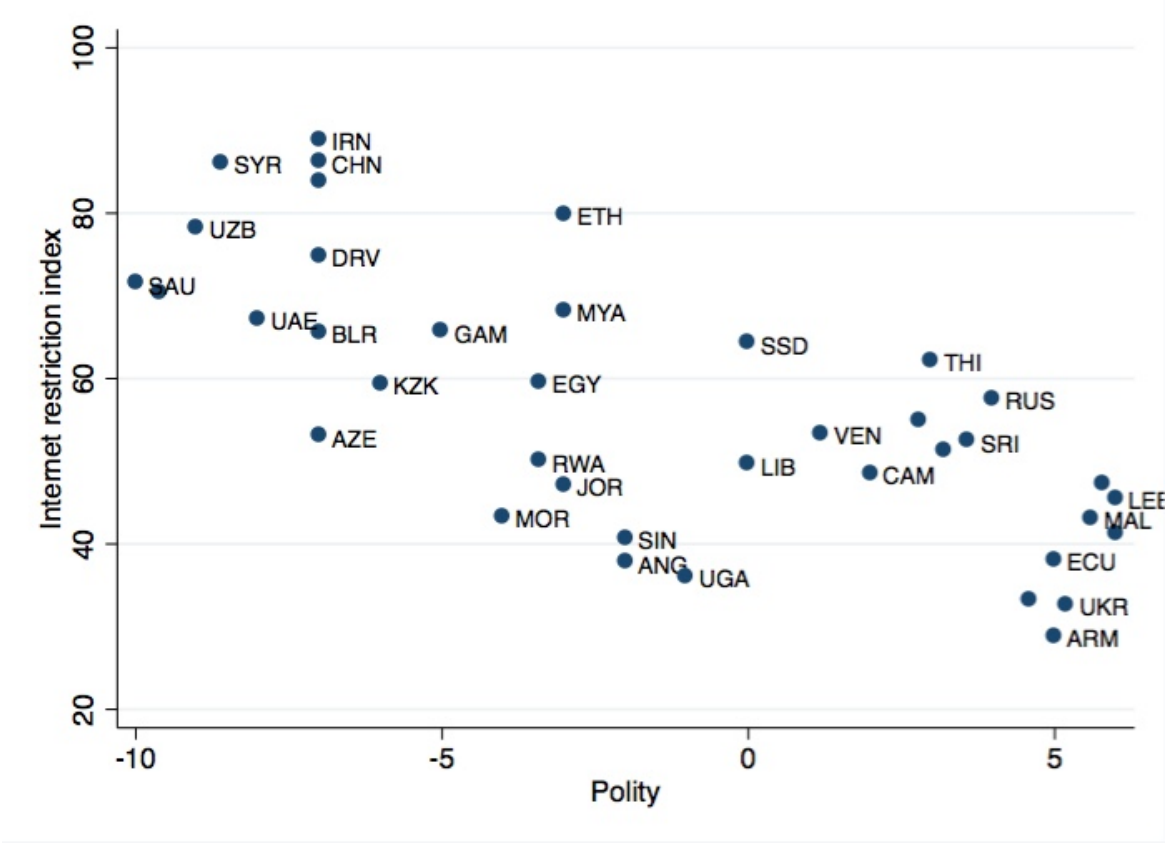
Some countries like China or Saudi Arabia introduced deliberative tactics, or as He and Warren (2011) call it “authoritarian deliberation”, for the internet access, rewarding from its implementation and maintaining the strict regime’s support simultaneously. In these cases, more nuanced methods of the internet regulation are applied. Within the Chinese regulation policy, public expressions are not restricted by the government, which allows them to know preferences of masses and somehow mollify them. Such internet-related companies like Google, Facebook, Wordpress etc. were blocked on mainland China, substituted by local products and as a result, simplified a process of controlling information environment by the regime. If the potential for collective actions' formation is high, censorship takes place (Zheng 2005). Thus, for some countries like China, internet regulation policy is not aimed at criticism exclusion *per se*, but to decrease the likelihood of mass mobilization (King, Pan, and Roberts 2013). Such tactics might also indicate how leaders can deliberatively monitor people and members of the winning coalition. As a leader in autocracies has an impact on the internet development, given the political, economic, social and other conditions he builds infrastructure that favors the regime stability. Public and private goods serve narrow interests of a political leader. Hence, in this paper I assume that authoritarian leaders possess control over policies and internet policy is no exception.

As Figure 2 shows, non-democracies vary greatly in terms of internet regulation. An incumbent ruler chooses a policy drawing attention to his contracts with elites and citizens (and sizes of both). When resources mostly come from citizens (i.e. taxation), a dictator compares expected payoffs of free and not free internet. If a dictator relies on taxation mainly (here we assume that

an optimal tax rate is chosen), then in order to take taxes in future a leader needs to provide some public goods. Even the worst dictator should provide some basic needs to people like education and health care. Moreover, recently one more public good – internet – has appeared. Hence, to balance between policies that benefit masses and satisfy a leader, the latter should acknowledge at what level the internet freedom can abandon those who might organize revolution to start their anti-governmental campaign.

State authority still can censor some online information (be it hate speech, pornography, or politically unstable resources), but there can be less detention of online activists, for instance. In such a scenario, in order to get rich from a population (through taxation) a leader provides more liberalized internet. The opposite is true for non-labor resources such as oil and natural gas rents, as well as donor allocations. In such a case a leader of oil-rich, diamond-studded or on development assistance dependent regime can limit the budget canals to resources revenues and foreign aid. In this case, leaders attempt to ensure political stability by violating users' online rights and blocking of politically dangerous online platforms and web-sites. When there is no need to largely appease citizens (as most of resources for private goods come not from taxation) it is easier to stay autonomous from the inside and provide benefits only to a small number of people who help an incumbent to stay in power.

Figure 2 Non-Democracies and Internet Restriction (Both Averaged for 2011-2016)[5]



Source: Freedom House and Polity IV Project data

At the same time, one could argue why can't a leader while benefiting from resource revenues placate opposition by providing some appearance of internet freedom or sharing some rents. This could be a circumspect decision in terms of providing political stability and wriggling out threats coming from opposition. Gandhi and Przeworski (2006) claim that if resources rents are high there is no need to cooperate with opposition. On the other hand, it can be a case that some rentier states privatized energy sector not only as a part of proper economic decision, but to acquire discretionary revenues to counter opposition in future (Luong and Weinthal 2001).

[5] Democracy is the Polity IV's variable Polity2 ranging from −10 (perfect autocracy) to 10 (perfect democracy). internet freedom score is Freedom House's 'Freedom on the net' score. Freedom House classifies internet freedom into free (0-30), partially free (31-60), and not free (61-100).

Wantchekon (2002) assumes that an incumbent by investing a part of his wealth rents in crucial projects (e.g. infrastructure projects in target areas) can lessen a probability of political unrest driven by opposition. For the theoretical model of this paper I emphasize that for a dictator especially in a rentier state it is more reasonable to use rents for a discretionary mechanism and not to provide more internet freedom. As there is an incumbency advantage – be it informational, budgetary and/or over a challenger (i.e. opposition) a part of rents coming from resources revenues/aid can be distributed to voters (i.e. for electoral gain) and affect their decision during elections in favor of an incumbent.

Regarding official developmental assistance, aid literature identifies several reasons that explain patterns of aid giving. It is assumed that aid giving is associated with political considerations, which include colonial past, alliances ties and strategic interests (Alesina and Dollar 2000). The authors state that on the example of France the former colonies receive aid support in disregard to political and economic regimes. Change-seeking policy is another explanation of providing developmental assistance. Here, from the perspective of foreign policy Palmer, Wohlander, and Morgan (2002) attempt to explicate that a donor country's aid policy is a foreign policy tool that aims to change or maintain a recipient country's behavior. In particular, it was found out that the amount of aid support is negatively correlated with a recipient's level to initiate a dispute. Furthermore, foreign aid can be an instrument for policy concessions, as described by Mesquita and Smith (2009), to promote interests in international organizations such as the United Nations bodies (Kuziemko and Werker 2006), to resolve a humanitarian crisis (i.e. natural disaster or poverty) (Harmer and Cotterrell 2005) and many others. Not excluding the possibility of policy concessions, however in this paper I ignore donors' incentives because in terms of the Master

thesis and given the data available it is hard to identify incentives of donor states when allocating official finance flows for each specific country.

We should notice that leaders pursue a goal to remain in power once they gained it. Survival is a primary goal when leaders choose and implement those policies, which might affect their tenure and mitigate risks to be ousted. From the theoretical perspective, public policy varies as the coalition size either increases or decreases (Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2005). By extending the selectorate theory Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2010) I would like to assess how survival threats like revolutions, presence of resources rents and/or aid allocations interact and affect leaders' internet policy choices.

As selectorate theory states, a country with a small winning coalition, which is typically a non-democracy, is more vulnerable to revolutions for several reasons. A large number of outsiders, who wants to take the power, few rewards to the latter and long lasting tenure of incumbent – it all provide conditions for a revolution. In order to eliminate such a threat, an incumbent with help of oppression and various suppression tools obstruct efforts of revolutionaries to recruit and organize. According to Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2010), leaders of small winning coalition with access to the so-called labor-free resources (i.e. oil and foreign aid) are more likely to suppress public goods in order to decrease the probability of revolts' success. In a broad sense, public goods include the presence of freedom of speech, free press, communication ease, and transparency. Thus, in this paper internet as an essential part of modern society is included in public goods.

Risk for an authoritarian incumbent arises every time he either lack resources for private allocations or misallocates them (Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2005). When an autocracy is not rich in resources other than taxation, an incumbent has to rely on the revenues received from his citizens. In common, authoritarian rulers have more incentives to enhance public goods with the objective to quiet a close to revolution mob. If an autocracy is not either an oil-abundant country or receive a large amount of foreign aid, it is assumed that a leader might actively release internet restriction from the heavy governmental control in order to benefit from it (e.g. politically and economically) and increase a potential for governmental revenues flowing from citizens.

Figure 1 Labor Resources and Public Goods

Labor resources → *more provision of public goods* → *less restrictive internet regulation (i.e. taxation)*

Hypothesis 1: A non-democratic country has less restrictive internet regulation when resources rents/aid are low.

On the other hand, leaders who get foreign aid and likewise other contributors of resource-curse ensure their leadership survival and keep following unpopular policies among citizens (de Mesquita and Smith 2009). Thus, abundance of resources revenues and aid support contribute to a political leader's decision to pull internet under the heavy governmental control. It is reasonable for a leader of autocratic state to contract or to limit the provision of goods for public use, specifically internet, as its expansion poses challenges to political survival. Autocrats need money to distribute them to members of the winning coalition. From that standpoint aid, for example, can be perceived as a force of evil that promote misbehavior of an incumbent. Such

contractionary response (i.e. lessen provision of public goods or more restrictive internet policy) decreases the ability to revolt, but at the same time it lessens economic productivity and put a country under increased international pressure. Nevertheless, leaders might satisfy the members of a coalition with private goods not through taxation, but through other non-labor canals that is a convenient alternative.[6] Here, I argue that autocrats who receive resources from oil/gas revenues and foreign aid forsake public policy goals to hold on power by rewarding his supporters and imposing more restrictive internet regulation.

Figure 2 Labor-free Resources and Public Goods

Labor-free[7] *resources* → *less provision of public goods* → *more restrictive internet regulation (i.e. resources rents and foreign aid)*

Hypothesis 2a: A non-democratic country has more restrictive internet regulation as resources' rents are high.

Hypothesis 2b: A non-democratic country has more restrictive internet regulation as foreign aid allocations are high.

[6] The theory in this paper does not consider conditionality of foreign aid (Burnside and Dollar 2000; Stokke 2013), however the author realizes the importance of it as part of the further theory development.

[7] In this paper such terms as labor and labor-free resources as well as taxation and rents/aid respectively are used interchangeably.

