

Masteroppgave

Elite-cohesion in the militarized gatekeeper-state

A case study on autocratic succession in Chad

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Abstract

Through causal-process tracing, this thesis explores how the Chadian regime dealt with the question of succession in the six months after Idriss Déby's death. In accordance with an analytically eclectic approach I apply a reconceptualization of Cooper's (2002) Gatekeeper theory, which I refer to as the Militarized Gatekeeper state. Through this lens I show how elite-cohesion manifest during a regime-threatening event. As local elites and external stakeholders, with vested interests in the regime's survival perceive the regime to be threatened, they join ranks. The Chadian regime and senior members of the ruler's winning coalition has relied upon a strategy of co-optation and repression, made possible by the explicit or implicit backing of the international community and their allies. This has allowed a relatively smooth hereditary succession and a period of consolidation under the son of the late president - paving the way for a possible Déby dynasty. The study highlights the importance of the patrimonial marketplace as tool of regime survival, and how the price of rents for members of the selectorate negatively correlates with regime-stability. The findings of this thesis reiterate the need to understand these militaristic hybrid regimes, who often rule by the financing and support of geostrategic partners. This study has empirically shown how the Chadian military is the de-facto body in control of the Chadian government. The control and ability to project power through the military apparatus is the cornerstone of the regime in N'Djamena. Lastly, the findings of this thesis reiterate the need to understand these militaristic hybrid regimes, who often rule by the financing and support of geostrategic partners.

Acknowledgments

This thesis has been the product of years of studies in Norway and abroad. My interest in the MENA region dates to my upbringing in the late 90s and early 2000s. They are in part formed by the tragic events of the two previous decades and have continued to catch both my interest and concern. This journey has become a meaningful experience, often along a tumultuous road. This has not been easy, yet I believe I have gained valuable lessons along the way and am much richer for it. This is no solo project; I need to thank all those who have aided me through this journey.

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1. Introducing the context

The reigns of autocratic rulers have, throughout history, concluded in myriad different ways, from the autocrats stepping down, being ousted, dying of old age, and some without warning. They have died unexpectedly, leaving the population, the outside world, potential enemies, and their supporters incredulous. What happens in these states as autocrats who have managed to stay in power for years, even decades, suddenly die? Are there - as in their democratic counterparts - necessarily institutional mechanics in place to secure the succession? This thesis will be a qualitative case study where I examine the outcome of the violent end to Idriss Déby's reign in Chad.

The point of succession is often seen the Achilles heel of the autocratic regime; a sudden departure from office, neither planned nor expected, could destabilize the state (Frantz & Kendall-Taylor, 2016, p. 159). The solid political figure who has managed to stay in power despite both internal and external threats, perhaps throughout several decades, is understood as the force suppressing political tensions, creating the perception of a powder keg that, without the firm hand of the autocrat, might explode (Betts & Huntington, 1985, p. 112).

Contrary to this gloomy picture of the post-autocrat state stands another, where the leader's death incentivizes the ruling elites to rally around a successor to maintain the status quo and their privileged positions (Frantz & Kendall-Taylor, 2016, p. 160). This conflicts with the powder keg theory as it does not see a likely power struggle but rather sees succession as requiring elite-cohesion. Also, in contrast with the powder keg theory, one might see the long reigns as a feature of political stability (Betts & Huntington, 1985, p. 112). Like democratic states, these regimes might have developed succession procedures that enable a stable power shift (Frantz & Stein, 2017, p. 937). Frantz and Kendall-Taylor (2016, pp. 161-167)

highlight that the **form** of succession and the **type** of autocracy are **key variables** in deciding how succession crises unfold, as institutional mechanics are not a given.

Regimes without succession plans or institutional mechanisms to ensure succession produce uncertainty (Kendall-Taylor & Frantz, 2016, p. 161), yet regimes lacking in all these conditions still tend to survive (Hummel, 2020, p. 992), mainly owing to the tendency of elites to prefer smooth leadership transitions to uphold status quo. I will formalize this hypothesized tendency into what I call the Elite-cohesion theory.

Chad fits into this discussion as a unique case. Idriss Déby Into¹, hereby Déby, the autocratic ruler of Chad for just over 30 years, died suddenly in late April 2021, killed by rebels while leading troops in the north of Chad (Dickow, 2021)². Directly after his death, the Chadian regime placed Mahamat Idriss Déby Into - hereby referred to by his nickname Kaka - the son of the former ruler, in charge of an interim government meant to rule for the next 18 months. This violation of the constitutional rules of Chad has been met by support by the most important foreign actor in Chad, France (Dickow, 2021), and a resulting forbearance by the international community. Chad has built up both the image and de-facto role as a critical partner for western powers in the Sahel region. Particularly after the Arab Spring, the destabilization of Libya post-Gaddafi, and the proliferation of Jihadists and other militants in the region (Hicks, 2015, pp. 1-6). This implies that the death of Déby is not only a cause of concern to the people in Chad but also viewed with circumspection abroad (Harding, 2021); this has arguably increased after the fall of Gaddafi but was already a view held by both the US and France pre-2011 (Institute of Security Studies, 2009, p. 4).

¹ Unique in that Déby, a state leader died in battle, not because of a Coup or of natural causes.

² There are non-verifiable rumors, with weak credibility, circulating of an orchestrated move to kill Déby (Scheele, 2022, p. 173). Still, these sources are of non-verifiable or weak credibility. Hence my thesis concentrates on the official testimony.

The fall of a critical ally in an already volatile situation might have severe consequences on security operations currently underway in the Sahel region and possibly the stability of the greater region. Seemingly, the Chadian regime has been able to side-step the fate of the powder-keg - we have seen the appearance of elite-cohesion. These facts combined justify a further investigation into the question of succession. I see this case as one of both tremendous theoretical and empirical interest, with possible findings of real-world implications (Halperin & Heath, 2020, p. 95, 98) It has led me to ask the following question.

“How has the Chadian regime dealt with the question of succession after the death of the strongman Idriss Dèby?”

This initial research question needs a specification, as it currently is too broad (Gerring, 2017); as I will show, we have can observe an outcome close to the what I label elite-cohesion. After this initial identification and clarification on the observed outcome, I need to ask how and why such an outcome occurred. Therefore, a more specified follow-up question will remedy this issue. I go on to ask.

“Why and how has elite-cohesion characterized the outcome of the question of succession during the first six months of the Chadian succession period?”

I will do an in-depth qualitative case study of the Chadian succession to answer these connected questions. I will develop testable hypotheses through theory (Levy, 2008, pp. 3 & 4). This case study aims to employ the theoretical framework: a reconceptualized version of the gatekeeper theory (see Cooper, 2002), which I label the: Militarized gatekeeper state (see Chapter 3). I examine the case through stipulated causal mechanisms (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p. 299), arrived at through a combination of my theoretical framework and the case-specific conditions. The method of process tracing will allow this to be done

qualitatively. I collect and analyze evidence that either strengthens or weakens developed hypotheses. This evidence is produced by relying on so-called causal process observations (CPO), which are analyzed based on case-specific knowledge and theory (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 73). These CPOs will be generated by relying on a broad sample of various forms of secondary sources. These methodological choices will be discussed further in chapter 2.

The analyzes are made up of two chapters. My first analysis (Chapter 5) follow a two-step process; firstly, I focus on a historical account together with one of a more contemporary nature, which describes the pre-succession Chadian political scene and society. These steps enable me to specify my main hypotheses further by applying the case-specific conditions in tandem with the theoretical framework. My hypotheses are derived from my theoretical framework, the literature on authoritarian politics, and authoritarian succession dynamics combined with case-specific knowledge. This part works as a staging ground for delving into a casual process tracing – starting from the death of Idriss Déby and ending six months later on the 20th of October – which will contain the bulk of my analysis. This chapter (Chapter 6) is divided into a timeline, a more thorough investigation of key events and moments – so-called snapshots – and a concluding discussion of the findings of this analysis.

To explain such a complex and multifaceted case in-depth, it insufficient to rely on a single theory or mechanism; supplementary theories are necessary to achieve a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 92). This choice of drawing on a broader theoretical framework, referred to as analytic eclecticism (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010), instead of relying on a single theory, is motivated by the quest to sufficiently answer this question through exploring complex causal stories, instead of more narrow and parsimonious explanations (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010, p. 412).

Chad as a case also requires an understanding of the assumptions and interpretations that see a politically unstable Chad as a security threat (Patrick, 2007; Cecon, 2014; Raineri & Strazzari, 2019) rather than the partner – it has thus far been. This is especially important in the case of Chad, as it fills a role that no other state in the Sahel is either capable or willing to fill³. Also critical are realist theories that may explain the actions of local elites, the Chadian state, and the foreign actors' response to the death in Chad, and their underlying motivations and rationale. It's, therefore, necessary to rely on a wide range of literature exploring key concepts and theories that may help explain how local elites deal with a potential succession crisis.

External actors of interest, both states and supra-state actors are essential to the study as a part of a broader set of necessary conditions for the coming regime, as external patrons are key in upholding the regime. Due to the limits of the scope of research, I will limit the state or supra-state actors to involve what I define as the key state actors who are thought to be crucial for the ruling elites in Chad; and who are seen as critical parts of the international support that the Chadian gatekeeper-state (see Chapter 3; Chapter 4) rely upon.

Any drastic change could significantly impact these external actors and the region within the Chadian state. Chad, the region, and key external actors' function in a symbiotic relationship where the actions and fates of one are linked to the other through interplay (Iocchi, 2020, p.1-4). This justifies the inclusion of some reflections on how the findings of this thesis will impact both regional and external actors in the Sahel in the future, and what they imply for further research into Sahelian security issues (see Chapter 6).

The choice to focus on the elites is tied to the makeup of the Chadian state and society, one where the elites play a disproportionately large role in politics (Gondeu, 2013 p. 6). This choice is further justified

³ A result of the security vacuum created by the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya (Bøås, 2019).

by the critical role that elites play in autocratic succession dynamics (Brownlee, 2007; Geddes, 1999, 2009; Geddes et al., 2018; Gilli & Li, 2015; Helms, 2020; Kailitz & Stockemer, 2017; Mesquita & Smith, 2011; Svobik, 2009a).

Déby's regime can be characterized as a strong regime in a weak state (Bøås, 2003); the Chadian state is arguably a gatekeeper-state in which the emphasis of the rulers in N'Djamena is to control the capital, critical border areas, and vital nodal points of the economy while upholding domestic alliances and international support (Gissel & Henningsen, 2021, p. 3). Yet as most gatekeeper-states, it fails to ensure the basic tenets of the ideal state (Hansen, 2013, p. 584). As a gatekeeper-state, one can argue that the regime is fixated on controlling the gate rather than engaging with the concern of the civilian (Gissel & Henningsen, 2021). This trend further underscores the necessity to focus on elites. The gatekeeper theory – coined by Frederick Cooper (2002) – will be reconceptualized to fit within the specific case and then applied. The emphasis the traditional gatekeeper theory puts on securing general border control is especially problematic in the case of Chad. I see Chad as a militarized gatekeeper-state, where border control loses priority while international support gains even greater credence. They achieve this support through strategic military projection, as well as playing upon their region's fragility to necessitate this projection and retain international attention.

For a militarized gatekeeper-state, fortunes are tied to (1) their entrepreneurial approach to issues of international security to remain relevant to international supporters; (2) the ability to control critical sectors and nodal points of the economic activity; (3) the ability to keep relative internal stability⁴ through internal alliances, (4) and lastly their ability to keep the “fortress” – in Chad's case N'Djamena – as the capital hold the key to all other necessary conditions. In my theoretical chapter, I will elaborate further on the militarized gatekeeper-state, which I use as my main theoretical framework to analyze the actions of

⁴ Stability is a highly relative term in fragile states, discussed later in this chapter.

key decision-makers within the Chadian state. In my conclusion, I will also reflect upon how unique the militarized-gate keeper is, given examples of states with a foreign policy approach comparable to Chad, namely Rwanda (see Damman, 2015) and Uganda (see Apuuli, 2017; Frank, 2017)

External stakeholders, such as France, are a vital part of the necessary condition to uphold a gatekeeper-state. Hence, they will be embedded into my theoretical framework rather than analyzed separately. This means that the focus of the external actors shifts from studying them as distinct from the process to one where they become an integrated part of what is needed for the gatekeeper-state to remain. They will therefore be analyzed from the perspective of their relation to Chadian elites - how these elites keep external stakeholders' interest vested in the sitting regime. This does not mean that I will refrain from elaborating on the rationale and motivations of external powers, but rather that these elaborations will be both limited and restricted to what is strictly their relevance vis-à-vis the Chadian regime and the continuation of the militarized gatekeeper-state. My aim of explaining how the Chadian state has dealt with the succession relies upon understanding how they adapt to external stakeholders' motivations and desires. As I will show in my case description, this is a recurring theme in Chad - a task Déby has skillfully managed, arguably better than any other Chadian leader.

1.2 Succession in autocracies

As mentioned, the point of succession is seen as a great point of insecurity and exposes state fragility; it opens the doors for both internal and external challengers to power. Therefore, the character of change depends on the internal situation at the point of succession and the rules or norms of succession that would function to contain or avoid infighting within the "court" of the former leader ((Kokkonen & Sundell, 2020, p. 435). Joseph Broz Tito's death in Yugoslavia became an example and cautionary tale of how bad successions can go; it resulted in catastrophic wars and the breakup of the state, a result of ethnonationalist

sentiments which were effectively fueled and utilized as political capital by violent entrepreneurs to pursue their own political goals (Frantz & Kendall-Taylor, 2016, p. 160). As Helms (2020, p. 329) points out, poorly handled successions risk ending political regimes, especially in regimes with a high degree of power concentration and leaders enjoying “charismatic power”, so-called “personalist-regimes”, like the Franquist regime in Spain, which failed to place an effective successor, despite numerous and extensive attempts. This led to regime collapse and a transition to democracy in Spain (Share, 1986, pp. 549-571).

The cautionary tales of the powder-kegs are many, especially in medieval history (see (Kokkonen & Sundell, 2014, 2020). Empirical findings underscore the need to explore the pre-succession context of the Chadian state and society, as the situation on the ground is highly likely to impact how succession would be dealt with. The first part of my analysis aims to explore and specify my hypotheses by thoroughly examining Chad's pre-succession conditions.

Authoritarian leaders often accept institutionalized succession rules as a form of compromise with elites within their circle - reducing the risk of coups during their reigns - as there are fewer incentives to overthrow said leader when there are possible gains later (Frantz & Stein, 2017). Institutionalized succession rules also calm elites who are naturally fearful of regime instability (Frantz & Stein, 2016, p. 937), as informal successions are often based upon ad-hoc solutions to an emerging problem (Frantz, 2017, p. 936). Certain regime types, such as party dictatorships or monarchic systems, usually prefer institutionalized procedures and are seen as more orderly than their autocratic counterparts, the personalist dictatorships, and military regimes (Helms, 2020, p. 336). As an authoritarian republic, Chad is left less room to implement institutional procedures than its monarchical authoritarian counterparts in, for instance, the Arabian Gulf. The refusal to follow institutional rules of succession in N'Djamena could therefore be a symptom of a lacking ability to implement viable formal procedures in – what I go on to argue is - a

personalistic hybrid regime. It's critical to note - that while formal procedures may be viewed as non-viable - informal procedures cannot be out-ruled⁵.

(Kokkonen & Sundell, 2020) have shown that succession crises throughout European history have been met by introducing hereditary succession rules - such as the principle of primogeniture⁶ - which reduced the risk of civil wars compared to elective monarchies. In Syria, the personalist regime of the Hafiz al-Assad succeeded in its power-transfer through this method. Hafiz's son Bashar took power following his death, and despite a glaring lack of experience, the elite rallied around Bashar (Stacher, 2011, pp. 197-200). According to Stacher (2011), hereditary succession benefits both ruler and family, but also elites who fear leadership vacuums and factionalized competition for power. Cases, where this fail are often where the elites are strong enough to outweigh the ruler's prerogative to dictate succession rules, resulting in factionalized conflict (Stacher, 2011, p. 209). Still, even in personalist regimes where the dictator has the option of designating heirs, he faces what Hertz (1952, p.?) referred to as the "crown prince problem"; an issue of rational and spiraling mutual suspicion between heir and ruler. This dynamic is shown through several game-theoretical articles (see Svolik, 2009; Yu et al., 2015). It illuminates the complexity of designating heirs and strengthening the perspective of succession as a weak point in autocracies.

These realities have a set of implications for Chad. Hereditary succession could rest both upon the fear of factionalized conflict. Yet, following Stacher's (2011) logic, it would also rely on the assumption that elites were not strong enough to outweigh the ruler's prerogative. The lack of a formally designated heir in Chad could be a result of the crown-prince problem Hertz (1952). Nonetheless, as I will elaborate in

⁵ Informal succession procedures could result from a priori arrangements between members of the winning coalition, see chapter 3.

⁶ The eldest child inherits the throne; usually the son (agnatic primogeniture) (see Nong, 2022).

later chapters, there were signs of Kaka being groomed for leadership, such as through his leadership of the republican guard (see chapter 5).

As Brownlee (2007, p. 603) points out, hereditary succession and its applicability are tied to highly centralized and personalist regimes, where the ruler often need not consider influential members of his own circles' wishes about who succeeds. Yet when this successor takes power, his role is initially of a more limited capacity from his predecessor⁷ - a result of entrenched political systems and elites who functioned as the "old guard". Not following the already established status quo, for instance, through reforms that do not have backing from the elites, risks sparking attempts at seizing power by strong figures within the elite (Frantz & Kendall-Taylor, 2016, p. 166). This means that elites are key actors in the succession process; their level of cooperation or in-fighting often decides the regime's fate. If they can influence the chosen successor, they will opt for a weak successor to maintain or strengthen their control.

The degree to which an autocracy relies on formal institutions to ease power transfers is highly dependent on the regime-type, which often steers the form of succession. In personalistic regimes, formally designating a successor proves difficult, thus leading to a tendency for ad-hoc. Alternatively, these solutions might be understood as pre-planned informal arrangements based on norms rather than ad hoc arrangements (see Yates, 2020); this question will become relevant in the case of Chad. As Frantz & Stein (2017, p. 936) suggests, these informal arrangements can be the result of ad hoc cooperation, or perhaps, they are decided much earlier as part of an elite compromise between key members of the winning coalition. Research from the Chinese Communist Party highlights the role of informal norms (Smith, 2021) and new research into the usage of informal succession rules in feudal China (Nong, 2022). The absence of formal hereditary procedures did not exclude it; the Chadian regime had "chosen" a hereditary arrangement through the appointment of Kaka. The underlying rationale and dynamic leading to Kaka's assignment will be further explored in chapter 5.

1.3 Leviathan of The Congo

The case of Joseph Kabila in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) exemplifies the relevance of informal and ad-hoc solutions. When Laurent Kabila died in 2001, only four years after taking power, allegedly at the hands of his bodyguards (Clark, 2002, p. 68), his son, Joseph Kabila, was swiftly put in power. What led powerful men within the elite to concede power to a successor, in this case, letting the “prince become king”? As (Stearns, 2012) writes, this decision was due to a few key realizations: Only Joseph, as former head of the military, could be respected by the army and foreign backers, and they needed to act fast as their enemies would exploit any divisions within the elite, hence threatening their positions, and finally, they viewed Joseph`s relative political irrelevance as a sign of a weak leader which they could control⁷.

I argue that what Stearns (2011) observed was a manifestation of a group of elites caught in a Hobbesian “state of nature” ? the elite`s Hobbesian understanding of the succession dynamic in the case of Congo, one where security became the rationale that dominated. The fear of an anarchical struggle for power incentivized the elites to hand power to a leviathan, as any unfolding crisis would have catastrophic consequences and threaten their positions and lives. The Leviathan, in the case of Joseph, would be politically weak - to maximize the elite`s room of maneuver – while ensuring a central authority to maintain security and rally around. Crucially, despite ambitions to limit the power of the designated successor, these measures fell short. Kabila soon reshuffled the winning coalition; thus, ridding himself of his former backers (Stearns, 2012, p. 308), a development similar to the succession of Bashar al-Assad in

⁷ They would be sorely mistaken – as often has been the case when this strategy is chosen (Syria & Turkmenistan for instance) – and most of his backers during the succession would be reshuffled within a short time (see Stearns, 2011, pp. 307-314)

Syria (Stacher, 2007; 2011). Therefore, the choice of a seemingly weak successor does not necessarily equate to a weak leviathan, as ambitions and realities do not always coalesce.

1.4 Elite-Cohesion in the face of a powder-keg

The Congo is an exemplary one case, because like in Syria (see Stacher 2007; 2011) it explain how modern personalistic regimes manage to side-step the powder-keg. It highlights the rationale and great incentivizing effects that a potential succession creates within a winning coalition, to rally around a new successor. I label this the elite-cohesion theory, highlighting the apparent cohesion and organized co-operation to facilitate a succession. Caused by a fear of destabilizing feuds emitting from the power vacuum created by the absent ruler, it is tied to the continuation of the militarized gatekeeper-state, as the key actors all have vested interests in it`s continuation. The elite-cohesion theory is evidently inspired by a Hobbesian perspective and this Hobbesian lens will be further elaborated in chapter 3.

The elite-cohesion theory stands in contrast to that of the powder-keg. The case of post-Tito Yugoslavia is a clear example of the latter. The internal tensions were controlled by a charismatic leader. With his departure, Yugoslavia fell into a succession crisis and multiethnic Yugoslavia was torn into pieces by crafty political entrepreneurs who transformed deep tensions founded in history, religion, ethnicity, and culture, into political capital to further their respective causes. This led to bloody secessionist wars rampant with war crimes, and even genocide (Holm-Hansen, 2018). In the context of family dynasties medieval history is filled littered with examples (see Kokkonen & Sundell, 2014); The Ottoman-empire highlight this powder-keg dynamic, yet with different actors, as the legitimacy relied on being the sultan`s son. As the sultan died, his often several, sons fought for control of the state. This led repeated civil wars, making successions a constant powder-keg(Mesquita & Smith, 2011, p. 29, 75). A modern African

example of a failed succession is the Liberian civil war. The death of Samuel Doe left a power vacuum which neither Prince Johnson nor Charles Taylor was willing to fill, much in part to their lack of funds to redistribute rents (see Chapter 3).

The death of Dèby led to a manifestation of elite-cohesion, it seemingly has thus far avoided plunging into the chaos and destruction of the powder-keg. Here I present three interdependent, complementary hypotheses; that while compatible and non-dichotomous, may function as competing for the degree of credence. I attempt to problematize which of these three hypotheses rings the truest; which of these three factors best explains how Chad managed to side-step the gloomy fate of the powder keg. These hypotheses guide the discussion and analysis and allow me to reflect upon the existence of elite-cohesion as well as a greater more general discussion about how the regime has dealt with it.

1.5 Hypotheses

The central hypothesis is that this elite-cohesion manifests in internal fear of the possible loss of their valued positions within a winning coalition of a militarized gatekeeper-state⁸. As in Congo – after Laurent Kabila's sudden death – the elites needed a ruler swiftly. This was motivated by their need to ensure their security in the face of potential conflicts and potential rivals within former elites or regional strongmen. These include members of the selectorate or even members of the old winning coalition, keen to revise the balance of power. The chaos such a revision would entail may end up plunging the country into conflict, where high risks for both loss of positions and life looms. This perspective is reliant on the premise that elites are successfully co-opted. They need to perceive their interests and security as tied to the

⁸ A common fate of many Chadian political figures (see Debos, 2016; Chapter 4).

continuation of the former regime. These motivations and the existence of potential threats coalesce to incentivize the search for a new leviathan.

Hypothesis 1: “Elite-cohesion is a manifestation of internal fear as elites see the anarchy resulting from an absent leviathan as a threat to their privileged positions”

There exists an alternative to this hypothesis. Since one can argue, as stated earlier, that both Bashar al-Assad and Joseph Kabila were chosen due to their apparent weaknesses rather than their perceived strengths. One could argue that it was not the case of elites handing over power to leviathans as the Hobbesian social contract stipulates. These were picked as “managers” of a succession rather than leviathans; in chapter 6, I will discuss Kaka`s role as a leviathan.

A second hypothesis is that the legitimation of Kakà - Idriss` son – was rather the key factor that led to elite-cohesion. This legitimation must not be understood from a strict legal and Weberian perspective but as “charismatic authority” (Gerschewski, 2013). It sees Kakà as the “heir apparent” to the “king”: the natural choice to fill the role as head of the military, the heart of a militarized gatekeeper-state. This understanding hinges upon an appreciation of the militarized nature of the Chadian society. So heavily shaped by a warrior culture (Hansen, 2020). As Debos (2016) so fittingly describe - the act of rebellion has become an occupation. In this context, one needs to be a capable figure within the military; these become essential virtues for the head of state. This need is tied to the legitimacy of the winning coalition and the ruler`s ability to continue the operations of the militarized gatekeeper-state.

Hypothesis 2: “Elite-cohesion came as a result of Mahamat Kaka`s legitimation from within the military ranks and the broader elites”

The third hypotheses see the Chadian succession not mainly as a result of either internal fear, nor of the legitimacy Kaka or his closes aides hold within the military; it instead sees the succession as a natural outcome of functioning internal alliances. The militarized gatekeeper state relies heavily on the functioning architecture balance of power politics, and internal alliances. This hypothesis arguably lay closest to the “cohesion” encapsulated in the “elite cohesion” term. It sees elite-cohesion, not as any ad hoc outcome of the effects of possible succession crises but rather sees successful successions as an *a priori* feature of functioning militarized gatekeeper state due to the existence of self-regulating internal alliance-structures.

Hypothesis 3: “Elite-cohesion is a feature of self-regulating and balanced internal alliances in a functioning militarized gatekeeper state.”

Two key variables affecting the succession are both form of succession – thought here to be an informal hereditary succession – and regime-type, the regime-type identified is a personalist or established dictatorship. These two-terms are often used interchangeably, yet slight nuances exist. The personalized character of Chad is tied to the idea that all power flows from the ruler in N`Djamena, who stack his winning coalition⁹ with friends, family, people from his Zaghawa clan and other allies. Chad is also a hybrid-regime, it has, since Déby`s tenure as President been a multiparty state¹⁰ and has used these seemingly democratic characteristics, to legitimize their state internationally. This hybridity also allows the regime to dominate the political system in a less overt and more sophisticated manner (see Chapter 4).

⁹ The “*winning coalition*” describe the group of individuals within the elites needed to maintain power (see Geddes et al., 2018; Mesquita & Smith, 2011).

¹⁰ On paper, but effectively one-party – Idriss Déby`s party MPS has won every election since 1990 (see Chapter 4)

These three hypotheses steer my inquiry and search for data. They will be further rationalized and specified in my first analysis (Chapter 5). I will study these along with what I consider – based on the literature on autocratic succession and my reading on both contemporary and historical Chad – the three main challenges of the succession (see Eizenga, 2018; Crisis Group, 2020). They are (1) intra-ethnic and family rivalries, (2) military in-fighting, and lastly (3) popular discontent and civil conflict. These challenges are seen as the three most likely disruptors of elite-cohesion. By analyzing these prior to the CPT and the concluding analysis, I gain a strong foundation to truly understand how the Chadian state was able to sustain, what according to many, was seen as a regime-threatening situation – namely an abrupt succession.

The established dictatorship refers to a situation when the balance of power is so skewed in favor of the sitting autocrat that he becomes “Coup proof”. Within autocratic states, there is continuous bargaining between elites and ruler over control, over positions of power, resources, and privileges. This “game” takes place both in the open and in the shadows of autocratic politics. High risk is involved for both sides, ruler can punish overambitious elites or vice-versa. Elites may oust an overly ambitious ruler, yet sometimes the ruler is both skilled and lucky enough to reach a balance-of-power so in his favor that he becomes an established dictator (Svolik, 2012). This is what I – in my historical chapter - argue happened in Chad in the last decade of Dèby`s rule (see chapter 4). In the fifth chapter, my first analysis, I will again return to both the **type** of rule - an established and personalistic dictatorship - and **form** of succession - an informal hereditary succession.