Chapter 3 Statistical Analysis: Foreign Aid Promotes Internet Freedom

The chapter of statistical analysis discusses aspects of hypotheses' tests. More specifically, it presents operationalization of theoretical concepts (i.e. information on dependent, independent variables and control variables), data sources and statistical model used to estimate the abovementioned effect of natural resources rents and foreign aid on a leader's decision over the internet regulation. The primary sources of measures are the 'Freedom on the net score' derived from the Freedom House as a proxy for 'Internet restriction' variable (i.e. dependent variable) and data that are collected by the World Bank used as a proxy for independent and control variables. In this section I show that correlation between aid support and internet freedom holds across countries and over time, however in the wrong direction and not in a cross-section setting. Summary statistics are presented in Appendix.

3.1 Sample and Unit of Analysis

The derived hypotheses focus on what factors might lead states to impose either more restrictive or more liberal Internet regulation. Namely, how governmental revenues (i.e. taxation or resources revenues/foreign aid)[8] might drive a country to afford internet policy package that is the most suitable for the regime elite. Thus, this paper uses a country-year as a unit of analysis. Offering a dataset on Internet regulation both an over-time analysis (i.e. panel data analysis) and a study at a single point of time (i.e. cross-sectional) were conducted. Due to the problem of data scarcity, the temporal domain of this paper spans only from 2011 to 2016. The sample size

[8] By taxation I mean labor-resource and by resources revenues and foreign aid - non-labor.

includes 65 states (36 are non-democracies), therefore it has 339 observations for the period 2011-2016.

3.2 Operationalization of Variables

In this section, I take a closer look at providing operational definitions of the dependent and independent variables. The paper employs two data sources: the Freedom House and the World Bank. The theory used in this paper is an extension of the selectorate model presented above. The use of it, then, in terms of explaining internet regulation in nondemocracies determines a focus on its economic implications, namely how economic policies or ways of getting governmental revenues impact prospects of a political leader to maximize his chances of remaining in office. Within the political context, the winning coalition's support is crucial for a leader to hold a power. Its size is taken into account by a leader while making any allocation decisions to ward off any threats that might lead to a leader's defeat (Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2005). Thus, for a dictator it is essential to appease his winning coalition, which is predominantly small.

As detailed in theoretical section, it could be that non-democratic leaders who rely on resources rents or foreign aid can provide more restrictive internet regulation. On the other hand, the absence of such resources puts a political leader in a situation to collect revenues from his citizens through taxation. The latter scenario would allow for a less censored and open online

environment. Consequently, the hypotheses in terms of rent-seeking behavior (i.e. labor or labor-free resources)[9] are tested with the following research design.

Dependent variable

The primary dependent variable (i.e. 'Internet restriction') indicates whether a country has either open or closed Internet regime. It is proxied by the Freedom on the net score, which ranges from 0 to 100 and available from the non-governmental organization Freedom House (FH). To facilitate interpretation, the higher the Freedom on the Net score, the less free is the internet regulation policy. Each country is evaluated on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0-30 means 'free', 31-60 – 'partly free' and a range between 61 and 100 as 'not free'. Notice that the internet restriction score is available only from 2011.

The numerical score of dependent variable, or 'Internet restriction', is a result of in- and out-country experts' and advisors' evaluation of online environment. A list of in-country experts can be found in Freedom on the net reports. Based on a set of 21 questions and about 100 sub-questions, the methodology is divided into three categories: obstacles to access with total 25 points (1), limits on content with total 35 points (2) and violations of user rights with total 40 points (3). Each question is allotted the points: the lower the number, the freer is a situation and vice-versa for the opposite scenario. Apart from investigating legal regulations, the questionnaire also captures analysis of consequences of citizens' online activity such as free speech and other.

[9] In this paper labor resources and tax resources (i.e. tax revenues) as well as non-labor resources and tax-free resources (i.e. natural resources' revenues) are interchangeable notions.

Next, after local experts and advisors submit the draft scores, numerous regional review meetings, as well as international conferences, take place before the Freedom House experts provide a reliable final score. Since 2011 the number of evaluated countries rose from 37 to 65 in 2016, however still not covering many autocratic states worldwide. However, according to the Freedom On the Net (2016) report, those 65 countries are representative with regards to geography, economic development, political and media freedom. Thus, as there is no other alternative data to measure the given dependent variable, this paper relies on the Freedom on the net score.

Last, but not least, shortcomings of the given data used as a proxy for the outcome variable can significantly distort findings of the statistical analysis. Perhaps the Freedom on the Net proxy used by scholars is not the best way to operationalize the internet restriction/freedom variable. First, the exploited methodology suffers from the bias exemplified in research planning, data collection, its analysis etc. Secondly, the Freedom House data do not cover all authoritarian countries that, in turn, does not allow me as a researcher to validate the outcomes and extrapolate them on the group of non-democracies. Even though the score might suffer from subjective validation and/or sources limitation problems, the data of the Freedom House is commonly used by scholars and Freedom on the net score is no exception.

Independent and control variables

The main independent variables of the paper are ‘Resources’ and ‘Aid’. Such non-tax revenue as resources rents (‘Resources’) is used to test the derived hypothesis presented in a theory part.

‘Resources’ variable is proxied by the World Bank data – Total natural resources rents as a percentage of GDP. As a matter of fact, oil is the most important type of traded resource. However, by using the World Bank proxy the paper captures rents’ sum of oil, natural gas, coal (hard and soft), minerals, and forest (Total natural resources rents (% of GDP). Certainly, countries differ in terms of economically relevant resources they have in stock – be it oil, natural gas or coal. Therefore, the existence of the variable, which comprises not only oil revenues, allows taking into analysis those countries that might heavily rely on other mineral rents such as diamonds. Taking the natural logarithm can help to eliminate any possible skew to diminish an influence on regression of one or a few cases. Hence, I take the natural logarithm of the ‘Resources’ variable.

The ‘buy off’ argument used in the theoretical part of the paper takes foreign aid equivalent to natural resources rents. Thus, the following independent variable ‘Aid’, which is constructed by the World Bank, is utilized to measure foreign aid allocations and estimated by dividing net official development assistance (ODA) received and midyear population. Here, ODA or simply foreign aid is provided by official agencies of the members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), by multilateral institutions, and by non-DAC countries. The ODA is designed to provide aid to developing countries with an aim to promote economic development (Net ODA received (% of GNI) n.d.). Worth to mention that this indicator includes a grant element of at least 25% and excludes aid provided for military purposes and anti-terrorism actions. As for ‘Resources’, I take the natural logarithm for the ‘Aid’ variable too.

It is important to note that overfitting a statistical model by estimating too many variables with a small sample size can be a problem. As a result, regression coefficients, R-squared, and p-values might be misleading. By specifically testing other variables that are related to the dependent variable (i.e. 'Internet restriction') the paper seeks to avoid any spurious correlations (if any). To provide alternative explanations the paper considers only a limited number of control variables such as country's regime type ('Polity'), gross domestic product (GDP), population size and a sum of estimates of the two main independent variables. Plus, new measurement of the 'Aid' variable is considered for the alternative analysis. I take the natural logarithm of all of them (lnGDP, ln_population, ln_free, lnODA_gov).

As internet turned into a part of people's daily life, in 2011 internet access has become a basic human right that was anchored by the non-binding UN resolution (Jackson 2011). Since democracies are less likely to put restrictions on freedoms in general, the paper controls for regime level. Most variants of scholarly papers draw on the Polity IV dataset, ranging from -10 to 10 ('autocracies' -10 to -6, 'anocracies' -5 to +5, three special values: -66, -77 and -88, and 'democracies' +6 to +10), as a reliable source to measure a country's regime spectrum (The Polity Project). From this dataset the variable Polity2 was taken for the statistical analysis, which takes values only from -10 to 10 is a modified version of the Polity variable.

Citizens *per se* advocate freedoms, which also include internet freedom. A successful economic performance can be essential to regimes with a large winning coalition (Bueno de Mesquita, et al. 2005). Economic structure and success indeed is crucial for political performance and a common control for a country's wealth that is used to isolate any effects of economic growth to

the value of the outcome variable (Wantchekon 2002). The paper includes ‘GDP’ variable taken from the World Bank (i.e. GDP (current US$)) as a proxy. While I am interested in governmental revenues at a particular leader’s disposal, I take a GDP indicator that represents the sum of value added by all resident producers in the economy including product taxes and excluding any subsidies.

Demographic factors such as population size, or size of the selectorate, might also impact the internet policy in a country. The importance of the internet as a coordination tool is crucial. It follows that the larger the population size, the more complicated it might be to engage into an inter-communication process with a purpose to revolt (Egorov, Guriev, and Sonin 2009). Here, such online instruments as social media platforms are essential when a mob/opposition plans to overthrow a political leader. The data on population size is derived from the World Bank data (Population, total).

3.3 Statistical Model

The statistical model choice is contingent on the type of the dependent variable and the relevant dataset available. As the dependent variable is continuous, the linear regression model is the most appropriate way to test the derived hypotheses. Intrinsically, the proposed model states that value on Y (or internet restriction) is predicted from knowledge of a combination of Xs (or independent variables) plus a random error. In terms of hypotheses, it is assumed a positive relationship between the level of natural resources/foreign aid and the internet restriction

($\beta_{1,2} > 0$). It is also expected that the relationship between democracy level to be negative ($\beta_3 < 0$).

$$Internet\ restriction_{i,t} = \alpha + \beta_1 Resources_{i,t} + \beta_2 Aid_{i,t} + \beta_3 Polity_{i.t} + \beta_4 x_{i.t} + \varepsilon_{i,t},$$

where $\beta_4 x_{i.t}$- control variables

3.4 Findings

This section provides empirical results derived from the testing part of hypotheses. The results are not consistent with the theoretical predictions, however with some exceptions. Once parameters are estimated, one can predict a score for the dependent variable. The results from analysis of labor-free resources' impact on internet freedom are summarized in Table 1 and Table 2 provides similar information, but only for non-democratic countries.

Table 1 Analysis of Internet Restriction (Including Democracies)

Variables	1	2	3
Resources	0.557		-2.371
	(0.409)		(1.818)
Aid		-1.616*	-1.497
		(0.740)	(0.829)
Polity	-2.364***	-2.004***	-2.203***
	(0.129)	(0.243)	(0.274)
Constant	50.832***	50.486***	55.393***
	(0.984)	(1.710)	(3.462)
R-squared	0.6545	0.5045	0.5326
N	236	72	68

Standard errors in parentheses * p<0.10 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.001”

While the first two columns of Table 1 and Table 2 report coefficient estimates for one of the independent variables (i.e. resources and aid respectively), column 3 and 6 include all variables. First and foremost, the effect of democracy with its system of checks and balances and active participation of citizens in political life might reflect the importance of the internet as an additional tool of politicians and constituencies. All politicians have an incentive to stay in office, but in democratic countries with a large coalition it is done by promoting and distributing welfare, including internet freedom, to a large number of people. Barely one can argue that in such states bailouts are an evil. Poor political, social, economic performance is likely to be perceived by voters as a failure. So the demand for a positive outcome during a vote day enables politicians to satisfy constituencies. In turn, such a policy makes democracies stable and political survival secure. In both Table 1 and Table 2 the polity coefficient is positive and significant, as predicted by the statistical model. Thus, the more a country is democratically developed, the fewer internet restrictions one might observe.