1.6 Political stability in Chad

In Chad, war and armed struggle has been pervasive through the country`s modern history, creating what Marielle Debos (2016, p. 8) describes as a state of flux between periods of war and inter-war. Politics is militarized and armed violence becomes an occupation, to understand Chad one must understand the role

of the military as bringers of both stability and instability. Chad is militarized and poor and from its war-torn history it inherited a political landscape marred in factionalism (Massey & May, 2002, pp. 72-89), but also a state dissimilar to the Weberian ideal-state in other ways. Chad is (see Chapter 3) a gatekeeper state. The key to its control does not lie in effective tax collection or a stringent monopoly of violence. For Chad, three tasks remain critical in ensuring the regime's security: border control, domestic alliances, and international support (Gissel & Henningsen, 2020, pp. 2 & 3). As I will elaborate on later, the Chadian case warrants a reconceptualization of the gatekeeper state perspective of both Cooper and Gissel & Henningsen (2020), one in which the role of border control loses primacy, while the role of the international community rises.

Chad has since independence in 1960 experienced state collapse, several dictatorships, long periods characterized by violent conflict and foreign interventions, it's therefore safe to say that instability has been a long running theme in its post-independence history (Powell, 2020, p. 1). Today it is still one of Africa's most fragile states (Dunn & Engelbert, 2019, pp. 49-52). Still, fragility does not equate to instability, but it's an important indicator of potential upheaval to create instability. To see the possible effects of this succession crisis terms such as political stability must be defined and be related to how these socially constructed concepts vary depending on factors such as geography, culture, and history. Neither do I see political stability as a dichotomous variable, but rather instability and stability form a continuum (Davies, 1969, p. 15). Political stability as a concept takes on different meanings depending on the context and usage (see Ake, 1975; Davies, 1969; Radu, 2015). Ake defines Political Stability as the "regularity of the flow of political exchanges" (Ake, 1975, p. 275), where the political is seen as either the alteration or maintenance of the distribution of power within a society. Instability is often seen in examples of communal violence, insurgencies, riots, civil wars, or elite disagreement (Arriola, 2009).

It's evident, from the sheer presence of rebel attacks and the case of Dèby's death, that Chad was already experiencing levels of instability and lacking ability to secure their internal sovereignty, with non-state

actors able to alter the distribution of power. In the case of Chad, a degradation of stability should be seen as a reducing capacity of the state and military to uphold the tenets of the militarized gatekeeper state (see Chapter 3). Namely, to contain rebel activity to periphery areas, manage rent-flows and ensure control of the capital. Maintaining stability is often done to ensure its ability to uphold alliances, something done through military power, but also the distribution of rents from the oil sector and aid (Debos, 2016, pp. 177 & 178).

1.7 Theoretical perspective

To understand the succession in Chad I have chosen to use a broader theoretical approach, in line with the pragmatist ethos (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 13) and the quest for middle-range theoretical arguments founded in analytic eclecticism (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010, p. 412). This means that I will rely on not one parsimonious theory, but rather draw on a wider set of theories and concepts. I for instance draw inspiration from Hobbes' social contract theory and "state of nature" to supplement my theoretical framework. When applied in my framework of a Militarized gatekeeper - which may both help explain the actions and motivations of external and internal actors. Chad falls into a category of states and regimes which have enjoyed support in the west despite its authoritarianism (Hansen, 2013, Debos, 2016, Debos & Tubiana, 2017, p. 3, Freedom House, 2022) and alleged human rights violations (Amnesty International, 2021, pp. 115-117). This highlights how security concerns have trumped more liberal ambitions, and thus enabled illiberal state-building (Osland & Erstad, 2020, p. 20) to take place through the aid they have received. The lacking distress by outside forces compared to other cases, of less geostrategic importance, exemplified recently by the suffocating sanctions put on the Malian regime (AlJazeera, 2020) further highlight the rationale behind a lens that encompass the realms of realpolitik. I therefore reflect on how the Militarized gatekeeper state can maintain engagement from external actors.

In case of internal actors – in this thesis the elites specifically - I use a realist perspective to explain the Hobbesian nature of the Chadian state between death of the ruler and the succession. This lens is justified by a conception of the situation where the pursuit of power, security and stability through effective control of the state lies at the heart of the issue of succession. This reading of the realist perspective is an adaptation that looks behind the interpretation of the state as a black box (Finel, 2001, p. 212), a measure motivated by the pragmatist ethos of analytic eclecticism. As a theory of international politics, realism traditionally has dealt with the anarchical structure of the international system, yet the issue of succession is a matter – while still impacted by international events and external actors – of mainly internal consequences. Therefore, this use of realism lay closer to the one expressed in Hobbes` social contract theory (see Hobbes, 1998). Formed by his experiences from the English civil war, which led to his conclusion about the necessity of an absolutist sovereign. This leviathan were needed to prevent anarchy and the outbreak of civil war – a result of the state of nature (Baylis et al., 2020).

The theory of the Militarized gatekeeper state is a reconceptualization of the existing theory of the gatekeeper state, as well as other key concepts found in the literature on African state building exemplified by the reconceptualization of the donor-receiver relationship captured by what has explained as “fragility as asset”. Fragility as asset which refers to the role that the securitization of the label “fragile state” defines the relationship between said state and its international donors; this concept is embedded into the greater Militarized gatekeeper state-framework. To understand how elites operate within a threatened gatekeeper state – such as faced with successions – I apply a realist lens, highlighting the anarchical nature fostered in these states. As they - like states in the international system according to realism¹¹ – are faced with any lacking formal structures or an overarching leviathan in the face of a succession crisis. They

¹¹ Often referred to as the “anarchy of international politics” (Baylis et al., 2020, p. 10).

therefore fall back on old -or seek new – alliances, and a viable new leviathan. This lens rests upon the prerogative of security, and it as a trumping concern over all other.

1.8 Structure

This thesis is split into seven chapters. My introduction chapter I have briefly addressed some of the methodological and theoretical considerations to be taken and spent time introducing the case. This has been warranted in order to contextualize both my later approach and the hypotheses, who steer the further inquiry. In the following chapter I will further describe my methodological approach and perspective. Chapter 3 explore the literature on autocratic successions, as well as both define and reconceptualize key theories and concepts. Chapter 4 is split into two segments. The first introduces what I see as the key foreign stakeholders in Chad, it is a further justification of their embeddedness with the regime. The latter part gives an historical account of Chad - the construction of a Militarized Gatekeeper. I will then – in chapter 5 and chapter 6 - go on to do my analyses. Analysis I will analyze the pre-succession situation in Chad, allowing me to both specify hypotheses and set the stage for the process tracing. Analysis II focuses on the first six months after Déby`s death. This process tracing is followed by a discussion of the findings and what implications they have. This thesis will finish with a conclusion of the findings as well as some reflections for what these findings and the given situation in Chad have for the trajectory of the Chadian state, as well as the succession`s effects for both regional and external actors in the Sahel.

2. Methodological approach

2.1 Research Design

The objective of a research design is to answer the question being asked with the maximum level of validity that can be achieved. Ontological, epistemological, and theoretical assumptions steer the choice of inquiry. The research question emanates from this point of inquiry as a researchable specification; in my thesis, I have two research questions, one general and a later specified question. These are both introduced in Chapter 1 but will be reiterated here. We then identify the relevant theoretical lens and operationalize the relevant concepts to be employed (Marsh & Stoker, 2018, p. 220). This theoretical framework is discussed in Chapter 3.

Research questions tend to revolve around answering causes of effects, effects of a cause, or the relationship between pairs of concepts. This thesis will aim to answer the first - cause(s) of effects. I aim to comprehend how the regime has handled the Chadian succession; or more specifically, which causal conditions led to elite-cohesion that characterized the six months post-Déby. The quest is, therefore, to identify and trace the causal mechanisms of the Chadian succession crisis. I will be using a qualitative case-study design and the method of causal process tracing (see Blatter & Haverland, 2012). This choice approach rests upon the conviction that the research question – to be sufficiently answered – requires a method allowing in-depth analysis of this single case. It follows the logic of saying more about less, than less about more (Gerring, 2017, Chapter 1). As stated, and justified prior, the Chadian case is highly unique, thus making an approach that allow an expansive approach that is adapted and respects the complexities of the subject matter become vital. As this thesis should show, I do not subscribe to the idea

that good qualitative research should necessarily follow a quantitative template in the mold of KKV¹² (Mahoney, 2010) These reflections are harmonious with the underlying ontological and epistemological perspective which guides this venture (Gerring, 2017; Sil & Katzenstein, 2010). Causal process tracing is a valuable tool to formalize the search for causal chains and mechanisms within a single case, something needed to answer how a regime deals with a specific event, in this case, a succession. There are a set of challenges still, such as dealing with the closed context of the subject matter¹³, and these challenges and other considerations will be reflected upon further in this chapter.

2.2 Causal-Process tracing

Causal process tracing (CPT) involves creating within-case causal inferences through CPOs with the goal of identifying causal factors that lead to an outcome (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 142), in this case, the succession crisis in Chad. Using CPT in single case studies you are able to unravel the temporal sequence of events and gather empirical observations through a comprehensive timeline (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, pp. 109 - 112; Collier, 2011, p. 828); this timeline is centered around presenting key causal conditions (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. The description will work towards the goal of providing a “comprehensive storyline” (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 81). I then identify critical moments or snapshots within the causal process that will enable observations to work as “smoking guns” (ibid, p. 111). The snapshots are meant to “zoom” in on specific moments of interest within the process, believed to be of great importance. In doing CPT, one presupposes that the outcome (Y) – in this case, one of Elite-Cohesion - is not the result of a single mechanism. One instead looks for a combination of causal factors; therefore, subscribing to

¹² The highly cited and read work by King et al.(1994).

¹³ Chad had a 300-day ban of social media in 2018 and 2019 (Dahir, 2019).

“*configurational thinking*” (ibid, 2012, p. 80). This perspective sees social outcomes, not as a result of single factors, but resulting from combination of causal factors who create different effects and outcomes depending on spatial and temporal context and combination of factors (Blatter & ibid, pp. 80-89).

This comprehensive narrative and the more static snapshots are part of a temporal sequence of events that lead to the specific outcome (Collier, 2011, p. 824). As Collier (2017, Chapter 2) points out, while the spatial dimensions of the given case might be a given, the temporal sequence may not be. In the case of Chad, this temporal sequence will start with the death of Idriss Déby on the 20th of April and last for six months, ending on the 20th of October. The choice of six months follows the logic of analyzing the succession as a process with a specific start and end date, where the end date marks the conclusion of what I regard as the most key period of the succession. Six months constitute a key phase of any succession, as the first six months determine if the new leader and his winning coalition manage to consolidate their new regime. Still, one could study successions based on shorter or longer periods, I do not deem this fruitful, for two reasons who both connect to either alternative. Firstly, six months allow me to collect a suitable number of observations to construct causal narratives where one can observe causal chains (Blatter & Haversland, 2012, p. 119), the more data collected on a short time allows for shorter periods of study, and vice versa. Secondly a too long time-period risks having to access such a collection of data, which do not make it feasible, given that one should strive for no gaps in the causal chain, this becomes harder and harder as the period of study grows. In line with these arguments, I deem six months to be an apt middle-ground between these two alternatives. A more limited time-window, than, say a year also strengthens internal validity- as exogenous shocks after this period could lead to a change not necessarily related to the succession itself, which would be harder to trace given the increasingly growing data that needed to be analyzed. The limitations put on the temporal sequence are, therefore, both necessary from a practical standpoint and in line with the logic of not attributing effects or causes which could be tied to omitted variables.

A common critique of process tracing is its lacking explicitness, informality, and lacking systematization. It has thus – by some – been relegated to the plight of historians (Mahoney, 2015, p. 201). My defense of the method of CPT addresses these concerns specifically by adhering to formal methodological requirements from the now growing number of academics using the method of process tracing (see Blatter & Haverland, 2012; Collier, 2011; Gerring, 2006, 2017; Mahoney, 2015). The use of process tracing when studying historical events, such as the question of Chadian succession, relies upon the analyst's comprehension and competency regarding the case's historical context, relevant theoretical literature, and his ability to connect case-specific findings with general knowledge (Mahoney, 2015, p. 202). I have extensively read Chadian history, relying on a wide range of sources; this will also be reflected when constructing the timeline. Much time has been spent on using a vast and diverse set of sources to gain a comprehensive narrative (see Chapter 2). My CPOs and the data collected in the process tracing are also a result of an extensive quest for knowledge using multiple and differing sources with differing backgrounds and places of production.

This study is not seeking to be “Variable oriented”, as these studies often over-homogenize assumptions based on universalistic principles (Gerring, 2017, Chapter 3) While admittedly interested in variables - most notably regime-type and form of succession –this case study is, to a greater extent, interested in causality. Specifically, the causal mechanisms that lead key variables to outcomes. A causal mechanism can be understood as the pathway from X to Y, the mechanism, path, or reasoning for X to lead to Y (Gerring, 2011, p. 12). Rather than focused on predicting outcomes, one is interested in mapping causal relations; why and how an outcome occurred. One seeks to investigate which variables interacted and how and why they led to the observed outcome. This paper is not aimed at seeing how accurately a model can predict the outcome of the death of an autocratic leader. Instead, as done in chapter 1, I frame this as mapping why outcome the outcome occurred. How did the Chadian regime deal with Déby's death? Why and how did the death of Déby seemingly lead to a moment of elite-cohesion, instead of experiencing an exploding powder-keg?

One of the great strengths of choosing a CPT approach lie in its ability to add the key temporal aspect of Politics (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 2). As causal chains occur not in a static environment, but rather one causal condition or factor led to another which in turn, given the right timing to a second, and so on. Timing, which CPT allows one to analyze, will become key when analyzing the Chadian succession (see Chapter 5). This allows me to trace the causal chains accurately to answer the research questions.