Table 2 Analysis of Internet Restriction (Non-Democratic Countries Only)

Variables	4	5	6
Resources	0.094 (0.679)		-0.700 (2.119)
Aid		-3.251** (0.927)	-3.170** (1.151)
Polity	-2.127*** (0.240)	-2.270*** (0.445)	-2.261*** (0.474)
Constant	52.186*** (1.662)	47.915*** (2.326)	49.781*** (4.480)
R-squared	0.4335	0.5607	0.5385
N	111	41	37

Standard errors in parentheses * p<0.10 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.001”

Notice that the coefficients of 'Resources' variable in columns 1 and 4 are positive and in columns 3 and 6 are negative, however in both cases not statistically significant. For the latter cases it might mean that the higher resources revenues are associated with the lower internet restriction. Even though the coefficient is statistically insignificant, a potential explanation for its negative correlation is that at present within the context of economic crisis resource-rich countries are trying to dispose of resource-curse, focus on economic diversification and other growth-oriented strategies. Hence, whenever an incumbent gets sight of an economic crisis appearing on the horizon by providing more internet access and freedom he potentially tries to benefit from the latter economically. One of the explanations is that such leaders can be convinced that impending political crisis can be solved by policy concessions (i.e. to impose more liberalized internet regulation) in terms of debt forgiveness, aid or new loans.

Next, in Table 2 the coefficients in both columns for foreign aid are statistically significant in the wrong direction, or negatively correlated with the internet restriction score.[10] It suggests that the more official development assistance is received by a recipient country, the stronger the positive effect of foreign aid on internet freedom, which is not consistent with the proposed hypothesis (i.e. A non-democratic country has more restrictive internet regulation as foreign aid allocations are high). Presumably with 1% increase of foreign aid in a share of GNI the observed value of the internet restriction decreases by approximately 3.2-3.3 points. Such a result is an interesting point for further studies.

[10] The results hold the same outcome for the probit regression analysis.

As governments seek to ensure political survival and find support from the politically relevant groups they need to distribute benefits to the latter. The resources can be found in aid allocations, the amount of which can be contingent on government policies and/or their changes. By changing the internet regulation policy, for instance, the situation might have either positive or negative effect on aid disbursements provided by donors. Foreign aid itself has its own political logic. In principle, one explanation for such a negative correlation between aid and internet restriction can be hidden in the concept of conditionality, or in exchange for policies. Aid giving strategies have been reassessed for the last years. Leaders need resources and aid resource promotes their political survival. Some scholars argue that regime type is a determinant factor of aid's impact on reforms: the higher the democracy level, the more effective works aid conditionality strategy (Montinola 2010). Furthermore, Kono and Montinola (2009) argue that aid helps autocrats only in the long run and donors in order to allocate disbursements more effectively can influence non-democratic recipient countries by offering future commitments. By receiving assistance autocratic leaders can reward their backers. However, a question at what price can a non-democracy with various coalition size be bought still remains.

3.5 Alternative Explanations

To account for alternative explanations, additional variables were added in the model. This section expands on population (1), GDP per capita (2), foreign aid as a percentage of governmental expenses as a split-halves method case (3) and a total amount of resources rents and received aid (4). As Table 3 depicts, in all cases only Polity variable is consistent with

previous results. Of interest is that here the coefficient of natural resources' rents and foreign aid ('Free') in column 15 is negative and statistically significant that again contradicts to the derived hypothesis (i.e. A non-democratic country has more restrictive internet regulation as the resources' abundance rents are high). Column 14 indicates that the higher a population of a country, the higher are internet restrictions, which is reasonable. Note that other variations of adding control variables were analyzed and no coefficient was statistically significant.

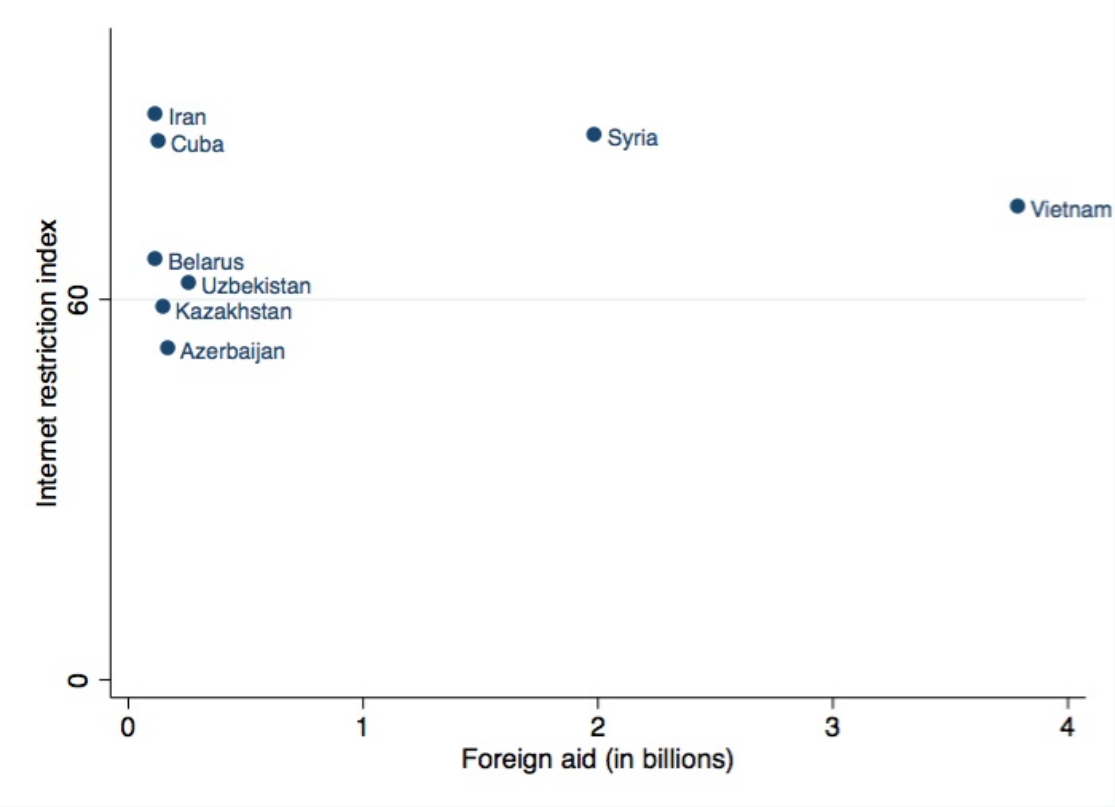
Table 3 Statistical Analysis with Control Variables (Non-Democracies Only)

Variables	11	12	13	14	15
Resources	2.091	-0.991	-0.698	-1.943	12.486
	(6.419)	(2.305)	(2.088)	(2.107)	(7.184)
Aid	-2.722	12.714	-1.384	-2.387*	2.027
	(1.516)	(13.010)	(1.704)	(1.160)	(8.378)
Free	-3.258				-22.101*
	(7.060)				(8.322)
Aid (% of governmental expenses)		-14.659			3.991
		(11.667)			(9.086)
GDP			3.717		0.852
			(2.647)		(5.292)
Population				4.937*	2.878
				(2.381)	(4.353)
Polity	-2.273***	-1.202	-2.309***	-2.205***	-2.037***
	(0.480)	(0.767)	(0.468)	(0.452)	(0.467)
Constant	52.047***	70.042***	-42.466	-29.883	-2.772
	(6.685)	(13.576)	(65.847)	(38.665)	(82.698)
R-squared	0.5416	0.3741	0.5653	0.5931	0.5163
N	37	21	37	37	40

Standard errors in parentheses * p<0.10 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.001"

The impact of labor free revenues (i.e. resources rents and foreign aid) among autocracies is showed graphically in Figures 5 and 6. Due to the fact that the Freedom on the Net includes only 65 countries, which are either democracies or anocracies, there are only 11 autocratic countries (i.e. not nondemocracies), namely the states that have a score of Polity IV dataset equal or less than -6. In the following graphs, the author makes an attempt to depict countries by estimating the impact of the value of non-labor resources on the internet freedom (both variables are averaged).

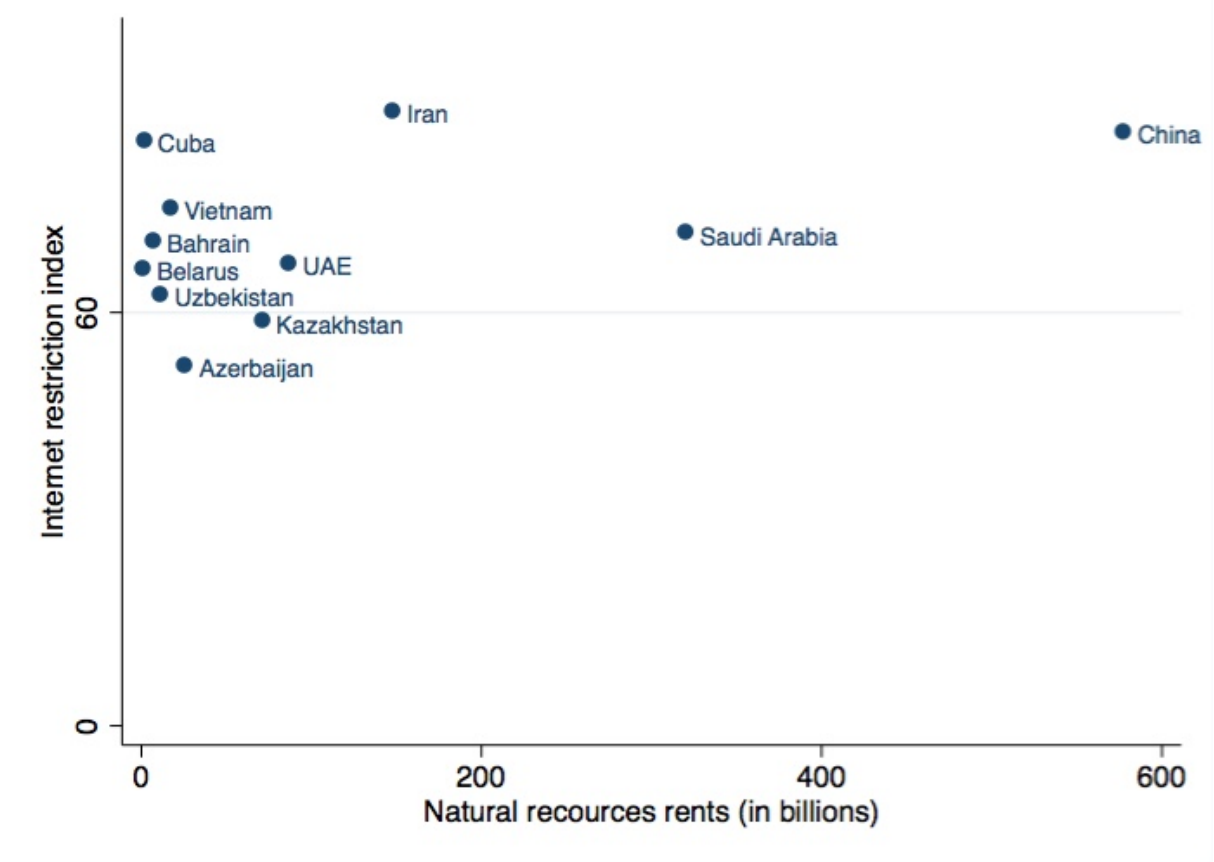
Figure 3 Foreign Aid and Internet Restriction (Both Averaged 2011-2016)



Source: Freedom House and World Bank data

From the Figure 5 above it can be seen that there is little evidence that abundant amount of foreign aid is associated with the less internet freedom in a given state. Points on the left are stacked one atop the other. Only two countries with autocratic regime type, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, have the averaged score lower than 61, meaning that these states are assumed to be partially free in the internet domain. Four countries were dropped by the reason that Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, China and the United Arab Emirates according to the Net ODA data have not received any official external aid support. In other countries, it appears that the more depraved outcome value may be affected by other reasons than just aid support.

Figure 4 Natural Resources Rents and Internet Restriction (Both Averaged 2011-2016)



Source: Freedom House and World Bank data

Moreover, natural resources imply some weak evidence to suggest that the more revenues an autocratic government receives from its resources (i.e. oil, gas etc.), the less free is the internet. Among the top countries, which receive more revenues from natural resources are China, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. According to Figure 6, one can see that the distance between one billion and almost six hundred billion is about plus 20 points of Freedom on the net score. However, barely one can make any valid conclusions as information of a small subset of non-democratic countries were used in the analysis.

Above I asked, whether the statistical analysis can provide information about the effect of labor free revenues on the internet freedom score. In general, from the graphs above one can conclude that there is no discernable effect of labor-free revenues on online censorship policy, as the models suffer from the small sample size bias. However, the statistical results suggest that contrary to the derived hypotheses non-democratic countries has less restrictive internet regulation as foreign aid allocations are high. In sum, it would be interesting to conduct analysis in about five years and see, if there is any statistically significant relationship. Hence, the frontier question still remains.

Chapter 4 Case Studies: Internet as a Tool to Strengthen Control

Taking into account the limitation of the preliminary statistical estimation, namely the absence of large-N data that can provide a general measurement of the internet freedom for all non-democratic countries in numerous years, the paper seeks to apply case study analysis in order to derive valid conclusions.

The internet freedom is proxied by the Freedom on the net score, which ranges from 0 to 100 (i.e. the higher the score, the worse is a situation with internet freedom). First, to choose countries for the case study based on the internet freedom score change, 10 cases were selected: Thailand, Ukraine, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Russia, and Turkey are in the '*score decline'* group, whereas Georgia, Tunisia, and Brazil are among '*score improvement'* group. Moreover, according to the final report of the Freedom House the following five countries experienced the steepest deterioration of the internet freedom for the last five years (Freedom On the Net 2016 n.d.): Ukraine, Venezuela, Turkey, Russia, Ethiopia. To combine twelve countries can potentially be investigated in this chapter.

To test the theory, countries with a large within-case variance of dependent variable were chosen (i.e. Venezuela, Ethiopia, and Turkey). Whereas Venezuela and Ethiopia present within case variance of an independent variable, the case of Turkey is atypical in this respect, but still remains in the *'score decline'* group. As it experienced almost no variance (or better to say variance in unusually small quantities), Turkey might leave alternative explanations for the given research puzzle.

The fact that all three countries belong to the category of non-democracies gives an opportunity to thoroughly investigate the examined phenomenon of internet regulation. For example, Venezuela as a country with abundant natural resources and revenues received from oil reserves represents the category of rentier states. Ethiopia, in turn, is an example of a state that receives a relatively large amount of aid from foreign donors. Doing so, namely taking for analysis Venezuela and Ethiopia with prominent variation in natural resources revenues as well as foreign aid allocations, may provide profound insights into explaining why do some countries have more restricted internet control and others do not. Finally, Turkey's example introduces a state with no significant amount of either resources' rent or development assistance available for governmental funds – be it public or private goods expenditure. The instance of Turkey is used as a control case to see, whether the results of previous cases (i.e. Venezuela and Ethiopia) support the derived hypotheses or not.

4.1 Venezuela: Resource Curse as a Premise?

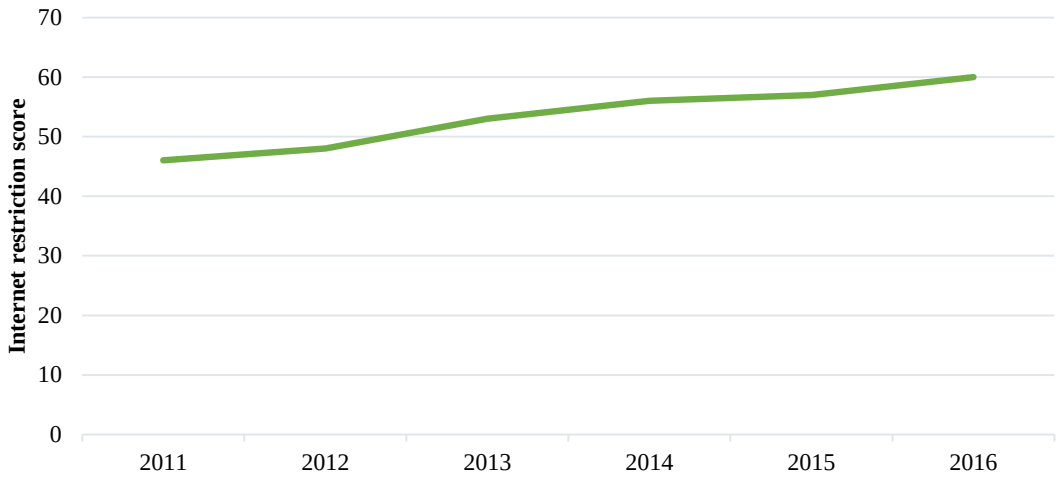
The country that emerged after the collapse of Gran Colombia, which is extremely overdependent on natural resources revenues, for the last five years experienced one of the steepest internet freedom deterioration alongside with Ukraine, Turkey, Russia and Ethiopia (Freedom On the Net 2016 n.d.). According to Polity IV dataset, in 2000s Venezuela from being a democracy turned into the category of closed anocracy (Polity IV Annual Time-Series, 1800-2015). As much of the government's revenue comprise oil rents, oil price drop in 2014 worsened the economic situation of Venezuela with ended 275% of inflation in 2015. As a response, the government under Nicolas Maduro aimed at increased control over the national economy (The world factbook: Venezuela n.d.).

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has a long history with oil. As it can be seen, Venezuela is a heavily oil-dependent country. Auty (2005) asserts that high oil rents in the case of Venezuela erode "checks and balances as part of a negative socio-economic spiral". Venezuela eschewed a policy that aimed at import substitution, building a system of rent extraction from oil export mostly. Failure to ration rents in the last years prompted authoritarianism and low public goods distribution. Following this idea Hammond (2011) underlines that a country with abundant reserves of natural resources is prone to economic afflictions as in the long run industrial diversity is undermined. After Hugo Chavez came to power in 1998 a number of laws were passed that was aimed at taking governmental control over the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA). Even though the Venezuelan government invested revenues of PVDSA in public spending, oil overdependence accompanied

with a decline in oil prices have put the country on the brink of economic collapse (Timmerman 2012).

After the 47-hour coup d'état attempt of 2002, which was a response to Chavez's reforms in the oil industry, Chavez suffered from the popularity decline. However, after his supporters demanded his return a series of social programs were initiated called "Las Misiones". The formula of the social programs covered a wide range of problems among the poor population: 28 missions served interests of those who had no access to medicine, housing, job training etc. (Pedro España N. 2008). Many of such public spending projects were extremely costly, unsustainable in investments and ineffectively managed like the social programs "Las Misiones". Undeniable fact that such bold socio-political promises, namely social programs, brought political fruits. Nevertheless, still efficient management of oil revenues was a challenging task for the Venezuelan government.

Figure 5 Internet Restriction Score in Venezuela between 2011 and 2016[11]



Source: Freedom House data

[11] Note that the higher the score, the lower is internet freedom.

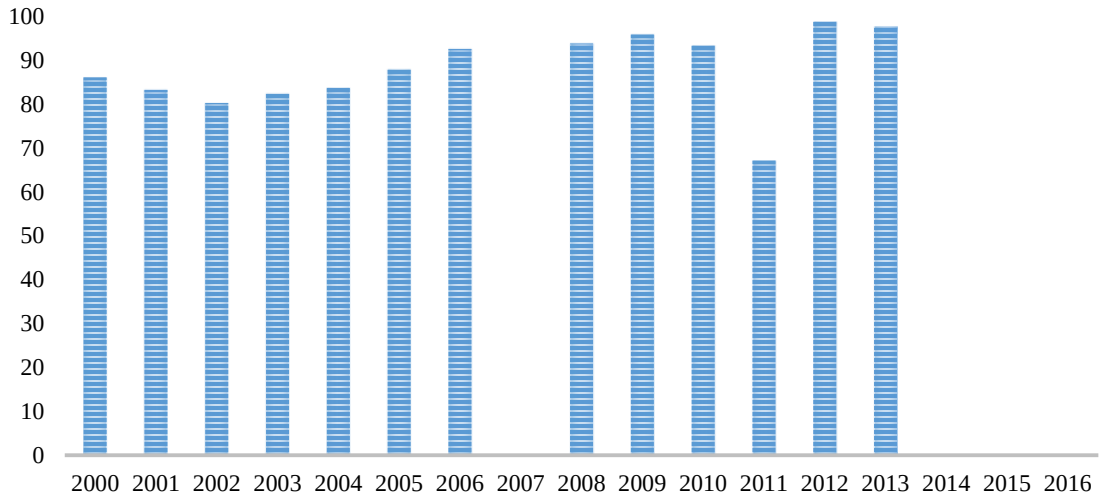
Hugo Chavez was an active supporter of a higher internet penetration in Venezuela. Even though the number of internet users rose beyond 60% among the national population, it is worth mentioning that the internet penetration is exceptionally uneven that is strongly pronounced in the urban and rural divide. According to Freedom House country report, up to the moment the average broadband speed in Venezuela is the lowest among other Latin American states. In turn, that fact can be buttressed by the number of broadband subscriptions, which changed insignificantly for the last fifteen years. Mostly that happened due to economic turmoil when a number of factors badly influenced telecommunication sector's development. (Freedom on the Net 2016 Venezuela 2016).

Table 4 Internet Usage in Venezuela

	2000	2015
Internet user (per 100 people)	37.37	61.869
Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)	22.318	92.972
Fixed broadband subscriptions (per 100 people)	0.018	8.245

Source: World Bank data

Figure 6 Fuel Exports of Venezuela (% of Merchandise Exports)[12]



Source: World Bank data

As the theory states, if a non-democratic country relies on natural resources revenues (in the case of Venezuela it is oil revenues), it has more restrictive internet regulation to ensure political survival of a ruling elite. By analyzing the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela the primary as well as secondary factors that led to internet freedom score decline to be examined.

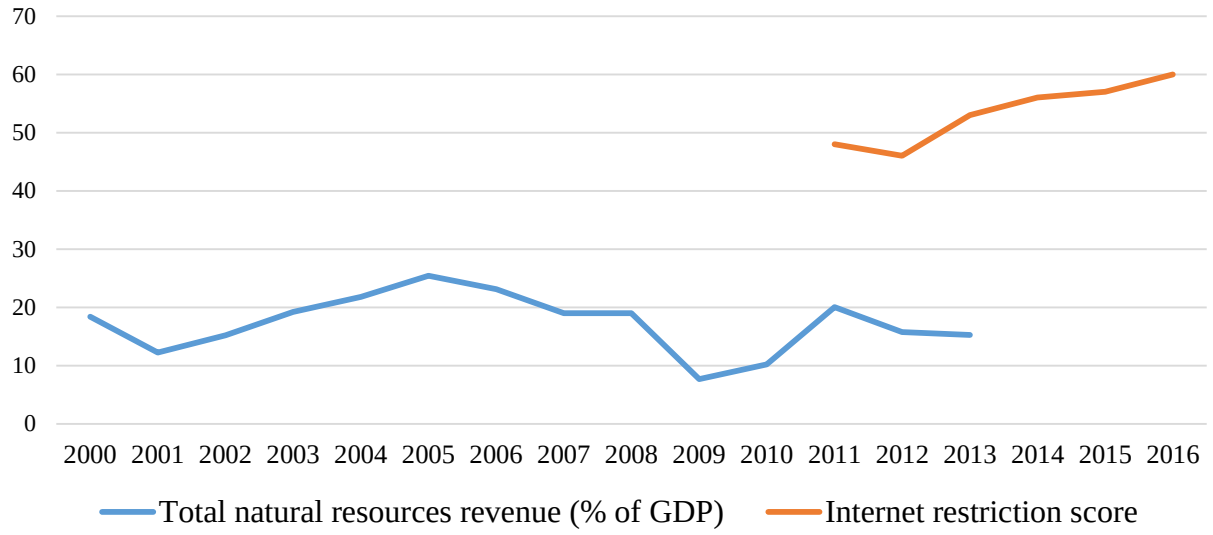
In order to estimate natural resources revenues, the World Bank 'Total natural resources rents' indicator was chosen which is proxied by the percentage amount of GDP. It comprises oil rents, natural gas rents, coal rents (hard and soft), mineral rents, and forest rents. However, for some unknown reason, it lacks the numbers for 2014-2016.