The case of Chadian succession has a distinct starting point – the death of Idriss Déby - yet lacks any obvious conclusion point. As the effects of his death could start creating reverberations potentially long after his death, still due to this paper's limits, the contemporary character of the case and the possibility of applying causation to events long in the past, where omitted variables could be the main X in any future change in Y. Therefore, to both make this study feasible and ensuring a degree of *ceteris paribus* in comparison to pre-succession years. In the fluid, dynamic and fast-paced world of International Politics one runs the risk of mapping the causation of certain events – for instance, successions – while neglecting the fact that international conditions might change rapidly. Therefore, I limit my period of study to what I deem as the most critical period in the succession process, namely the first six months. The rationale for this choice lies in the fact that succession is especially dangerous due to the uncertainty they bring, and the room of maneuver they enable in the period between consolidated and reconsolidation. In this period the regime is exposed. It's key for the regime to get “back on its feet” as regime change remains a possibility, with an absent leader. Within this 6-month period one would assume that either: (1) a new or the former regime has managed to consolidate and reshuffle the leadership position or (2) there are clear enmities within regime insiders and a struggle for control; hence the regime has not been able to consolidate.

2.3 Research Question

This thesis aims to answer the research question “*How has the Chadian regime dealt with the question of succession after the death of the strongman Idriss Déby?*”

To answer these questions, I had to clarify my research question further, something I already introduced in chapter 1, as I already concluded that what is needed to study is how the succession led to elite-cohesion.

“Why and how has elite-cohesion been the outcome during the Chadian succession period.”

To answer this question, I need to clarify key concepts, the theoretical framework applied as well as relying on the broad literature of relevance (see Chapter 3). I will in Chapter 4 also give a summary of the political history that has molded the Chadian society and shaped the state, and how it operates today. This work is complementary to my theoretical framework, as it maps out how these patterns and characteristics were embedded and why they persist to this day.

2.4 Conceptualization and aim

This in sum is the foundation of the hypotheses about the case (Marsh & Stoker, 2018, p. 225). For this thesis, I spend time on reconceptualizing terms, theories and use them to pragmatically allow for richer hypotheses and theoretical expectations used in my analysis. Conceptualization involves taking complex, and often contested, concepts and define and classify these for the purpose of the specific case one studies (Marsh & Stoker, 2018 p. 227). What might be relative political stability in Chad will not be understood

the same way in for instance Denmark. This calls for a clear theoretical clarification while ensuring consistent theoretical application. I briefly started this venture, by displaying the link between political stability in Chad and the foreign but as stated before, any further elaborations follow in the next chapter. The Chadian state deviates greatly from the Weberian ideal state, but also from Cooper`s (2002) theory, justifying my reconceptualization efforts.

For this thesis, an in-depth case study, the operationalization is not related to breaking down concepts into quantitatively measurable variables or indicators, but rather to link the concepts to the empirical data to be collected in the data collection process (Marsh & Stoker, 2018 p. 227). The aim of an in-depth case study is not to estimate average effects of a set of cases such as in Large-N studies, but rather to locate effects or causes in a specific case (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006, p. 231). The choice of pursuing complex casual narratives, based on a not one but several theoretical foundations, can be seen as a neglect of academic parsimony. It can also be said that in-depth knowledge about a single case, and the testing of a set of theoretical expectations on this given case, allows greater insight *than* “*fleeting knowledge about a larger number of examples*” (Gerring, 2017, Chapter 1).

2.5 Case Selection

Strict criteria related to the research question and research design often dictate the choice of case, yet in some cases this relationship is turned on its head. In this thesis, the latter will be true, the case is chosen due to its significance and importance to the greater field of inquiry and theme. I apply existing theories and concepts to explain an unstudied event of something Goertz & Mahoney (2006, p. 239) described as a “positive case”, meaning that the case`s outcome is the rationale of case selection. The outcome is intrinsically interesting to research, hence chosen due to its value on the dependent variable. In contrast to the quantitative rule of giving *ex ante* cases equal importance qualitative research often finds cases which

are of greater importance and pursue which are believed to be of theoretical importance (Goertz & Mahoney, 2006, p. 242).

Still, as Levy (2008, p. 7) points out, the “*intrinsic value*” of the given question is not sufficient alone. Case selection is also steered by theoretical implications, as it functions as a form of deviant case (Seawright, 2016). Deviant cases are often used for the purposes of discovering omitted variables or causal heterogeneity (Seawright, 2016, p. 494, 495). In this case the choice of case is driven chiefly by two interlinked factors. As mentioned from the outset, Chad is a case of contemporary significance, and as such attempts the ambitious goal of adding understanding to an issue with real-world implications; a key goal for Political Science (Halperin & Heath, 2020, pp. 95-98). As have both been elaborated on previously and will be done later, the stability and persistence of the Chadian regime are important to the region, to the international community, and last but not least, to the Chadian population. The case being studied in this thesis is the Chadian regime’s handling of the succession. I must clarify what this is a “case of”. The death of Chadian is a single case, yet not a case of one single thing¹⁴, I use the event – Déby’s death – and the case of the Chadian regime’s handling of this event as an opportunity to study it as a *case of succession in autocratic regimes* (Gerring, 2017).

Along with the real-world application, a key factor when choosing this case is its ability to answer a – naturally¹⁵ - under-researched question, namely: “How do autocratic regimes deal with both non-intentional and unexpected successions?”. Following this, its deviant character is based on its surprising

¹⁴ Others might interpret the death of Déby - within Political Science and beyond - as a case of something else.

¹⁵ There are no comparable cases to Chad after Francisco Solano López death in 1870 (Britannica, 2022)

outcome (Y), as the succession has seemingly gone smoothly, to the surprise of many experts (Soudan, 2021).

2.6 Data sampling

The empirical evidence and data that will be sampled during this research process will be derived from secondary sources such as previous research, organizational reports, historical accounts as well as broader set of contemporary sources. This is key to gain the case-specific knowledge that enable analysis of the causal process observations that will be collected. The main bulk of the analysis is based upon observations collected through contemporary sources which describe, and hence enable the extraction of a greater narrative of the six months of the Chadian succession period that will be studied. This has required me to do a thorough and expansive reading of news articles, government press releases, contemporary analyzes, INGO-reports and opinion pieces, posted during these six months. To broaden and enrich my perspective, I have chosen to rely on sources with differing backgrounds. Still, a main bulk of news and analyzes are drawn from sources situated in the northern hemisphere, as these supply the number of observations needed. While local Chadian news outlets have given some insights, it's key to note the weak levels of press freedom within the Chadian state (Amnesty International, 2021 & RSF, 2021). This is widely reported by INGOs such as Reporters sans frontières (RSF), and it has thus remained a challenge when attempting to obtain observations from local news outlets.

It's key to justify and reflect on the choices of the studied data to avoid bias in the selection process (Marsh & Stoker, 2018, p. 250) and therefore this is met by using the purposive method of data sampling called "Theoretical sampling". Theoretical sampling steer choice of data, theories and concepts guide where to look for relevant evidence that relate to generated hypotheses and dictate when to end the search for new data, this is referred to as the point of theoretical saturation (Bryman, 2016, p. 410-412). This is an

ongoing process which involves going back and forth between theoretical reflection and analysis stimulating new theoretical ideas that direct attention to new data relevant to these ideas (Bryman, 2016, p. 411). This means that both the case and the theoretical framework grows as the research process endures. This has resulted in a broad theoretical framework, aiming to capture the complexities of the case. The data generated from the six months are steered by these theoretical and case-specific findings yet are naturally contained by its much more defined temporal and spatial context.

2.7 Validity

The greatest threat to validity is selection bias in the data sampling process and unwarranted selectivity (Thies, 2002, p. 352), this forces one to be cognizant of following the theoretical sampling strategy but also to understand the theoretical biases one brings with the applied theoretical framework (Goertz & Mahoney, 2006, p. 241). Biases are famously hard to rid ourselves of, yet some measures are taken, such as ensuring to collect data of relevance and value to established expectations while including those who contradict these expectations. To that end, I have been explicit in my hypotheses and expectations for the Chadian case. This allows readers to see how the choice of data correlates with the expectations set during the previous chapters, making it easier to detect unwarranted selectivity, often referred to as “cherry-picking”.

The method of analytical eclecticism allows one to draw on competing research traditions and this risks theoretical incoherence, meaning that concepts from different traditions must be translated before they are integrated into the same analytical framework (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010, p.414). Robust and consistent concepts and logic are key during measuring in qualitative work, this is called conceptual validity (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006, p. 244). Much time will be spent on carefully defining the key concepts that will be used, to ensure conceptual clarity while avoiding conceptual stretching. This thesis hinges on the ability to effectively reconceptualize theoretical terms and concepts for a framework who accommodates

the case-specific conditions. This venture is justified and motivated by the specific goal of this study, namely, to gain a deeper and richer insight into one case. In other words, to explain this complex and multifaceted research question sufficiently, I followed the logic of middle-range theorizing (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010). . In terms of validity, I can say that internal validity in this study comes at the expense of external validity and the ability to draw generalizable conclusions. My aim is not to generalize, outside of what can be understood as “probabilistic generalization” (Blatter & Havertsland, 2012).

The case-specific considerations and adaptations that are central to this study allow strong internal validity and ensure the strength of the inferences and conclusions that pertain to the given case, while also requiring generalizations to take place in cases of almost impossible similarity. One of the greatest challenges in the work is the reliability of information and lacking openness in autocratic regimes (Svolik, 2012). This is an important caveat that should be expressed, given the closed context of this repressive and authoritarian state. Some events and actions never reach the surface. Still, most events of importance that pertain to a state’s key decisions and operations, do; they are practically impossible to hide. It is thus this accessible information this study relies on. Lastly, validity is tied to the conviction, strength, and thoroughness of the analysis and its ability to link CPOs with the applied theories, literature, and case-specific conditions. Inferences drawn and reflections made should reflect an ability to connect points of interest with greater theoretical claims and expectations, to create “*complex arguments*” (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010, p. 411).

3. Theoretical framework and literature

Here I will present the theoretical framework, a reconceptualized version of the gatekeeper state, called the Military Gatekeeper state. This framework is my adapted interpretation of Frederick Cooper's (2002) theory of the gatekeeper state. My lens is also inspired by the hypothesized relationship between "fragile" states and their international patrons, where fragility is augmented to the benefit of the "weaker" state in specific contexts, referred to as "fragility as an asset". To understand how a militarized gatekeeper-state operates during a succession crisis I draw inspiration from a realist perspective. This is driven by the pragmatist ethos of analytic eclecticism (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010), which allows the possibility of deriving valuable insights and theoretical constructs from diverse and sometimes competing strands to construct arguments that can answer complex questions. To sufficiently answer the issue of a potential succession crisis within my Militarized Gatekeeper state, I find no better alternative than the Hobbesian social contract theory and the idea of a threatening and abstract "state of nature". These choices are compatible and in line with the methodological approach of this thesis while also being necessary to sufficiently understand the existence and persistence of the Chadian state and its regime. The addition of the realist lens is a pragmatic choice steered by the ambition to understand how elites within gatekeeper states deal with successions. With a close reading of Chadian history and political science, these theories and concepts have inspired the militarized gatekeeper-state theory.

3.1 Fragility as an asset

"Fragile" is a dominant label used to categorize states that have a weak capacity to perform their basic duties, and this label often frames the state as disadvantaged. As an idea, the "fragile state" especially

gained increasing importance as part of a policy agenda driven by powerful western humanitarian and political actors in the 1990s & 2000s (Grimm, Nay, Lemay-Hérbert, 2014).

The Sahel is a region where the term “Fragile” reaches its strongest expression. In the Sahel, fragility is clustered, and borders are porous, this means that the risk of collapse of one state is at a high risk of proliferation (Bøås & Strazzari, 2020, p. 3). This risk of a regional collapse helps explain the growing attention from external actors (see Institute for Security Studies, 2009; Debos, 2016a; Hansen, 2017; Iocchi, 2020; Hansen 2020; Powell, 2020).

To understand “fragile” as solely a defect¹⁶ is too simplistic. Fragility is weakness, yet it also serves to create attention and draw focus, fragile states offer flexibility and fluidity (Hansen, 2020. 5). Fragility is, therefore, also an opportunity and can be shaped into political capital by crafty political entrepreneurs. In the case of the Sahel, these states have suffered from increasing poverty (World Bank, 2020) resource scarcity, and climate variability, and these developments are fueling local grievances and conflicts. The Sahelian states are not only suffering from deteriorating internal security but are often framed as producers of transnational, and transregional security threats, due to their porous borders and risk of proliferation cited earlier. The issue is not made easier by the politically contested and polarizing subject of transnational migration, and refugee flows, exemplified by the 2015 refugee crisis (Erstad & Osland, 2020, pp. 18-20.) Therefore, the sitting regimes in the region become a vital component in the containment and combating of these perceived threats and challenges. In the case of Chad, this gives the authoritarian regime in N`Djamena leverage vis-à-vis it`s foreign partners as it is not a simple patron-client relationship in which one is reliant on the other but not vice versa (Bøås & Strazzari, 2020, p. 5). In effect, the regime`s security vulnerabilities can be capitalized on and transformed into aid which ensures the regime can spend to strengthen their grip on power without suffering significant dissent from their partners, who see them as

¹⁶ It`s key to state that for many civilians “fragile” and “weak” states often do equate poor governance and often horrible living conditions, yet I here refer to it`s value for the regime specifically.

indispensable (Debos & Tubiana, 2017, Iocchi, 2020). As much as donors might dislike or see the receiving regime as incompetent, immoral, or corrupt, they see no viable option to ensure security to ensure security (Ba & Bøås, 2017).

Still, it's key to understand that the leader himself must be indispensable to their ruling elites, not only to external allies or they risk being reshuffled, sharing the fate of the likes of the ousted Malian president Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta (Fornof & Cole, 2020). As gatekeeper states they need to balance the need to uphold international support, while being able to spend these resources to manage domestic alliances and all relevant patron-client relations. This necessitates a deeper understanding of the constraints that pertain to gatekeeper states, as the fragility as an asset, is a reconceptualization of the traditional donor-receiver perspective. "Fragility as an asset" encapsulates the specific strategy the Chadian state – a Militarized gatekeeper state – uses to uphold international support.