According to Figure 4.1.4 it can be seen that resources revenues dropped by roughly a half since 2005 putting the country in record-setting shortages and economic crisis. Meanwhile, internet

[12] The data is available at:
http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/TX.VAL.FUEL.ZS.UN?end=2013&locations=VE&start=1990

restriction level reached the score of an internet ‘not free’ country in 2016. It seems that the Bolivarian government tried to exploit external revenues to ward off from threats and simultaneously undertake steps to authoritarian adaptation. Nevertheless, one cannot make any causal relationship.

Figure 7 Internet Restriction Score and Natural Resources Revenue in Venezuela

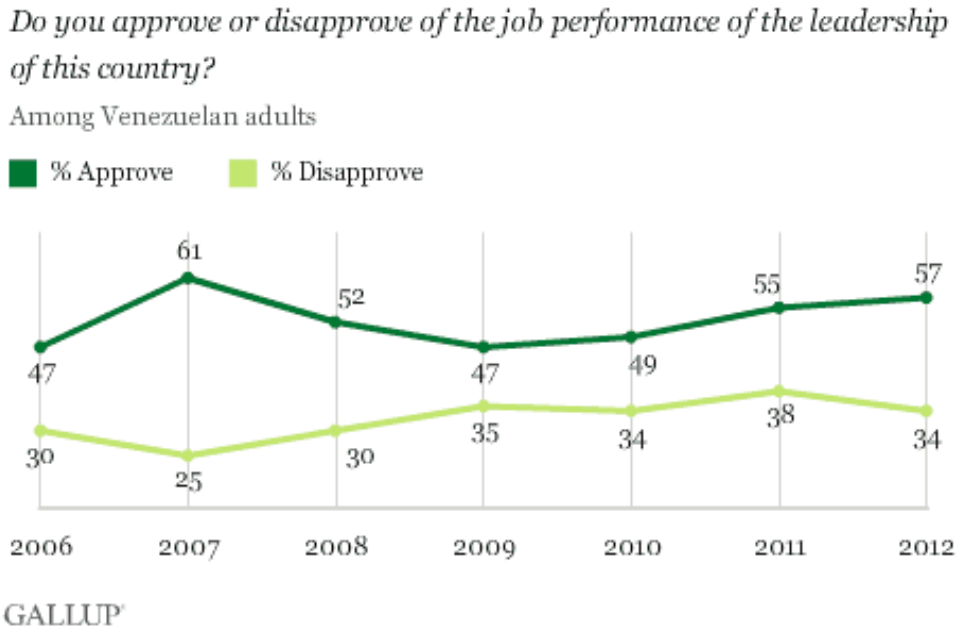


Source: Freedom House and World Bank data

Article 57 of the Constitution states that “everyone has the right to express freely his or her thoughts … and no censorship shall be established. Anonymity, war propaganda, discriminatory messages or those promoting religious intolerance are not permitted” (Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (in English). Chronologically speaking, in 2000 as it was noted by the Presidential Decree №825 of Hugo Chavez, the internet access was promoted as the country’s integral part of development policy agenda that to some extent helped him to gain electoral support and approval (see Figure 4.1.3).

However, in 2002 the short coup against the President took place. Many radios and television stations were closed due to alleged ties in anti-governmental rallies and oppositional lines (Dizard 2010). Even if the government of Hugo Chavez in 2000s restricted freedom of press on the radio, printed media and television by adopting the Law of Social Responsibility in Radio and Television (Ley Resorte) of 2004 and the new Criminal Code Reform Law of 2005, the internet domain, especially personal internet use, was not restricted. Thus, according to the U.S. Department report regarding a situation with human rights in Venezuela, "there were no government restrictions on the internet or academic freedom" (OpenNet Initiative Country Profile. Venezuela 2007). An illustrative example, the next step for the ruling elite was to provide a necessary infrastructure. The launch of the satellite Simon Bolivar in 2008 from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan Province. According to the Ministry of Science and Technology of Venezuela, the total amount of money spent on the project was 241 million dollars (China launch VENESAT-1 – debut bird for Venezuela 2008). Along with other governmental programs like "Las Misiones", seems like the government of Hugo Chaves funded by high oil revenues set a goal to increase public goods, including online domain to gain support from the constituencies. At that time there was no sound evidence that indicated any internet restrictions – be it access limitations and/or users' rights violations. The 'success' of Venezuela on the international arena was dictated mostly by the fact that the number of internet users were negligible and barely could pose a threat by means of a social media mobilized revolutionary mob. Thus, mass media typified by a numerical indicator did not include internet, but the former was heavily restricted.

Figure 8 Views of Chavez's Leadership [13]



Source: Gallup data

Nevertheless, the positive line was replaced by consequent governmental initiatives that affected a number of internet use domains. For example, in 2007 President Chavez announced the plan of former privately owned internet service provider (ISP) the National Telephone Company of Venezuela CANTV to be nationalized. Since its privatization, this ISP was in possession of about 80% of the national internet market (OpenNet Initiative Country Profile. Venezuela 2007). According to the National Plan for Telecommunications, Information Technology and Postal Services 2007-2013, the government "recognizes communication as a human right and telecommunications and information technology as tools for securing that right". Nevertheless, since 2009 a number of adopted decrees and other governmental decisions contradicted the before mentioned ideas of the wide internet access were on the increase. In 2010 the parliament

[13] The data is available at: http://www.gallup.com/poll/161756/special-briefing-chavez-legacy-venezuela-future.aspx

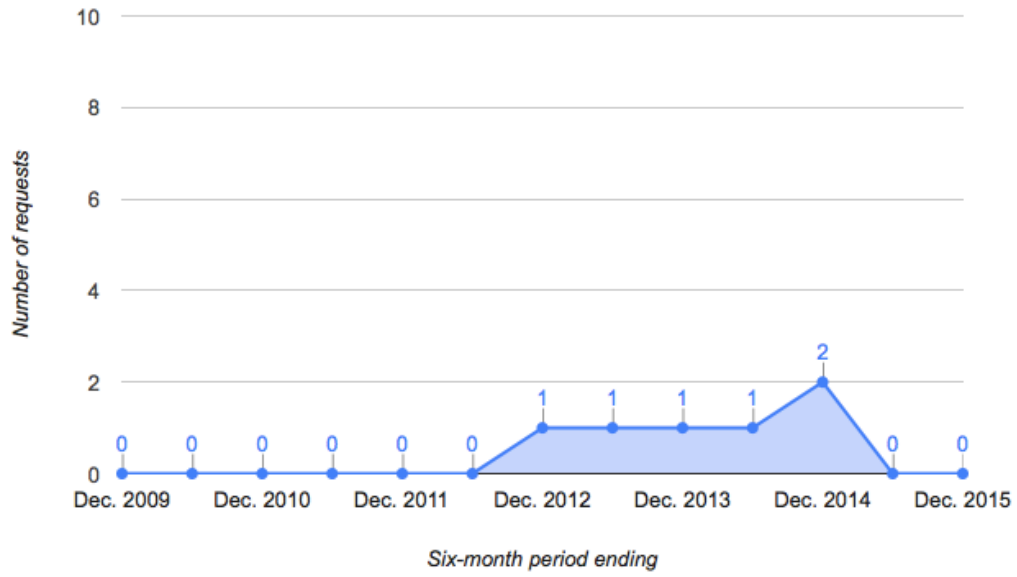
passed a law with a statement to monitor internet content in line with the Ley Resorte (Marguelas 2016). On the one hand, the head of state encouraged citizens to be online, on the other, in 2010s online emerging governmental criticism was condemned and called as a form of “media terrorism”.

Doubtless, such governmental decisions were a cause for concern about the future of the Venezuelan internet. Moreover, in 2010 the network access point for Web service provision was entirely managed by newly nationalized ISP – CANTV. Many critics asserted a claim that the government could totally usurp the power of the internet for the sake of the ruling elite. And they were right because in 2012 the first website blockings took place, namely, netizens using CANTV struggled with access problems to website “La Patilla”, WordPress, Blogger. The former website’s blockage was presumably because of video streaming of clashes in La Planta prison that barely were covered by national media (Venezuela 2012).

After the death of President Chavez in 2013 many people went out on the streets, they were detained for posts and uploading provocative photos online dedicated to political issues (OpenNet Initiative Country Profile. Venezuela 2013). During the Presidential elections the political sensitivity in Venezuela was extremely high: occasionally for several minutes CANTV shut down the broadband service, oppositional websites were temporary blocked. The site of the National Electoral Council also was displuged leaving voters unable to track results. As Ministry of Science and Technology explained such measures were undertaken to stop hacking attacks from outside and to identify responsible ones (Freedom on the Net. Venezuela 2013).

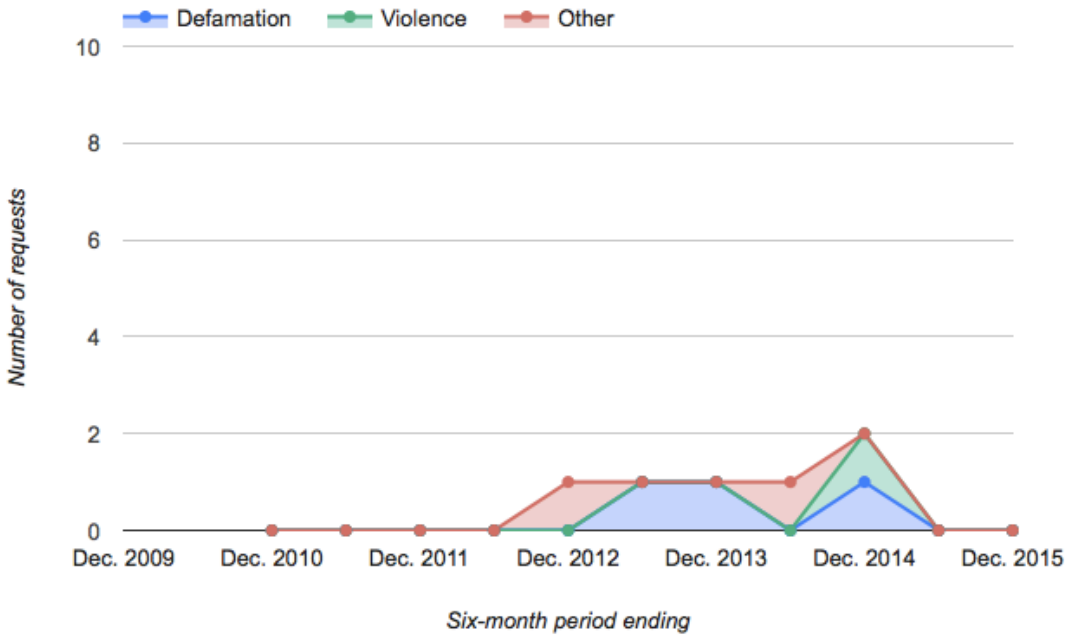
In 2013 it was also announced that intelligence services would not disregard instigators who look for country destabilization by means of social media. The government of Nicolas Maduro arrested many netizens who expressed their dislikes or criticism via Twitter and other platforms. For example, Lourdes Alicia Ortega Perez was arrested “for spreading false information” via Twitter, where to reply on how Hugo Chavez passed away, she wrote, “I don’t know, but he’s a wax doll now.” She was released a week later (NGOs Denounce Venezuela’s Human-Rights Abuses before UN Committee 2015).

Figure 9 Total Removal Requests Google Received from Venezuela by the Year since 2009



Source: Google Transparency Report data

Figure 10 Reasons for Removal Requests from the Government Agencies and Law Enforcement in Venezuela



Source: Google Transparency Report data

Worth mentioning that the growth of online restrictions embodied in the legal sense was coincided with the rise of Arab Spring in the Middle Eastern countries, starting from Tunisia. One trend comes clear that the announced by the government widespread use and access to the internet bumped up against the control of the latter. Situation assumed to be risky in Venezuela looking at the intensive campaigns that rapidly occurred in the Arab world and led to series of Presidents' ousting, sometimes murderous ones. Hence, the Venezuelan government decided to respond by actions controlling the internet domain despite the fact that in 2011-2013 the oil price was at a mark of 110 dollars per barrel (Spot Prices for Crude Oil and Petroleum Products n.d.).

For now, Venezuela is also famous for its practices of the so-called 'cadena', an obligatory broadcast of governmental messages to impose a one-sided version of current events, to

demonize political opponents and to make a solid propaganda(The Venezuelan Government Uses This Trick to Control Media Coverage 2014). However, the internet and social media, in particular, are not dependent on cadenas.

The last couple of years social media in Venezuela is seen as a platform for liberation as well as a marketplace. Local residents taking into account the economic crisis that harshly hit the country use those platforms as a broadcasting tool to share useful information about goods exchanges or medication purchases, for example. There are online groups called ‘treque’, which using available resources provide benefits to the Venezuelan society (Marguelas 2016).

The Venezuelan ruling elite accepts the fact that the internet is a vital tool in terms of social reach. President Maduro appears to be pro-internet active being one of the most retweeted leaders, however one of the negatively appraised at the same time (Twiplomacy Study 2016 2016). In the era of Nicolas Maduro, there are numerous facts of web content blocking and filtering of information on the political ground (Freedom on the Net 2016 Venezuela 2016). Nevertheless, the Venezuelan government under conditions of high inflation, lack of basic staples is not likely to afford the mass online blackout or its control, as it requires human and technical resources it barely can do so. By this reason the ruling elite and its command venture to detain active Twitter users, online activists seeking to prevent social unrest, anxiety and any forms of political destabilization.

To conclude, according to Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2010), leaders of a small winning coalition that is the case of Venezuela with access to the so-called labor-free resources (i.e. oil

and foreign aid) are more likely to suppress public goods in order to decrease the probability of revolts' success. In a phenomenon called a resource curse, nations are ready to extract resources and systematically underperform public goods. In the case of Venezuela among the public goods that include the presence of freedom of speech, the internet freedom takes a special role. After examining the Venezuelan internet regulation mechanism one can find a weak relation between the resources' revenues and rise in internet restriction. Natural resources are tremendous for autocrats, when the latter do not have to be encouraged to work and be reasonably taxed. Leaders of nondemocracies massively reward their essential backers with resources revenues and yet distance outsiders from a coalition by keeping them poor and unorganized. One of the ways to do so is to restrict internet freedom, namely by limiting internet access and prosecuting anti-governmental online activists. It is still ironic how resources revenues that are received to fix problems (especially societal) can create more issues. Among other factors to impact the internet freedom in non-democracies are regime change and political instability more generally. Indeed, every technique used to suppress mass media platforms, including online ones, were associated with an opportunity to move beyond threats to regime's stability.

4.2 Ethiopia: Heavy-Handed Approach to Internet

To begin with, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is one of strictest countries in terms of internet freedom environment. According to the Freedom on the Net report, despite the fact that Ethiopia's telecommunication infrastructure is relatively poor, the government monopoly intensified its control over the internet and its netizens (Freedom On the Net 2016 n.d.). However, the ruling elite of the country sees a development of the information and communication technology as a tool for poverty reduction (The National Information and Communication Technology Policy and Strategy of Ethiopia 2009).

Table 5 Internet Usage in Ethiopia

	2000	2015
Internet user (per 100 people)	0.015	11.6
Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)	0.027	42.764
Fixed broadband subscriptions (per 100 people)	0	0.658

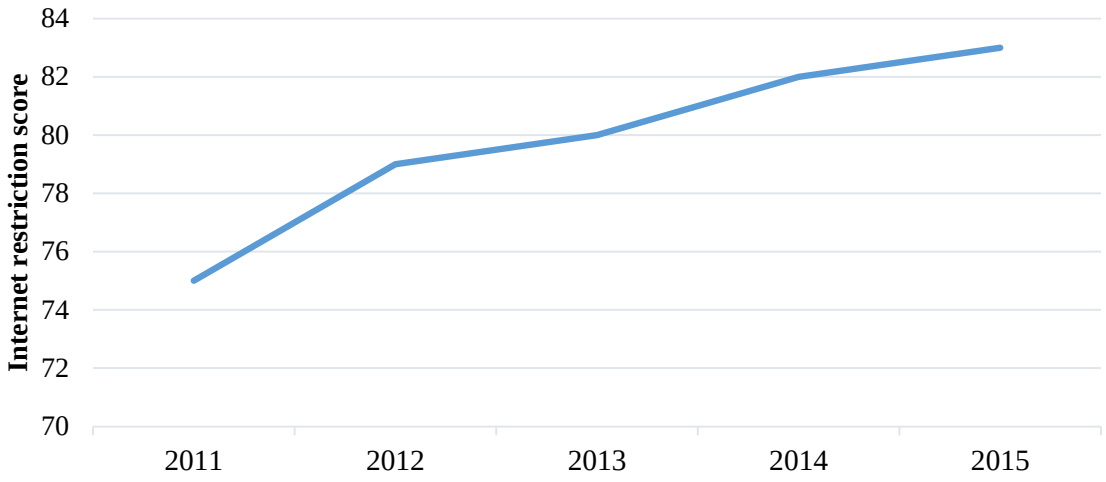
Source: World Bank data

According to the World Bank data, Ethiopia is among the countries with lowest internet penetration, the score of which changed insignificantly for the last 15 years. Moreover, it takes 119th and 135th places in the availability of latest technology and internet using individuals respectively (Schwab 2016).

Ethiopia is one of the countries that 'hijacked' the fight against terrorism narrative and passed laws to restrict freedom of speech and expression. For the first time internet was introduced in

the late 1990s with a limited access. The rise of human rights violation in the media domain can be tracked from 2005 after the parliamentarian elections when they were followed by a number of protests and arrests. In 2006 the government denied access to online publications related to political topics, one of the was the blodpost.com website (Internet Filtering in Ethiopia in 2006-2007 2007).

Figure 13 The Internet Restriction Score in Ethiopia between 2011 and 2016[14]



Source: Freedom House data

The poor internet proliferation was reflected in the legislative system. The first internet-related law was adopted in 2004. Namely, the Criminal Code included a list of online fraud like hacking and malware dissemination (Yilma and Abraha 2015). Exclusive control over the internet is taken by the governmental the Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency (ETA). In 2008 the Mass Media and Freedom of Information Proclamation was passed that increased the governmental power to convict journalists and deny press licenses on the ground of national security. In recent

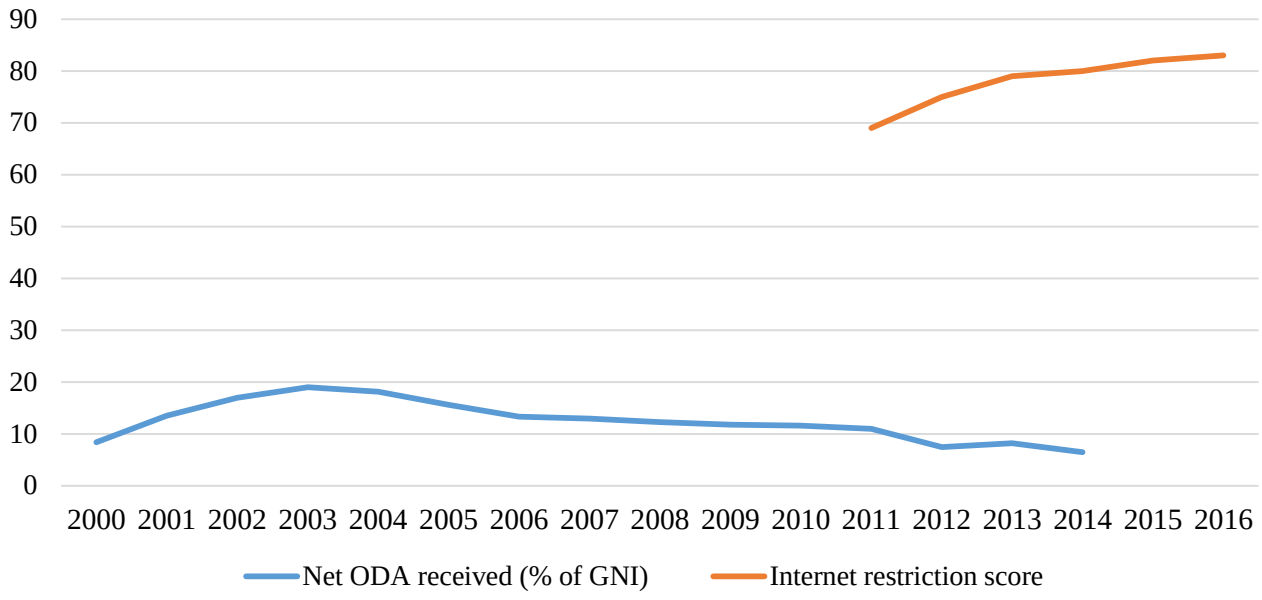
[14] Note that the higher the score, the lower is internet freedom.

developments under the Anti-Terrorist proclamation of 2009 convictions of bloggers and online journalists took place. In 2012 Eskinder Nega blogger was sentenced to 18 years after publishing an article the questioned the execution of the Anti-Terrorist law including mass arrests (Ethiopian blogger Eskinder Nega jailed for 18 years 2012). In such a manner the Ethiopian government outlaws any action that is considered to be dissident and gag any oppositional voices. In 2016 a new Computer Crime Proclamation ignited public concern. Thus according to article 14 says, “any written, video, audio or any other picture that incites fear, violence, chaos or conflict among people shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment not exceeding three years” (Ethiopia Computer Crime Proclamation Text Draft 2016). Potentially any protest and campaign can be suppressed using the article 14.

Ethiopia is no exception when dealing with antigovernment protests and rallies. In 2015 the Oromia region’s residents started a peaceful assembly mainly against an investment project that required destruction of forest and football field, but also due to capital’s territory expansion (“Master plan”) that could have a negative impact on locals. According to Human Rights Watch, the Ethiopian security forces lethally wounded hundreds of people, arrested and detained influential individuals among the local inhabitants (“Such a Brutal Crackdown” 2016). Blocking regime was reinforced and resulted in a shutdown of websites like Ayyantuu.net and Opride.com that reported about the protests and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. Still, in 2016 bloggers like Seyoum Teshome, who write about the Oromia protests can be sentenced behind the bars (Freedom on the Net country report. Ethiopia 2016).

As Gagliardone (2014) notes, Ethiopia has developed "love-hate relationship" with its donors, as they receive a particular amount of aid, but barely challenge their already solidified system. This idea is followed by Dirbaba and O'Donnell (2012) who argue that the government of Ethiopia has two objectives while liberalizing their media domain: 1) to attract the attention of foreign aid donor-countries; 2) to hold its power by excessively silencing independent journalism, for example. Moreover, the government of Ethiopia receives a substantial amount of the U.S. foreign aid, as the latter perceives the African country as an ally in the war against terrorism, especially within Southern Somalia-based "Al-Shabaab" jihadi fundamentalist group. However, in fall of 2016, the Ethiopia withdrew its troops from the territory of Somalia. As the Minister of Communications of Ethiopia informed, "keeping the troops there is posing an economic burden and logistical challenges to the government" (Ethiopian Troop Withdrawals in Somalia Raise Concern of Al-Shabab Resurgence n.d.).