The militarized gatekeeper state

The gatekeeper state is a term theory by Frederick Cooper (2002) to describe many fragile and weak African states as distinct products of their colonial past (Cooper, 2002, pp. 1-4). The theory elaborates on the idea that states were only able to – and thus focused on – the maintenance and control of the so-called "gate" (Cooper, 2002, pp. 5-7). The gate consisted of the controllable points of entry and exit of the economy; as exports and import tax, international aid, and commercial capital became the main form of income. Essentially the connectedness to the outside world and the control of the capital, and other points of entry and exit were what these weak states were able to maintain; they were simply too weak to project themselves inward (Cooper, 2014, pp. 155-157).

These gatekeeper states faced similar difficulties as their colonial predecessors and were seen as direct products of their colonial pasts. The centralization of the gate in these societies incentivized the struggle for it, as all power often flowed from the capital city or “fortress”. This has created a political arena of zero-sum (ibid., p. 6, 159); where the ones able to seize the “fortress” control the gate and distribute the rents among his or her winning coalition¹⁷. For the gatekeeper, threats manifest in the form of actors who threaten to seize the nodal point or who threaten to bypass the gate (ibid, p. 30). Therefore, a central piece of the gatekeeper’s strategy revolves around ensuring to spend the revenues derived from the nodal points to uphold domestic alliance-structures which ensure that ruler and winning coalition sits “safe”¹⁸.

A vast number of colonial societies were rewired to maximize profits for the colonizing states¹⁹ French and British colonies channeled investments into specific communication channels for one sole purpose, to facilitate the export of goods from the colonies and to the colonizers - from the periphery to the metropole. This flow of resources from Africa - geared towards fueling industrialization within the colonizing states - laid the foundation for their future macroeconomic trajectory and political structures. It created what has been described as the extraversion (Dunn & Englebert, 2019, pp. 218-220) of these states. Extraversion refers to the situation where foreign policy is geared toward ensuring patronage from more prosperous states to such a degree that this impetus dominates much of the rationale of both external and internal state behavior. As local “big men” and other elites - western colonizers had relied upon (see Bates, 2010; Schouten, 2022) – gained political independence²⁰, they would, post-independence, rely upon these same elites to facilitate the interaction between the local and external economies (see Bates, 2010; Schouten, 2022). To gatekeeper states, their dependence on key links with the outside world necessitated them to

¹⁷ Which helps explain the constant battle for N’Djamena since independence (see Chapter 4).

¹⁸ Arguably easier said than done, given the trend of autocratic regimes falling to coups from within the “Winning coalition” (Svolik, 2012).

¹⁹ Highly characteristic of the Chadian colonial experience, as will be shown in my historical case description ²⁰ The French also ensured that traditional chiefs kept their influence during colonial rule, to ease area management (Hansen, 2020, p. 2)

maintain international support, which took vastly different forms depending on what they could “offer” their international patrons. As I will go on to argue, Chad offers security.

Critiques of the gatekeeper state have stated that it suffers from the “one size fit all” issue of projecting a universal understanding of the African state. This critique is arguably valid in some cases²⁰, as African states are shaped by vastly different historic, cultural, and social events; both prior, during, and after the colonial-era. As I show, my investigation relies heavily on an expansive reading and reflection upon Chadian history upon which I attempt to contextualize the state and regime in which this succession takes place. This choice is motivated by the need to understand the highly case-specific circumstances affecting the Chadian political structure, such as its highly militaristic society, and embedded warrior culture. Hence, a reconceptualization of the gatekeeper state is necessary as the original concept formulated by Cooper (2002) functions well as an initial theoretical framework yet comes with stipulations and conditions that do not fit well in the case of Chad. According to Dunn & Englebert (2019, pp. 170-174) military regimes and neopatrimonialism correlate with weak governance and non or weak functioning states, which is admittedly true. Yet, it assumes that these states are to operate according to a Weberian logic. Without adding any normative value judgment, this lens expands its perspective to capture the way these states operate according to a unique and non-Weberian logic.

Alliances and deals in the patrimonial marketplace

Internal alliances are upheld through co-optation through redistributing the rents of the rulers within the “winning coalition” and strategically relevant actors within the broader elites, the so-called selectorate. According to Alex De Waal (2009) many of these weak and fragile states – such as Chad - operate within the logic of a patrimonial marketplace. The patrimonial marketplace is not unique to Chad (see De Waal,

²⁰ Especially in studies that aim for strong internal validity and in-depth analysis over parsimony and the ability to generalize.

2009), but it truly encapsulates the regulatory nature of elite politics within the Chadian state. Within this marketplace, rents and positions power and privilege are “auctioned” of in exchange for loyalty and submission. It often means that when these regimes fall, and enthusiastic looters reach their palaces or contenders trying to seize a “piece of the pie”, they end up disappointed. Finding out how cost intensive these regulatory mechanisms are (Mesquita & Smith, 2011, pp. 75-85).

By ensuring alliances with regional elites, one can co-opt the relevant power figure and the broader societal group he represents (Hassan, 2020, p. 4). In the case of Chad, this dynamic is often referred to as geopolitics²¹ (Debos & Tubiana, 2017, p. 11). The security of these states relies on the ruler and his closest aides` ability to coopt key regional elites, hence upholding internal alliances, and stack his regime with ethnic co-brethren, family members, and other loyalists. As this might come at the cost of competence, the ruler must constantly balance loyalty and competence to secure loyalty and effective rule (Egorov & Sonin, 2011).

Supply and demand of the militarized

The most marked departure from the traditional interpretation of the gatekeeper state is the impetus that it gives upon securing border control. While rulers in N'Djamena would very much like to have an effective governing of its borders, this is made difficult by the economic, logistical, or military feasibility of these goals – the regime must prioritize. Resources are limited, and rulers in N`Djamena have numerous priorities, many of which trump the need to secure desolate border points. On top of the agenda is upholding domestic alliances, making sure no possible competitor can create a coalition that poses a credible threat; it also needs to seek international support. Border points become key when they either threaten key nodal points of the economy, for instance, through producing economic revenues which

²¹ Not synonymous with the term used in International Politics, this term is strictly referring to the internal politics of Chad.

outpace the rest of the economy, or most importantly, when they enable rebels to operate in flux between border areas, using these areas as rear bases for future rebellions or attacks on the capital ²².

These two objectives, while distinct, are tied together. Without international support, resources often spent on patron-client networks to uphold domestic alliances are lost. The cessation of international support not only represents the threat of revenue loss; it also means that possible challengers may receive this support, potentially threatening their regimes²³.

Like the feudal lords and monarchs of medieval Europe, Déby have made powerful alliances through marriage, often with adversarial families, or with his sympathizers (Hansen 2020, p. 14), creating a family structure similar to a family kingdom. Being a family member or becoming a family-related devotee to Déby often meant gaining public office or other positions which ensured rents (Hansen 2020, p. 14). This *modus operandi* is also seen in the military domains, as he has strategically placed both allies and possible contenders in key positions of the military and security apparatus to ease domestic tensions (Gnanguênon, 2021, pp. 23-27).

The Chadian state is distinguished by its degree of militarization, the supply and demand dimension of its military power (Gnanguênon, 2021, p. 23), and its prioritization of strategic - but not total - border control. While other African gatekeeper states might rely on exporting raw commodities - a feature of the Chadian regime - Chad is not first and foremost a petrostate with a military but a warrior-state with oil revenues. This distinction is key, as the ability and shrewdness of rulers in N'Djamena when projecting military power both internally, and chiefly externally lay at the center of its existence. Through this lens, security becomes a question of supply and demand – as his regime can supply regional power projection,

²² Which has been crucial in several of the violent takeovers of the Chadian state since 1960(see Chapter 4)

²³ A recurring theme in Chad (see Chapter 4; Azevedo, 1998).

demanded by international allies keen to stabilize the region – thus tying regime survival to the demand for regional military support (Gnanguênon, 2021, p. 23).

Balancing act of the militarized

Chad, as a militarized gatekeeper state expends its military resources to both defend itself from internal threats, as well as remain relevant to its international patrons - chiefly, but not solely, France. Yet N'Djamena always walks a tightrope, balancing between internal and external power projection. Too many soldiers abroad might jeopardize internal security, and a too low external engagement will reduce international relevance, and thus leverage. There is a clear power asymmetry between Paris and N'Djamena, hence the usage of terms such as “patron-client”, yet it must be clarified that this term risk painting a picture where Paris is the subject and N'Djamena is an object to be acted upon – an image where Paris pulls the strings. This is not the case - as shown through the inclusion of “fragility as an asset” – N'Djamena is reconstructing fragility and weakness into bargaining chips. This dynamic is the key to their strategy of being an “Island of stability” in an unstable region. For Chad - and other militarized gatekeeper states – state weakness is a feature, not a defect (Hansen, 2011; 2013). The relationship is instead forged by the demand and supply dimension, in more explicit terms, how important you are. The more you can give your foreign backer, the less pressure for reforms or other internal changes (Dunn & Engelbert, 2019, p. 220). The relationship between France and Chad is admittedly an unequal partnership but not strict patron-client, as will become evident in chapter 6.

Realism in a leaderless gatekeeper

This thesis aims to answer how the Chadian state dealt with the death of Déby and how did elite-cohesion occur. In other words, how did the Militarized gatekeeper so effectively handle the loss of its leader? To answer this question, the framework of the Militarized Gatekeeper will be supplemented by the idea of a

Hobbesian social contract. The post-Dèby-pre-Kaka snapshot is one of a “state of nature” in the face of an absent leviathan. As Loewe et al., 2021, pp. 1-5) write, these social contracts should be conceptualized as the set of informal agreements and understandings between sovereign and key societal groups on obligations and rights between both parties. Despite the inspiration and reliance on Hobbes` s initial theory, his social contract limitation to the relationship between civilian and sovereign justifies a revision. He overlooks cases, such as Chad, where the social contract is not between civilian and sovereign but between the key societal groups – who make up the elites – and the ruler. In the Militarized Gatekeeper, the social contract is tied to elite groups and the ability of the leviathan to continue the operations of the state; the civilian has been excluded from the political domain within this state structure (De Waal, 2009, pp. 103-112; Gissel & Henningsen, 2021). Where Hobbes` s perspective truly shines is its ability to explain the outbreak of civil war because of the breakdown of a sovereign` s authority - the absence of a ruler. This leads to opportunities and fears which coalesce and create a breeding ground for opportunistic figures to incite rebellion in the face of a lack of coercive power from the sovereign (Schwartz & Kapust, 2022).

3.2 Authoritarian elites and successions

The literature on leadership transition is usually divided, with one segment following the dynamics of leadership transitions and change of government in democratic states and the second strand of literature that focuses on leadership transitions and regime changes in autocratic states (Helms, 2020, p. 329). Two terms of relevance in both, which will be explained here, are succession and *transitions*. Successions refer to the changes within the leadership structure – the change of ruler. Transitions refer to changes in the party or coalition which holds power (Helms, 2020, p.331). Transitions usually entail regime change, while successions do not necessarily mean regime change. This is key, as this thesis aims to answer why and how the Chadian regime have been able to side-step regime-collapse. This clarification is needed, because as you will see, the succession is often referred to colloquially as a transition, but this must not be misunderstood as the academic term - the case in Chad is one of succession not transition.

There is a trend to understand the literature on transitions as a form of a roadmap, where regimes are “partly free” or “semi-democratic” rather than “partly authoritarian”. This language indicates that states are moving towards democracy - they are “*getting to Denmark*”(Fukuyama, 2011). Many scholars challenge this assumption; in recent years we have been painfully aware of democratic backsliding in “Free” states. Thus, underscoring not to take democratic transition as a given. Autocracies regimes often transition from one authoritarian regime to another. The result in Spain after Franco – one of transition from fascist dictatorship to democracy - is not the rule; it’s rather the exception (see Levitsky & Way, 2002).

I will focus on the expectation derived from the literature on authoritarian regimes. Despite Déby's reforms in the 90s, Chad remains an autocratic state in which the elites of N'djamena control the state. Déby has not faced the possibility of losing any free and fair election²⁴. Helms (2020, p. 328-330) explains that leadership successions shape regimes' political development and their trajectories. The smooth, successful transitions usually increase the regime's stability, performance, and legitimacy. While poorly handled successions likely lead to pressure upon the regime and possible regime collapse. Geddes (1999) differentiates between four forms of authoritarian regimes: single-party, personalist, military, and hybrid regimes (Geddes, 1999, p. 7). Geddes' typologies are essential, not only as organizational boxes but highly relevant for how transitions and successions occur. Expectations within the categories of autocratic regimes depend on regime type.

Regimes are especially threatened in cases of personalistic rule, in which much of the legitimacy is centered around a resourceful and skilled leader (Helms, 2020, p. 332), coined by Max Weber as the "*charismatic authority*" (Hoffmann, 2009, p. 229) Chad under Déby would fall within the personalist camp as most of the legitimacy and source of power within the Chadian regime has been centered around Déby (see Chapter 4; Chapter 5)

The fall of a charismatic ruler has, as pointed out earlier, both led to a democratic transition in Spain, resulted in frequent civil wars within the history of monarchies (Kokkonen & Møller, 2020; Kokkonen & Sundell, 2014, 2020), and in the collapse of a state, in the modern case, Yugoslavia. Within military regimes, threats lie within the military elite - splits and factionalization within this elite may lead to its collapse. Leaders of military regimes are more threatened by rivals within the elites than in both personalist and single-party regimes (Geddes, 2009, p. 8). These observations have clear implications for

²⁴ Freedom House has consistently labeled as "Not free" and organizations such as Amnesty International and Transparency International has also been damning in its reports on Chad (see Chapter 4).

the case of Chad, and the Transitional Military Council (TMC). The Chadian regime is a hybrid regime, with highly personalistic tendencies and is heavily militarized; this means that his absence should be expected to create the potential for the creation of a military junta. In line with Geddes` (2009) work on would expect that Kaká`s and the TMC`s greatest threats would come from within rivaling elites and that these would be more substantial than if Chad, for instance, became a functioning one-party state under the MPS.

The literature on autocratic regimes has thoroughly shown how they adopt democratic traditions, only to mutate these in such a way as to increase the regime`s security and control, for instance using elections to reduce uncertainty and gain information (Cox, 2009) the implementation of term limits in autocratic regimes has also been an evident phenomenon (see Ezrow, 2019, pp. 269 – 284), something which, within the logic of the authoritarian regime, function as a vehicle of power-sharing (Helms, 2020, p.333). In the case of the hybrid regime in N`Djamena, these formal institutions represent possibilities for those seeking to enter the patrimonial marketplace, where rulers buy, and elites sell, loyalty through co-optation.

Svolik`s (2009, p. 477) reinforces the need to look at the elites highlight the disproportionately large amount of coups which are initiated and acted on within the elites. The elites and not the masses, should be of worry to an autocrat, and it admittedly is. Yet, it is key to say that while one might not see mass mobilization as the chief concern of the regime, it is necessary to understand how elite groupings can make use of popular dissent to mobilize or legitimate coups.

As stated, the Chadian regime depends upon the nature of elite cooperation and competition. The concept of a “winning coalition” has relevance in autocracies as well as democracies. The winning coalition in a presidential democracy is the minimal number of voters needed to win office, while in autocracies it is the selection of people in positions of power and influence which ensure one the ability to reign (Buono de Mesquita & Smith, 2011, p. 4, 5). As stated, in the Chadian case, key societal groups partake in the social

contract; within these, one finds the “selectorate”. The winning coalition is drawn from this group. While the threat of mass mobilization exists²⁵, the defection of the winning coalition is the omnipresent threat to the autocrat; rents are divided among the coalition before it reaches the populace; such is the logic of survival (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith, 2011, p. 195).

Gerschewski (2011) distills the tools of autocrats to remain in power, into three categories: legitimation, repression, and co-optation. Legitimation is understood in the terms of “Legitimacy of belief” and is often tied to social-contract theories (Gerschewski, 2011, pp. 19 & 20). In essence, legitimation as a tool relies upon the ability of the ruler to uphold his end of the social contract in exchange for compliance. His examples are the ideological deliveries of certain theocracies but also the material goods that autocrats in Beijing have been able to deliver to their people. This understanding of legitimacy also hinges upon the idea of charismatic authority – a broader conception of legitimation.

In the case of Chad, one can argue that the traditional Weberian idea of legitimation has played a more minor role than the two other tools. Yet this broader understanding of legitimation could raise new implications for legitimation as key in the succession process. In militarized gatekeeper states the role of legitimation is - rather than tied to the civilian population - linked to an individual’s perceived ability to act within the logic of the gatekeeper, the Hobbesian social contract, and therefore his ability to be the strong military ruler. This is needed to maintain the role as the legitimate and viable partner of the international community, which function as the regime’s resource base and the respect of the military apparatus.

Svovlik (2009, pp. 478-483) differentiates between contested and established dictatorships. In the contested dictatorship, the dictator rules very much under the threat of coups emanating from the winning coalition. He must constantly distribute rents and positions while acting within the accepted logic of his

²⁵ Becomes an issue if members of the selectorate are able and willing to capitalize on this (see Chapter 5).

ruling coalition, who always have the option of ousting him if they calculate that the gains outweigh the *ex-ante* and *ex-post* costs (Svolik, 2009, pp. 482 & 483). This is known as co-optation, yet while these efforts are aimed at tying the elites to the fate of the ruler's regime, the other side of the coin, called repression (Frantz, 2018), also plays a vital role in ensuring one's the ruler's security. Repression happens through a myriad of ways, such as extra-judicial arrests or even killings, but also, through more subtle ways such as through strategically sidelining and splitting coalition.

The balance of power between the elites and the ruler defines the credibility of the threat of coups; in established dictatorships, the dictator is essentially immune from coups due to his accumulation of power where the balance of power is so tilted in his favor. Some dictators who pass the process of "natural selection" and are not ousted for years, might, through crafty maneuvers where they accumulate power at the expense of their winning coalition, reach a point of established dictatorship. This is what I argue happened to an extent in the later years of Déby's reign (see Chapter 4).

Clearly, the elite-ruler balance plays a crucial part in regime stability, but how do these regimes deal with successions specifically within this landscape? Brownlee (2007, p. 595-597) argues that hereditary successions in the literature on the authoritarian republic and hybrid regimes, such as Chad, have long been unappreciated. Brownlee shows that the previously hypothesized effect of hereditary succession to sustain extant power in a broader set of elite groups is a key element of its applicability. Also – highly relevant for Chad – in cases where the leader created the party that runs the country, rather than being a product of the ruling party, the likelihood of hereditary arrangements again rises (Brownlee, 2007, p. 598).

In medieval monarchies, primogeniture played a pivotal role as a stabilizer, reducing the risk of civil wars and elite conflict due to the certainty it delivered (see Kokkonen & Sundell, 2014; Kokkonen & Sundell, 2020). In modern autocracies of non-monarchic character, primogeniture has been still used, evident in the two previous examples of Syria and Congo. What primogeniture offer is a remedy for the commitment and

coordination problem (see Svobik, 2012; Kokkonen & Sundell, 2014; Nong, 2022). Suppose the ruler dies without leaving an apparent heir. In that case, internal conflict might erupt, and it's here primogeniture amends the issue of uncertainty by delivering clear expectations (Nong, 2022, p. 7). According to Nong (2022, pp. 3-10), primogeniture also often bestows legitimacy upon the heir, given that primogeniture has become an ingrained social norm in said society. As might be the case for hereditary successions more generally, the absence of formal rules or designations does not mean that arrangements, norms, and expectations are already established.

In the case of Chad, Idriss Déby was allegedly planning to go down the primogeniture route but lost his eldest son (see Chapter 6). Kaka is a product of an informal hereditary succession, without following the principle of primogeniture. This might imply that legitimacy follows a different pattern in the Chadian case, which will be further discussed in chapter 5.

4. Case-description

This chapter focuses on giving a sufficient case description by addressing two of Chad`s most important international backers and explaining their link to the Militarized Gatekeeper state. Following this brief part, I describe the Chadian state through a historical lens through a process of state-building lasting from the early medieval period up until the current regime. This is needed to understand the foundations of the Militarized gatekeeper state and to justify further and contextualize the theoretical lenses.

4.1 External actors

Their former colonial overlords in France have, since independence, played a pivotal role in Chad, either to restore, create or impose a sense of political stability. France has intervened in Chad more than in any of its other former colonies, which speaks volumes for a nation who have intervened over 50 times in Africa since 1960 (Powell, 2020, p. 10). De Gaulle`s decision to intervene in 1968 stood as a hallmark of the French *modus operandi* in many of its former colonies (DeVore, 2020, 2020, pp. 106-134). Debois (2016, p. 26) points out that Chad is a key piece in France`s African sphere of influence. Political counterparts in Brussels and Washington share this French perspective of ensuring local and regional stability. They viewed the Chadian military capacity that Déby offered²⁶ as the only option in reaching their security objectives in the Sahel (Hicks, 2015, p. 5).

Therefore, Chad`s militaristic nature is crucial in understanding its dealings with external actors, as France and the US have been key allies of most Chadian regimes since 1960. Despite attempts by regional

²⁶ As well as its key contributions to the G5 Sahel force, Déby made Chad one of the key pieces of the UN mission in the Sahel (Eizenga, 2021), being the state with most soldiers deployed through the UN MINUSMA mission in Mali (United Nations, n.d.)

powers, Paris has been the only efficient “kingmaker” in N`Djamena, essentially approving every regime change since independence (Debos, 2016, p. 93). Chad was sitting at the bottom of international indexes (Dunn & Engelbert, 2019, p. 52) and was experiencing a socio-economic crisis before Déby`s death, succession had been pointed out as a possible point of threat to regime stability by several experts (Crisis Group, 2020; Eizenga, 2018), but it`s clear that the international community were not willing to risk pushing Chad into a path of political change, but rather prioritized stability, thus supporting Déby (Eizenga, 2018, p. 13).

Chad is fragile, but as I have elaborated extensively, the fragility becomes an asset (Bøås, 2019, p. 14). All this highlights that political stability and the continuation of the regime in Chad are both of highest priority to those ruling in N`Djamena and its external patrons. Looking at one is unproductive without understanding how they interplay through the Militarized gatekeeper's demand and supply logic.

4.2 A militarized gatekeeper in the making: The history of the Chadian state

A historical lens needs to be applied to understand how the Chadian state has developed. I do this by referencing what I identify as four distinct epochs in Chad`s history. Each differs significantly in length, yet all share a role in constructing and transferring essential characteristics to the Chadian state and society. They have together produced a Militarized gatekeeper state, with an embedded warrior culture, a weak state with insufficient ability to project power inward but with an ability to uphold the gatekeeper state.

As stated, Chad follows The Militarized gatekeeper`s core tenets: (1) controlling the gate and key nodal points of the economy, (2) upholding internal alliances, and (3) remaining internationally relevant, thus ensuring international support and aid, (4) lastly it also attempts to secure strategic border areas. Yet these

efforts have not always been successful and often have, when mismanaged, led to a new ruler in N'Djamena.

4.3 Pre-Colonial Chad

The areas which today encompass Chad, as has the case in the Sahel - and especially around the Lake Chad Basin – these areas have been subject to a vast myriad of merchants, slave traders, conquerors, and state entities, most notably the Kanem-Bornu, Wadai, and the Baguirmi(Azevedo, 1998)²⁷.

Kanem, now a region in northern Chad that once extended into modern Sudan, existed as a state entity since ca. A.D 800. Established by the ruling Zaghawa nomadic people - after joining the Toubus - Kanem, which became Islamized in the 10th century, was an essential entity in Central Africa. Its importance lay in its strategic location and its function as a vital “trade node” between the Arab peninsula and West, North, and Central Africa. Its connecting role between the lands north of the Sahara and Sub-Saharan Africa gave them great wealth and incentivized the protection of trade routes. It also played a vital role in the pilgrimage routes between the Arabian Gulf and central and western Africa (Martin, 1969). The routes made such an impression of safety that it was said that “*a lone woman clad in gold might walk with none to fear but God.*” (Azevedo, 1998, chapter 2).

The Kanem ruling family lost control in the 14th century, but after fleeing to Bornu, they reconquered Kanem a century later, firmly cementing the Kanem-Bornu Empire. After centuries of rule and being arguably the most crucial entity in Northern Chad, the Kanem-Bornu fell into decline due to repeated

²⁷ For a more extensive description of Chadian history (see Azevedo, 1998; Debos, 2016; Azevedo & Decalo, 2018; Powell, 2020).

invasions by Fulani and Tuareg nomads, combined with famines in both the 16th and 17th centuries. The Wadai and Bagurimi states met similar fates. The Baguirmi much in part to Wadai incursions.

There are many more kingdoms, statehoods, and peoples of Chad - a country of over a hundred distinct ethnic groups - that have made a significant impact (see Azevedo, 1998, Azevedo; Decalo, 2018), but given the limits of this study, I will need to refrain from steering into a long historical passage.

Regarding Southern Chad, the peoples there were much less politically organized, and state structures like those in the north did not manifest. Societies were organized on the village level, with traditional chiefs often in charge. Life was vastly different in the south; the sedentary agricultural life stood in sharp contrast to the warring and more organized states of the North, yet often felt the predatory nature of their northern states through raids. The south became victimized. A constant target for more organized, united northern societies, who went south searching for slaves. This dynamic has negatively shaped the North-South relationship to this day and ended with the entry of the “white infidels” from Europe in the later stages of the 19th century, following the Berlin Conference (Azevedo, 1998, Chapter 2).

From its precolonial-era modern-day, Chad inherited a political structure and economy of duality. The militarized northern states of conquest would further shape the colonial experience of both Chadians and French policymakers and arguably steer the trajectory for future politico-military entrepreneurs after independence. The southern societies, which remained less politically organized, would define the other “pole” of the Chadian state.

4.4 Colonial Chad

The French transformed and restructured the Chadian economy with devastating effects. Centralization of the economy, new modes of transportation, customs posts, forced labor, and an absolutist system deeply undermined the traditional trans-Saharan trade that had been vital to the economy. What replaced it was a colonial cotton economy, where the domestic economy answered their colonial overlords' whims. This system, which consisted of forced cotton cultivation, made an ineffective economy dependent on international markets and without domestic control. The effects of the appalling socio-economic development policy can be seen today in a country that consistently ranks as one of the poorest and least developed states in the world (Azevedo, 1998?); despite its newfound resource wealth, there are few positive signs for Chad's economic direction (Winters & Gould, 2011).

The French colonial practice in Chad further exacerbated the North-South divide. The south, known as "*le chad utile*" (useful Chad), was prioritized for development, while the entrenched political **systems** and societies of the north were in many ways left to their own devices and ruled through indirect rule, yet had to accept ceasing their slaving traditions (Azevedo, 1998, Chapter 2, 3). As stated previously, the North-South enmities had deeper roots than European colonialism - yet these were further strengthened and exacerbated through the duality and embedded inequality of the colonial policies (see Debos, 2016, pp. 38-41). The resulting dynamic would set the stage for violent conflict following independence.

4.5 De jure independence in a violent Chad: 1960-1990

After gaining independence in 1960 Francois Tombalbaye became president – through political maneuvering and violence – yet his rule would be marred with civil conflict (Azevedo, 1998). Tombalbaye

became dependent on French support for regime survival, primarily through intelligence support (Powell, 2020).

Chad saw a continuation of external influence on Chadian society and the state, both its military and security apparatus were significantly influenced – and often totally controlled - by France. This, again, adds to this notion of a blurry line between the external and internal realms (Powell, 2020, p. 3), as many of the institutions we see today are heavily influenced by the Franco-Chadian connection and the colonial legacy while still maintaining much of the links between both states, to present date. Powell (2020, p. 17) refers to this as the Franco-Chadian state. Rather than a breakdown of the empire and complete political, social, and economic independence after 1960, a joint operation of restructuring Franco-Chadian relations between French and Chadian elites followed. France and its former colonies, in this case

Chad built a “special relationship” with exclusive ties between both sides. For the autocrats in N`djamena, France became an indispensable security provider, and France upheld the norm of personalized and unaccountable rule in Chad, arguably still today (Powell, 2020, pp. 14-18). This highlights the colonial foundations of the gatekeeper state and its propensity for extraversion - the connection between the gate and the external.