Figure 14 Internet Restriction Score and Foreign Aid in Ethiopia



Source: Freedom House and World Bank data

According to data provided by the World Bank, ‘net official development assistance (ODA) per capita’ indicator consists of “disbursements of loans made on concessional terms (net of repayments of principal) and grants by official agencies of the members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), by multilateral institutions, and by non-DAC countries to promote economic development and welfare in countries and territories in the DAC list of ODA recipients. It includes loans with a grant element of at least 25 percent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 percent)” (Net ODA received per capita (current US$) n.d.). The Ethiopian government became a suspect in ‘buying out’ international aid from the USA, UK, and EU for the substantial amount of political reforms, however with no caring about human rights, freedom, and democratization (Feyissa 2011; Stremlau 2011).

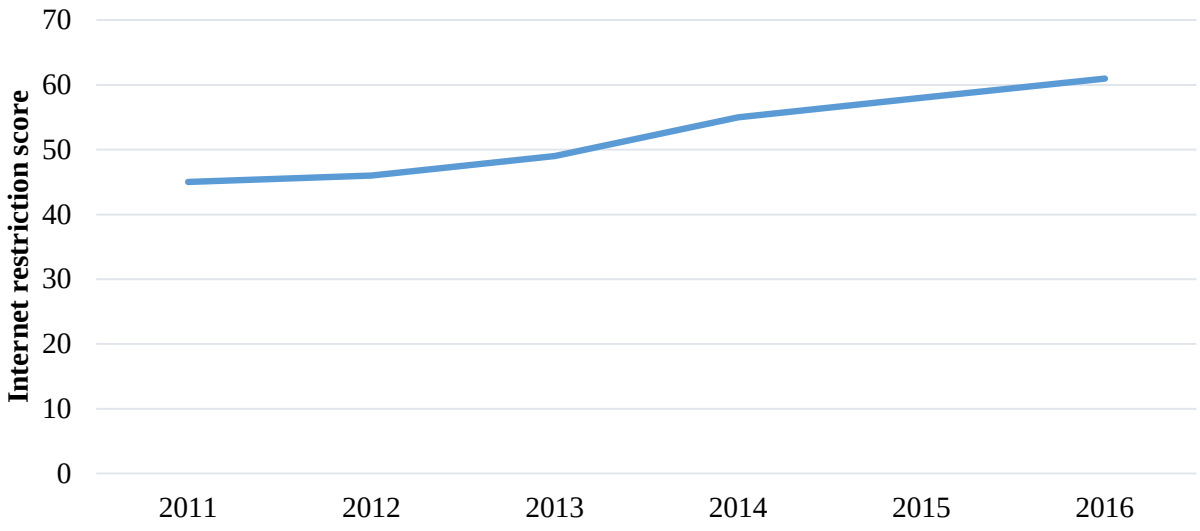
To sum up, does foreign aid in Ethiopia good for policy or simply good for politics, as Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith ask (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2012). The case of Ethiopia depicts a weak connection between foreign aid and internet freedom. One cannot simply condemn the ineffectiveness of aid only by a reason of a recipient country’s poor performance. Ethiopia might be a case that clearly illustrates a fact that aid is readily given to those countries whose policy concessions (not necessarily in the internet freedom sphere) are in need for donors than other noble goals like poverty reduction, for instance. The ruling elite represented by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front or EPRDF government with no exception ensures itself a political survival by decreasing ability of the mob to protest and revolt. Hence, the Ethiopian government implements the more restrictive internet regulation policy in order to diminish the probability of being ousted. To achieve these ends, the regime elite needs to be

economically stable to keep members of the winning coalition loyal and be sure that people can not rebel and take control of the country.

4.3 Turkey: Instability as a Step to Regressive Approach to Online Freedom

The republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal and had a Western-oriented course since then. Fragmented by the periods of stability and military coups the transcontinental country of Eurasia remains one of the least free states in terms of internet regulation. In the latest released report of the Freedom House called Freedom on the Net, Turkey was named as one of five countries with the largest internet freedom score decline. With a drop in 16 points and only half population with internet access this country experience almost all forms of internet restrictions and human rights violations in this regard.

Figure 15 Internet Restriction in Turkey between 2011 and 2016[15]



Source: Freedom House data

[15] Note that the higher the score, the lower is internet freedom.

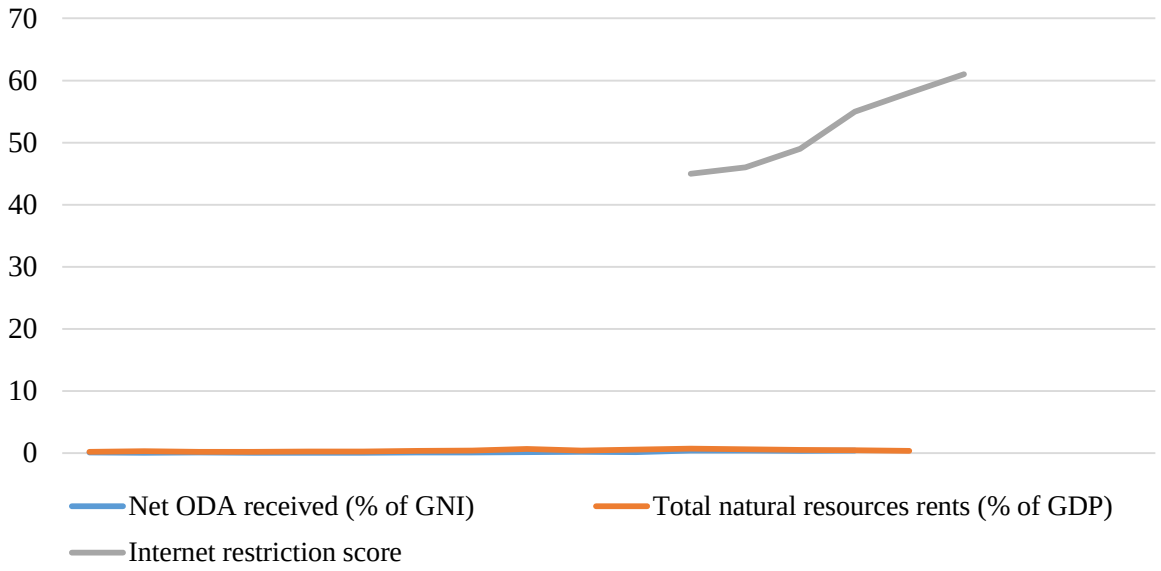
Table 6 Internet Usage in Turkey

	2000	2015
Internet user (per 100 people)	3.762	53.745
Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)	25.538	96.021
Fixed broadband subscriptions (per 100 people)	0.017 (2001)	12.393

Source: World Bank data

The telecommunications sphere in Turkey has been actively developed in recent years. The market is characterized by a growth of the internet penetration and a growing number of privately-owned internet service providers (ISPs). The aim of Turkey to become a part of the European Union was one of the driving forces to liberalize telecommunications and IT sectors. In this regard, the regulatory authority was legally established in 2000 called Information and Communication Technologies Authority. Plus, the major ISP Turk telecom from being a state-owned company since 2005 were partly privatized in accordance with World Trade Organization agreement that stated privatization by 2005 (Wolcott and Goodman 2000). However, of particular concern was a condition of company's share privatization restriction to 21-year concession agreement and later be returned to the government (OpenNet Initiative Country Profile. Turkey 2010).

Figure 16 Internet Restriction Score, Foreign Aid and Resources Rents in Turkey



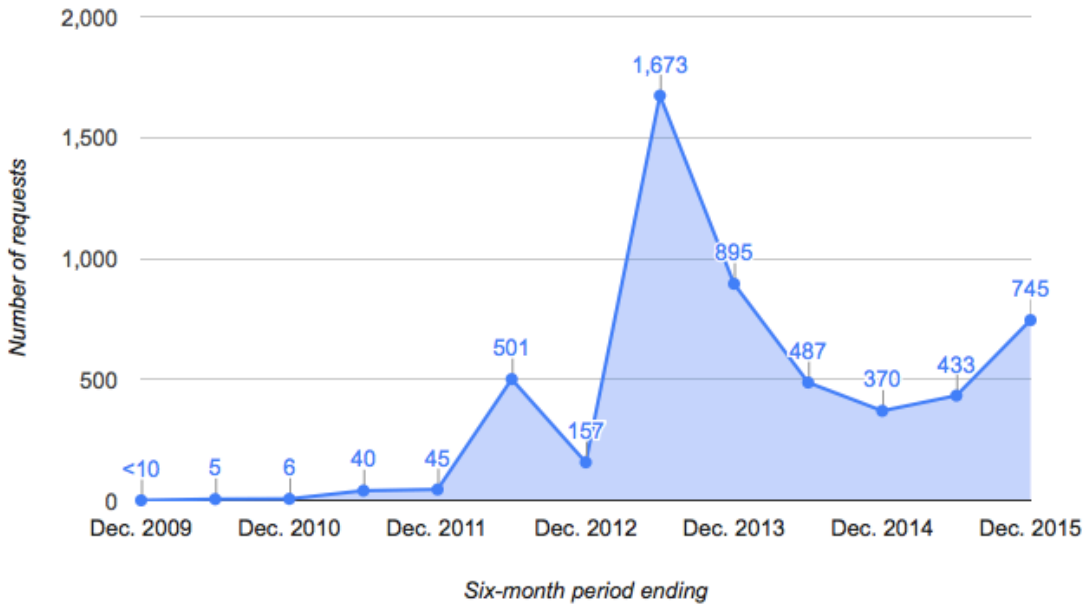
Source: Freedom House and World Bank data

The case of Turkey was chosen to illustrate other alternative explanations. As the country does not rely on either resources rents or foreign aid, it can be helpful to detect other reasons that can impact the internet freedom domain in non-democratic countries. According to the OSCE report on Freedom of the Media on Turkey and Internet Censorship, the hands-off approach with no specific laws in regulating the internet was replaced at the beginning of the 2000s. Namely, in 2002 the Turkish Parliament approved the amendments to the Radio, Television and Press Code. It included the internet domain as a subject of press legislation (Akdeniz 2009). The following enacted law No.5651 in 2007 is also known as the internet Law became a legal basis for the numerous cases of website blockings that were aimed to fight online crimes. In details, law No.5651 listed a catalog of crimes that should be banned unilaterally, which include incitement to suicide, gambling, insult of Ataturk etc. (Akgul and Kirlidog 2015).

The internet Law, as well as adopted Regulations governing the mass use providers in 2007, implemented some self-regulated solutions in terms of online access to various harmful and illegal materials. When the internet access was in an increase at the beginning of the 2000s, many internet café owners came across with problems of state control over their business. In 2000 Minister of Internal Affairs publicly announced that internet cafes with unhindered access to pornographic websites and separatism inclined information after a written warning first would be shut down (Yesil 2003). By those actions government aimed to ensure moral societal fabric close to Ataturk's principles, however not keeping on personal use of computers at home.

The legal developments of the original Law on the internet in 2014 were heavily criticized by activists and human rights defenders, raising serious concern about Turkey's determination to enter the EU. In sum, the new bill passed the Turkish government with a majority of Erdogan's AKP party members and since then the government holds an authority to block any website without a court decision (The Last Chance To Stop Turkey's Harsh New internet Law 2014). From Ankara to Istanbul people went outside to protest the new internet regulations. Worth mentioning here that a year earlier the so-called Gezi Park protests took place that were organized and managed mainly by means of social media. Twitter had proven itself to be effective in mobilizing the masses. Moreover, after the law amendments, the telecommunication authority has a power to order a shutdown of a website to be performed by ISPs within four hours. As the prime minister at that day, Recep Erdogan, said, "there is no censorship on the internet. Freedoms are not restricted. We are only taking precautions against blackmail and immorality" (New internet law in Turkey sparks outrage 2014).