Tombalbaye`s regime faced considerable threats from insurgencies, most based in the north, and a civil war erupted in the mid-1960s, grievances between the more developed and Christian south and the Muslim north reached the surface, and southerners held grievances from the experienced slave raids. At the same time, the northerners had political grievances as they had been kept out of a southerner and Sara-dominated state. For many years, rebel groups such as Frolinat under Hábre were relatively unsuccessful yet not weak enough to be stamped out (Buijtenhuijs, 2001, p. 151). Several attempted coups failed during the late 60s and early 70s, yet all were terminated, thanks to Franco-Chadian security cooperation. France

made sure Tombalbaye could hold the fortress, N`Djamena, and he would go on to arrest a wide cast of military and political dissidents (Hansen, 2020, p. 5)

Tombalbaye eventually fell, not by civil war but assassination. His fall marked the beginning of the end of Sara rule²⁸ as his two next successors – Noël Odingar, who sat for two days, and Felix Malloum, who ruled between 1975 and 1978 – were the last southerners in charge of Chad, ushering in the era of Northern dominance of the Chadian political system. The forces of H`abre entered a fragile and short-lasting coalition and power-sharing arrangement with Malloum in 1978, but this splintered by the following year, and the country was de-facto split into three parts by the ensuing civil war (Buijtenhuijs, 2001, pp. 151–153).

After France forced Malloum and the southern side to cease its effective air raids, the northerners were able to take N`Djamena. Not only had there been splits within the north-south coalition of Malloum and H`abre - the two Toubu leaders – but enmities between H`abre and Guokuni Wedei - a scion of the Teda. The resulting clashes within the fractions of Frolinat ended by 1982, as H`abre managed to seize N`Djamena (Buijtenhuijs, 2001, p. 151). Despite H`abre`s seizure of N`Djamena, Wedei - H`abre`s northern rival - was supported by Libya and engaged in fighting after 1982. In 1986 the involvement of Libyan forces escalated to open war between H`abre`s regime and Libya. Incredibly, Libya suffered a humiliating loss in northern Chad, thanks partly to French support but primarily due to the innovative and flexible military response of H`abre`s forces (Azevedo, 1998, Chapter 3).

Despite the H`abre`s effective military campaigns, an economy with a seemingly positive outlook for the first time in a long time, and an extensive co-optation campaign, H`abre would also be known for his ruthlessness (Debos, 2016; Powell, 2020; Hansen, 2021). His strategy still failed as his former

²⁸ The largest ethnic group in Chad.

commander, Idriss Dèby – whose military genius was one of the biggest reasons for the 1986-1987 military successes and a favorite of the French – would flee N`Djamena in 1989 and the following year - virtually unopposed – seize the capital (Azevedo, 1998, Chapter 3).

The lacking support from Paris – and a subsequent clandestine operation to back Dèby (Hansen, 2020, p. 14) – were not only due to Dèby`s popularity but also to H`abre`s declining role as an ally. H`abre had diversified his external patrons, leaning increasingly on the US in his last years (Powell, 2020, p. 328); developments stakeholders in Paris were keen to halt. H`abre fell due to his failure to (1) uphold the internal alliances to a sufficient degree, and when that failed, (2) he also misplayed his hand regarding his international support. He broke two tenets of the gatekeeper state and paid for it. Dèby became the latest man placed in power through a violent seizure of power, much like all Chadian leaders who came after Tombalbaye. As often has been the case, the French played the role of “kingmaker”. H`abre`s fate joins the rank of several fallen Chadian leaders who failed the key tasks of the gatekeeper state - remain relevant to key external patrons and uphold internal alliances; if one were to fail, at least the other had to be ensured. As I will show later, D`éby failed on some occasions to uphold these tenets, yet he was always able to persist, as he could use the other “legs” of his gatekeeper.

4.6 Idriss takes power: The Dèby dynasty 1990-2021

Following Dèby`s takeover in 1990 he took several steps to cement his “kingdom”, all these steps have since steered the trajectory of the Chadian regime and state. He changed his name to the Zaghawa name “Into”, symbolizing that he is part of the minority Zaghawa`s in control of Chad. A recognition of the

legitimacy his warrior-tribe gives him, but also respect for the Chadian “geopolitics” of his new realm (Azevedo, 1998; Tubiana, 2008; Tubiana & Debos, 2017).

Déby signaled a willingness to democratize Chad, and initially, much hope – in a country rocked by violence for over 25 years - was pinned to his rise. Upon seizing office, he introduced a multi-party system and term limits to Chad. Yet, Chad – a country with over 120 distinct languages and an even greater number of ethnic groups, which resulted in a high degree of regional factionalism – was seen as one of the most challenging prospects for democratization (May & Massey, 2002, pp. 73-75). Chad was, by 1990, the hallmark of a “failed state”; factions fought for control of the capital without this center being able to project power effectively to the periphery (Buijtenhuijs, 2001).

The reforms of Déby`s early years were arguably closer to window dressing than any substantive change. Déby still effectively ruled a de-facto one-party state without respecting his implemented rules and winning all elections, whose legitimacy is continuously scrutinized (Hansen, 2022). Yet, the international environment of the early 1990s, defined by a surging liberal order, with visions of a so-called “*end of history*” (Fukuyama, 1989) required adaptation. During the crumbling of the USSR and the beginning of the US`s unipolar moment (Mearsheimer, 2019, pp. 25–27). Déby had to signal a turn for Chad by introducing liberal reforms (May & Massey, 2002). This “liberal” Déby was not to last, as he understood to adapt quickly to new international realities, from democracy to a new fear of instability and terrorism (Hansen, 2020) in the early 2000s.

He won Chad`s first – on paper- multiparty election in 1996 and went on to win the next elections in 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016. In 2018 he amended the constitution, which resulted in more amassed power for Déby and the potential to be elected until 2033 (PANGEARISK, 2019, p. 2). The state he “inherited”

were one in great peril. Ravaged by continuous violence since independence; while admittedly less violent than his predecessor, Chad under Déby has continued as an authoritarian state²⁹.

Ketil Hansen (2013; 2017) has referred to him as a “democratic dictator”, an apt label. Even though Déby won his four first elections and received international recognition, I join the ranks of those who do not regard his regime as close to any free democracy (see Chapter 1; Chapter 3). His strategy has been to trick, manipulate and bend these terms, through his pragmatic hybrid regime. Déby was a warrior but also a great trickster (Scheele, 2022). Democratic institutions allow the regime in N`Djamena to operate outside of the realm of absolute authoritarianism, yet it is close to the “hegemonic electoral authoritarianism” that Brownlee (2009) describes. Elections are not free and fair (Debos, 2016, p. 68), and several organizations, such as Amnesty International, have warned of repeated human rights violations (Amnesty International, 2022, pp. 120-122) Chad has also continued to score near the bottom of democracy indexes such as Freedom House (, 2022). So, despite the appearance of elections and other democratic institutions, Chad certainly falls into the camp of authoritarian republics that exploit these, just in line with the literature on modern autocracies (see Cox, 2009; Ezrow, 2019; Helms, 2020).

The decades that led up to Déby`s rise saw the creation and continuation of a politico-military culture of which have heavily affected Chadian politics and the regime. Rebels not only rebelled due to – often legitimate – underlying grievances such as between nomads, sedentary farmers, ethnic groups, Muslims, or Christians; but increasingly as an occupation and mode of increasing their value in the patrimonial marketplace (Hansen 2013; Debos, 2016, p. 78) The experience of the civil war during the 70s - the end of Tombalbaye and the rise of Frolinat as a contender - had led to a professionalization of violence. Still, the 60s and 70s also led to increasing violence between rebel groups as they failed to unite, thus leading to

²⁹ In the last three years, 2019, 2020 and 2021 the Economist Intelligence Unit`s Democracy Index ranked Chad near the bottom, at 163rd, 163rd and 160th respectively (EIU, 2019, 2020, 2021).

increased factionalization (Debos, 2016, pp. 49-52), and strengthening of grievances as conflicts often serve to enhance intergroup hostility (see Choi & Bowles, 2007; Bowles, 2008; Rusch, 2014).

It was in this political landscape that Dèby was forced to navigate, something he has skillfully done. Flexibility and fluidity describe the politico-military alliances and organizations in Chad (Hansen, 2020 & Debos, 2016, p. 77), but they are also highly pertinent descriptions of Dèby himself. His pragmatism and flexibility - arguably in addition to a significant amount of luck - are responsible for his long tenure. He has been able to survive several coup attempts³⁰, mostly from within his own Zaghawa ethnic group, most notably in 2006, 2008 (see Debos, 2016, p. 66-71), and in 2019 (Crisis Group, 2019a) much in part to help from his French security alliance, and in the nick of time. The 2008 event was almost symbolic of Déby`s rise to power. Both rebels and Déby cozied the French.

Contenders for the throne of the militarized gatekeeper state also recognize the need to pursue international support, and in the case of Chad, the French are **the** partner to rely on³¹. In a country where security spending already occupied a disproportionate amount of the state budget, he increased Chad`s spending by tenfold in the decade between 1999 and 2009 (Hansen, 2020, p. 15), much in part to the country's growing oil revenues in the 2000s. The World Bank had ambitions of securing development in Chad by supporting the Chad-Cameroon pipeline (Gould & Winters, 2011), as Chad truly became a player within the oil industry. The growing oil revenues, thought by the World Bank to be used for development, were instead spent on consolidation of power, primarily through spending on defense and security (Hansen, 2020, p. 16). To some observers, this lacking accountability would not come as any surprise, as Transparency International regarded Chad as the most corrupt state in the world in 2008 (Transparency

³⁰ Often in the nick of time (see Hansen, 2013).

³¹ Unsuccessful rebel groups have often found support from neighboring Sudan (Debos, 2016, p. 82)

International, n.d.) That oil rents had flowed through patron-client networks of Déby's regime and helped build Déby's armed forces should have been predictable. It also underscores the applicability of the militarized gatekeeper theory, as control of key economic sectors and international aid enabled autocratic consolidation by further militarization efforts and strategic usage of oil rents to “grease” patron-client networks. It became the tools to uphold a kleptocratic system needed to keep internal alliances together.

After 2005 Déby amended the constitution and removed term limits; the result was a revitalization of civil conflict between 2005-2009 (Marchal, 2016, p. 16). Two very critical Coup attempts in 2006 and 2008 (Hansen, 2020, p. 15). The events of 2006 and 2008, in which Déby were twice nearly toppled³², just further exemplified to Déby that he needed to prioritize security (Winters & Gould, 2011); he also learned a valuable lesson, if his redistributive operations failed, he could face threats from within his military (Hicks, 2015, p. 5). The oil revenues and international aid – mainly through arms export and training by the US and France - enabled a substantially growing and increasingly potent military force (Hansen, 2020, p. 1). His motive was threefold: (1) it enhanced his security from rebel groups and possible popular dissent, and (2) it enabled Déby to stack his military and security apparatus with Zaghawa members and close relatives, thus ensuring loyalty among his “winning coalition”, and (3) lastly it was part of Déby's foreign policy strategy in the post-9/11 security landscape of the MENA-region. Déby aptly adapted to this environment by using his increasingly potent military forces for counter-terrorism operations in neighboring countries while inviting Western partners to station troops in Chad.

As Hansen (2013) writes, Déby spent the years following 2008 to either co-opt or repress any opposition, a. I argue that these years marked when Déby cemented his position as an *established dictator* (Svolik, 2012). The fall of Libya in 2011 led to a regional power vacuum - which Déby capitalized upon (Bøås,

³² In 2008 Déby admitted that rebels controlled the entire capital except the presidential palace in which the president was bunkered together with two French officers; Déby held the “castle”; days later momentum swung and Déby remained in power (Hansen, 2017).

2019). Déby understood – arguably better than any other – how he could cement his supply of international support by filling this geostrategic role (Hansen, 2020, p. 18). Chad had played the role of ally to both France and the US for decades, and it started ramping up its security operations after 9/11; yet 2011 truly marked a new era for Chad as a regional power broker (Gnanguênon, 2021 pp.15-18).

4.7 A history of the militarized

I argue that these four distinct epochs all attach certain qualities and attributes to Chadian society and its current regime. The pre-colonial epoch set the stage for the duality of Chadian society; the relationship between the northern militarized states and the victimized southern entities spelled a dichotomous colonial policy and an enduring north-south divide. It also established strong regional-traditional elites with deep historical foundations, which have since set the stage for the so-called geopolitics of Chad.

The pre-colonial epoch and its resulting development trajectories steered the coming colonial policies and management of the Chadian territories. Many of these policies reinforced and reconstructed these cleavages while also demolishing much of the Chadian economic capacity, leading to stagnating socio-economic development and a later dependence on foreign patrons, chiefly France. The gatekeeper dynamic was a colonial legacy. The seeds of what is referred to as the gatekeeper state were planted during the colonial era, but it was also reproduced through the external influence France held during its strategy of “Francafrique” post-independence. The colonial era set the conditions for the period after de-jure independence, expressed through different forms of extraversion.

Violence has been a constant throughout Chadian history; in the post-independence decades, Chad has had several regimes, except for Tombalbaye, which have all come because of violent coups. For Chad, the statement that “violence is the final arbiter in authoritarian regimes” rings true. In almost all moments of

leadership change, bases abroad and the former colonial overlord have been involved. During the 70s, the Chadian politico-military groups became professionalized, rebelling became a vocation to many, and the already present factionalization became even more significant - the culture of “living by the gun” was truly born.

In his over 30-year reign, Dèby reformed the political system; he introduced multi-party elections yet remained an autocrat of a hybrid regime. His reign was, at times, extremely turbulent. Yet, he consolidated increasing amounts of power, removed term limits, and oversaw the creation of a military force that made Chad a regional security provider. Much of his later accomplishments were thanks to the revenues brought by the oil sector, aid from its international partners, and Dèby`s efficiency at using fragility as a bargaining chip while distinguishing himself as the sole reliable partner in the region.