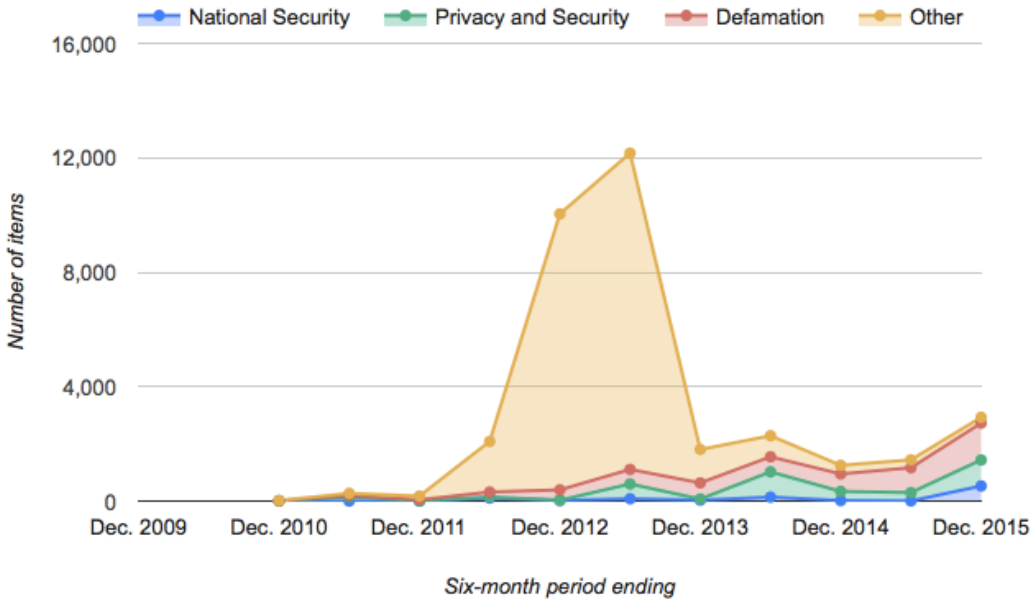
Figure 17 Total Removal Requests Google Received from Turkey by the Year since 2009



Source: Google Transparency Report data

According to the latest Google Transparency report, requests coming from Turkish authorities to remove particular web content rose dramatically in 2013, then dropped and rose again at the end of the year 2015 (Turkey – Government Removal Requests – Transparency Report – Google n.d.). Presumably the high number of requests during the period of late 2012 until the end 2013 can be aligned with the Occupy Gezi protest, whereas an increase of 2015 is associated with the Turkish parliamentarian elections and terrorist attacks during peace rallies in Ankara (Shaheen and Letsch 2015; Turkey election 2015).

Figure 18 Reasons for Removal Requests from the Telecommunications Communication Presidency of the Information and Communications Technologies Authority in Turkey



Source: Google Transparency Report data

Corruption is a specific topic in Turkey the ruling elite tries to conceal. After the Gezi park protests in July of 2013, the month of December hit the government with a huge corruption scandal. Arrested and accused people were charged with bribery and fraud, among of them were sons of three ministers and allegedly one of the Erdogan's sons could also be in pre-trial custody. As a result, the cabinet of ministers resigned and many netizens were detained, one of them was Sedef Kabaş (Freedom on the Net country report. Turkey 2015). It should be stressed that responsible for investigation attorney, Muammer Akkas, was replaced when the official authorities supposedly declined his further investigation and arrest of other suspects ((www.dw.com) n.d.). The scandal of 2013 that hovered over the high-ranking officials provoked the partial blackout of a number of websites, detention of activists as well as 'cleansing' of political opponent Fethullah Gülen's possible cronies.

Elections, terrorist violence, and protests marked 2015. That year was the last one when Turkey was identified as a partly free country. In the first half of 2015, about 90% of received requests by Twitter to remove particular content emanated from Turkey (Freedom on the Net country report. Turkey 2015). It became a common practice to temporary block social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube during acts of social unrest. For instance, in April 2015 the Prosecutor was taken as a hostage by leftist radicals who demanded justice in investigating the death of a teenager, Berkin Elvan, who got injured by policemen during the Gazi park protests in 2013 and died later (Quinn 2015). The Criminal Court of Istanbul issued an order that banned access to dozens of news websites, twitter posts and accounts as well as YouTube videos (Freedom on the Net country report. Turkey 2015). Of particular interest is the way the government negotiated with Twitter and Facebook in order to surmount crises. The findings of Bulut (2016) reveal is that in the case of Turkey Twitter was one of the resistant social media platforms that don't share any private information with the government of Turkey and approving one-third of requests for banning compared to Facebook's prioritization to serve interests of Erdogan's government.

Downgraded last year the internet freedom in Turkey was given a score of 61 out of 100 for the first time categorizing the country 'not free'. According to the Freedom on the Net report (Freedom on the Net Country profile. Turkey 2016), network shutdowns, social media briefly blackouts and lengthy sentences characterize the year of 2016 because of criticism of the government, officials' email leak etc. The coup in July 2016 attempted by Turkish military made people struggling with internet access for a couple of hours. However, later the Web was used by the President to initiate a campaign fighting with anti-President coup plotters. As it was noted by

a reporter Jeffrey Eisenach (How the internet stopped the coup in Turkey n.d.), Erdogan's live-stream via Face Time to his supporters within minutes got his army together and it can be the first time when the internet saved the government to be overthrown.

It is likely that Erdogan's regime is supported by that part of the population who admire the political figure of the President. Such dedication is almost unwavering and not without reason. Since his election in 2003, he and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) party initiated urbanization programs and sparked the economic boom in the country. By implementing carrots and sticks strategy, the AKP may either bring some public benefits in particular district or put it in a disadvantageous position (Who still supports Turkey's AKP? 2014). Bartertrade is seen to be in common: political loyalty translates into public goods provision. Still having public support, the ruling elite implements policies that favor the regime's survival, in particular, more restrictive internet regulation, however still satisfying the majority of core electorate by providing basic needs such as medicine, jobs and other goods. Under such conditions, political leaders are more ready to limit provision of public goods and/or distribute them pointwise, in particular, such a valuable public good as freedom – be it freedom of speech (online/offline), freedom of assembly and any other.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

The internet is a crucial platform through which people can advocate for political, economic, social reforms. Fearing all given possibilities by wider internet openness, authoritarian leaders find various ways to manipulate it. The purpose of this paper was to identify factors that impact a change in internet regulation among non-democracies. Extrapolating the selectorate model and concept of audience costs I explore this puzzle by evaluating the impact of non-tax revenues, namely natural resources revenues and foreign aid allocations on the level of Web control and its openness in given countries. The theory of this paper is the extension of the selectorate model and it claims that leaders, who pursue a goal to prolong their stay in office, might provide less public goods and curtail citizens' rights by implementing more restrictive internet regulation, in particular.

In order to investigate how non-tax revenues affect a leader's decision to restrict or liberalize internet control, I conducted the quantitative and the qualitative analysis. Analysis of the panel data from 2011-2016 is not consistent with the theory predictions. The statistical part revealed the opposite effect of the derived hypothesis: labor-free revenues (i.e. foreign aid) have a positive impact on internet freedom among nondemocratic countries. One interpretation of this finding is that foreign aid is allocated to finance public goods consumption when a supply of official development assistance is explained by a demand of recipient countries. Nevertheless, due to the scarcity of data and questionable measurement of the dependent variable, I believe that outcomes call for more research on how to resolve the abovementioned problems.

In the case study analysis of Venezuela, Ethiopia, and Turkey it was found out that political factors exercise a powerful impact on changing internet regulation policy. By focusing solely on the economic trajectory of oil reliance such countries as Venezuela invested a lot in public spending. However, now when the Dutch disease (or resource curse) has its effect and taking into account the evidence that abundant oil dependence put serious drawbacks on economic growth (Seghir and Damette 2013), to cultivate a loyal electorate requires variants other than resource revenues spending that is in scarce. Political costs of imposing a more restrictive internet regulation are put on the back burner, as for the majority of citizens of Venezuela it is more critical to have access not to the online platforms, but to basic key items. In turn, Ethiopia and Turkey are the illustrative cases to depict a ruling elite's decision to lessen the probability of being ousted with help of internet shutdown, violation of users' rights and persecution of online activists. With help of internet, that type of actions makes it difficult to political opponents to challenge an incumbent leader, to promote political alternatives and mobilize masses suggesting that internet control exercised by a government reflects an ability to maintain an iron grip status.

The second part of my analysis (i.e. case study) derived the next question: what role does political instability play in affecting the internet freedom? From that standpoint, one can conclude that the logic of political survival has failed to explain the variation of Web regulation among non-democratic countries. The new question arises: how does socio-political instability affect a change in the given dependent variable? A reasonable step would be to add a new independent variable 'socio-political unrest'.

The thesis presents several policy implications. First, my statistical findings suggest that we will see a more liberalized internet in a non-democratic country that is largely supported through official aid canals. Given the fact that some authoritarian countries like Saudi Arabia are self-beneficiated authoritarian countries, there is a little chance they will relax a grip on internet. Secondly, the truth behind the internet regulation in nondemocratic countries is that internet freedom operates only in interests of a ruling elite. The telecommunication infrastructure is produced with the goal to solidify the government's position referring to obscure justifications to ensure national security and stability. As it was found out it is better to say that the question here is not only about internet policy in general, instead one should focus on an incumbent's reactions to particular socio-political challenges in terms of internet restriction. Examples like Turkey clearly illustrates that if an unrest in social or political space takes places a menu of actions available to protesters narrows significantly (i.e. shutdowns, persecution etc.). Therefore, for citizens of authoritarian regimes internet itself is perceived as a boon for changes – be it political, economic or social. Precisely because the internet is seen as a threat to political survival and during the high level of violence apart from restrictive regulatory mechanisms dictators widely appreciate the ability of the Web to protect their hold on power.

Appendices

Appendix A
Descriptive Statistics (both democracies and non-democracies)

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std.Deviation	Min.	Max.
Internet restriction	339	46.0413	21.00306	6	91
Resources	796	8.064316	11.50911	0	60.83433
Aid	227	5.317458	9.085256	0	53.5706
Free	205	14.52843	13.77095	.1305958	93.96413
Polity	826	4.099274	6.150226	-10	10
GDP	405	6.66e+11	2.21e+12	2.33e+08	1.80e+13
Population	426	5.97e+07	2.02e+08	36537	1.37e+09

Appendix B
Cross-Sectional Analysis for 2014 (both democracies and nondemocracies)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Resources	0.697			-0.942	1.076
	(0.688)			(3.358)	(8.775)
Aid		-1.782		-1.160	-0.749
		(1.445)		(1.803)	(2.486)
Free			-3.067		-2.617
			(3.736)		(10.448)
Polity	- 2.375***	-2.112***	-2.509***	-2.233***	-2.264**
	(0.247)	(0.460)	(0.479)	(0.519)	(0.551)
Constant	50.028***	49.562***	59.355***	52.721***	44.448**
	(1.808)	(3.092)	(7.397)	(6.010)	(8.919)
R-squared	0.6902	0.5582	0.6368	0.5918	0.5938
N	54	20	19	18	18

Standard errors in parentheses * p<0.10 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.001”

Appendix C
Cross-Sectional Analysis for 2014 (non-democracies only)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Resources	0.723			-1.585	-5.559
	(1.011)			(2.746)	(7.620)
Aid		-4.104*		-4.785	-5.855
		(1.489)		(2.294)	(3.087)
			-2.205		4.992
Free			(3.770)		(8.843)
Polity	-2.189***	-2.532**	-3.221**	-2.544**	-2.444*
	(0.438)	(0.547)	(0.732)	(0.634)	(0.697)
Constant	50.206***	46.435***	53.768***	48.515***	44.448**
	(2.612)	(2.819)	(7.847)	(4.950)	(8.919)
R-squared	0.5393	0.8056	0.7097	0.8233	0.8339
N	27	12	11	10	10

Standard errors in parentheses * p<0.10 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.001”

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