5. Analysis I: An unstable powder-keg versus the consolidated gatekeeper

In this section – the first part of my two-part analysis – I will analyze the state of the Chadian state just before the death of Déby. This allows me to refine my hypothesis based on my historical account, theoretical framework, and contemporary observations. A necessary step as my three main hypotheses and their further specifications steers the data sampling and the process tracing. In my introductory, theoretical, and historical chapters, I have repeatedly underscored the need to understand the type of regime and the form of succession. Analysis I will have two goals. Firstly, identify regime type and what this **type** implies for the Chadian succession's **form**. As stated in the historical chapter and shown through my review of Chadian political stability in chapter 1, there is a relative level of division within the Chadian state; I introduced three key challenges for the upcoming succession in the introductory chapter. I will now expand upon these and reflect upon which implication they have for my three hypotheses presented in Chapter 1. These challenges are (1) intra-ethnic and family divisions, (2) military in-fighting, and (3) popular discontent and civil conflict.

5.1 The Déby regime: An established dictator

As stated in chapter 4, Déby spent the years after his “close call” in 2008 consolidating even more power and strengthening his security. His increasing security spending and campaign of strategic co-optation and repression of potential rivals were primarily enabled through resource wealth and international aid. The Chadian regime became very much defined by Déby, a man who awarded himself the honorary title of

field marshal of Chad in 2020 (Tampa, 2020), a token of his successful campaigns against Islamic terror in the Sahel region (Asala, 2020). This title was primarily symbolic and seemingly trivial. Yet, I argue that it is an illuminating example of how Déby became the personification of a sort of “warrior king”. Déby’s story was not of the statesman who became a military leader; he was a warrior turned statesman (Rosenhart, 2021) - a moment captured by his seizure of N`Djamena 1990 at the head of an army.

The regime is personalistic, republican on paper³³, but a hybrid regime that systematically uses repression and other authoritarian means; it is also highly militaristic (Hansen, 2020, p. 1). Power flows from the military and its de-facto head, which between 1990 had been Déby – a state leader who ended his days on the field of battle, almost inconceivable in the modern age. The militarized gatekeeper theory truly encapsulates how the Chadian state function; it explains the shifting and morphing of Chadian foreign policy – its entrepreneurial approach to security politics. The ruler in N`Djamena is the head of a system where his control of the capital and ability to ensure relative stability, rent flows, and crafty use of the patrimonial marketplace, provided the loyalty of his winning coalition.

What implications result from this understanding of the Chadian regime typology? Firstly, as per the literature, one should assume that personalistic regimes have a more challenging time dealing with successions when compared with regimes with more formal institutions such as one-party dictatorships (Geddes, 1999). One should expect formal succession institutions to be weak, increasing the likeliness of an informal arrangement. The abrupt end of a personalistic leader would equate to a greater vacuum, thus

³³ 33 The “republican” label is more rhetoric than actuality. Chad is a hybrid regime, one closer to the definition of hegemonic authoritarianism ((Brownlee, 2009)). This form of regime faces less competition within elections and parliament than its freer electoral authoritarian “brother”, the competitive autocracy (see Levitsky & Way, 2002).

necessitating a successor with broad elite support who can fill his gap and ensure the continuation of the gatekeeper state.

The choice of Mahamat Idriss Déby Into, late Déby`s son, means that the Chadian elites followed the hereditary logic for succession. They went beyond the institutional framework as Haroun Kabadi was sidelined, allegedly by his own choice, thus making it a de-jure coup. This steers the investigation toward informal arrangements such as primogeniture and hereditary succession. As Kokkonen & Sundell (2014) stated, the issue of autocracy is successions, both due to the insecurity of the future within elites who fear that factionalized conflict or challengers might act in the moment of uncertainty, as well as the coordination problem (Kokkonen & Sundell, 2014 pp. 435-438). As stated, within personalist autocracies, the issue of succession is often unresolved *a priori* leading to problems of uncertainty. Elites deal with these uncertainties using informal and norm-based succession procedures such as hereditary succession. To amend this, the hereditary solution and especially primogeniture are alternatives; still, while they are viable solutions, they are not free of tribulations. The Chadian case involved an informal hereditary arrangement but a break with the principle of primogeniture.

5.2 Challenges of the succession

Ethnic divisions & family rivalries

As stated Déby represented the Zaghawa or Beri, the ethnic group from the northeast of Chad in the borderlands with Sudan. Like previous rulers of Chad, Déby concentrated a major bulk of the power in Chad within his own ethnic group (Debos & Tubiana, 2017, p. 12). As Debos (2016, p. 125-127) states all Chadian regimes since independence have been characterized by the politicization of ethnicity. Despite this, tensions within the Zaghawa have been long-standing (Debos, 2016, p. 66), contenders from within

the Zaghawa group have allied with other ethnic groups and played key roles in the rebel attacks of 2006 and 2008 for instance, but also back in the early 1990s.

Despite what some Chadian news outlets could have you believe, simply being Zaghawa is not enough to guarantee privileges (Debos, 2016, p. 125). Fluid and dynamic alliances have characterized the rebel movements in recent Chadian history (Debos, 2016, p. 86-92). Within the Zaghawas three subgroups, the Bideyat, Kobe Zaghawa, the Wogi Zaghawa, and the Déby family, there have been consistent rivalries for decades. These rivalries have been mediated, played, and manipulated by Déby to cement his position and authority (Debos & Tubiana, 2017, pp. 11-13). In 2019, the UFR led by Timan Erdimi, nephew of Déby, made a credible attempt at toppling Déby but was thwarted in significant part, due to French bombardment (Crisis Group, 2019a). Both Erdimi twins, Tom and Timan - leaders of the UFR - are from Déby`s Zaghawa sub-group the Bideyat, thus highlighting the fluid and hostile landscape that reaches into the Zaghawa, and the extended Déby family.

In Chad, “geopolitics” (Tubiana & Debos, 2017) take the shape of internal geographic, ethnic, and clan-based co-optation and strategic representation within the state or other positions of power. This co-optation aims to ensure loyal regional elites while splitting potential coalitions and contenders. Despite the end of southern rule in Chad, southerners still often hold the role of prime minister or are co-opted in other ways. Co-opted figures span all regions and diverse ethnicities, highlighting the delicate and pragmatic nature of Chadian geopolitics (Tubiana & Debos, 2017)

Even within the closer family, there are potential rivalries among the Déby children; there are specific camps and camps within these, developments aided by the polygamous nature of Déby³⁴. One of these

³⁴ The number of wives late Déby had are contested, with estimates from 4 to 13 (Wax, 2006). ³⁵ Her older brother was first director of SHT (AI, 2015).

powerful camps is the Acyl network, based on the powerful Acyl family Déby married into in 2005, as part of a strategic move to save his then highly threatened rule (Wax, 2006). Déby married Mahamat Abderahim Acyl, now Hinda Déby Into, from the powerful Acyl family. The family has enjoyed significant political influence since modern Chad's early years (see Powell, 2020). Through Hinda, they have gained considerable sway within the presidential palace, arguably to the detriment of other Déby children. Hinda has - contrary to Déby's other wives - entered the limelight and truly cemented her position as the "First Lady of Chad" (Ali, 2006). In 2015 it was reported by Africa Intelligence (2015) that Hinda, had created an oil network by stacking loyal family members in strategically important positions within the state-owned oil company Société des Hydrocarbures du Tchad (SHT)³⁵. This means that the Chadian oil sector is run as a family business with Hinda at the helm (Africa Intelligence, 2015). All these points show how there are camps within both ethnic groups and closer families, the point of fluid and pragmatic alliances shines through. Similarly, to during the days of the Ottoman Empire, one must not assume that family-ties equate loyalty.

Military in-fighting

Chad's main export, military power, is a source of stability but also a potential threat to the regime. The impact of the shifting alliances and the use of rebellion to achieve goals within the logic of a politico-military arena has led to many instances of rebel contingents being integrated into the Chadian military (Debos, 2016, pp. 140-144).

There is a lack of representation in command positions, a great level of discrepancy between elite units and the ordinary army, and a troubled relationship between the general population and the defense forces (Crisis Group, 2021). The military has conflicted with militias from the Teda, a Toubou sub-group, situated in Chad's northern regions (Crisis Group, 2016). In other instances, such as in 2018, army officers

have refused to fight members of their own ethnic groups or clans when forced to fight against anti-government militias in the country (Scheele, 2022, p. 171).

Some see all these splits as representing a powder-keg, the army was never professionalized in any western sense. The army is competent abroad but violent (Debos, 2016, p. 121), and continuously accused of widespread human rights violations and war crimes (Debos, 2016, pp. 2-6). Due to its lacking meritocracy and ethnic discriminatory policies, the army's reputation is dependent on regional and ethnic background. The "untouchables" (Debos, 2016, p. 140) - men with the right connections and networks, often of backgrounds within the security services or former key rebels - enjoy impunity, to the frustration of many ordinary Chadians (Crisis Group, 2021).

The army has evident and deep cleavages (Scheele, 2022). Déby was unwilling to reform his military – despite its successes, often dominated by non-military concerns (Scheele, 2022, p. 172) - due to its embeddedness into critical sections of the Chadian society. Therefore, many fear that the break-up of the army during a succession crisis could toss the country into civil war along communal lines.

While this is undoubtedly a challenge to the Chadian army, its key to note that the security apparatus is consolidated around the much better trained and armed republican guard, the DGSSIE (Griffin, 2016, p. 902; Marchal, 2016, p. 19).

This is a point of tension, but while the regular army (ANT) is quite fractured and diverse, the DGSSIE is much more unified. It's stacked by Zaghawa loyalists, family members of the late Déby, also better funded, and its members have been led by Kaka since 2014 (Debos, 2016, p. 124). This means that the army is essentially a two-tier army, where the DGSSIE makes out the top tier, and the ANT the lower tier

(Debos, 2016, p. 124-128). If the ANT were to split, the DGSSIE - who do not answer to the chief of the army, but directly to the head of state - could respond to possible contenders and repress the ANT.

Popular discontent and civil conflict

After Déby`s nomination to run for the sixth period in early February 2021 protests erupted in the capital, these protests are a symptom of the greater level of resentment held by a broad group of the Chadian society (AlJazeera, 2021). These grievances should not be surprising, Chad is a highly kleptocratic regime, its operations are directed towards the continuation of the gatekeeper. Most Chadians see little or none, of the revenues brought in by the oil wealth pumped out of the Chadian soil, as about 46.7 % of the country`s population survive below the poverty line (Happi et al., 2021, p. 3). Popular discontent in large segments of the population - as a result of rising living conditions - led to protests in 2015 and 2016, both times these protests were repressed by the Chadian state (Debos, 2016, p. 145).

Especially evident are grievances held within the extremely poor central regions of Chad, the BEG, and Kanem regions, which have been ruled indirectly by N`Djamena through the usage of local elites (Crisis Group, 2016). These are just two of several regions, suffering from falling living conditions, made worse by the fall of global oil prices, poor harvests, and the failure of the state to ensure internal security (Crisis Group, 2016, p. 1). In eastern Chad, in areas bordering the Darfur region, with a deep history of Chad-Sudanese hostility and violence, inter-communal violence was rampant in 2019, between Arab and non-Arab groups (Crisis Group, 2019b)

In recent years the horrendous living conditions have not gotten better (Salih, 2021) and poor economic performance have been compounded even greater by the COVID-19 pandemic (Fualdes, 2021), as emergency tax cuts introduced by the Chadian state, has decreased oil revenues between first quarter 2020

and first quarter 2021 by just under 70 percent, putting Chad's economy in an extremely precarious situation (Benhaddou, 2021).

As underscored several times, Chad is finding itself at the bottom of indexes of development, wealth, and living conditions. The resource wealth and aid from the international society have done little or nothing to stem this development. They have flown into the Militarized gatekeeper state coffers, thus consolidating their rule (Debos, 2016, p. 143). This state has little concern for the "ordinary" man. Its concerns are elite groups, possible contenders, and the security demands of their international supporters. In essence, it prioritizes its survival, not development.

While this has led to much popular dissent, the opposition has been split (BBC, 2021). During Déby's 6th run for president the Wakit Tama, a coalition of opposition groups, was created. This platform represents a more united front, but despite this development, for them to threaten the gatekeeper state, they need to organize on such a scale that they would threaten: (1) control of the capital or key nodal points of the economy, (2) internal alliances, for instance by enabling key elite figures to capitalize on resentment to revise the balance of power in their favor or (3) weaken the gatekeepers internal support, for instance through delegitimizing the regime, thus making the support from abroad untenable.

Paradoxically, widespread popular discontent and the potential of a powder keg might also ensure elite-cohesion. This section has talked about the challenges of popular discontent and civil conflict. Yet, as usual in these states, fragile are often relative terms and always transformable, thus making these seeming challenges assets. International supporters and relevant internal actors might all be so incentivized – by the fear of all-out conflict - to reach stability that choosing not to "rock the boat" is the only viable choice.

5.3 Implications for the hypotheses

What do these three challenges entail for the succession? These three challenges give an opportunity to reflect on the prior hypotheses in order to further specify them, in order to make them more relevant for steering the data-collection and the eventual choice of key moments to digest. I will go through these three hypotheses piecemeal.

Hypothesis 1: “Elite-cohesion is a manifestation of internal fear as elites see the anarchy resulting from an absent leviathan as a threat to their privileged positions”

We have seen a great deal of potential upheaval within Chad, warranting a degree of internal fear. These points of potential conflict or chaos have been represented through: (1) the possibility of ethnic competition or conflict over leadership or positions of privilege and power, but also splits within the Zaghawa ethnic-ruling group and even within the extended presidential family. There are (2) potential splits within the armed forces, where some of the stability is tied to a loyal DGSSIE, who answers directly to the president, thus incentivizing a rapid transition to a new ruler. Lastly, (3) significant civilian discontent needs to be handled. Therefore, any leadership vacuum could debilitate the state’s effectiveness at repressing widespread unrest. These three points strengthen Hypothesis 1 and create some implications for how one would observe the manifestation of this hypothesis. If one were to say that internal fear played the key role, one would expect high levels of cohesion within the winning coalition, due to vested interests.

H1.2: “Elite-Cohesion is a manifestation of internal fear, and one will observe broad support and handover of power to the new leviathan among the winning coalition.”

Hypothesis 2: “Elite-cohesion came as a result of Mahamat Kaka`s legitimation from within the military ranks and the broader elites”

This hypothesis remains highly relevant given the typology and the three challenges discussed above. Given the splits and conflict potential within the army, one would assume that a chief objective of the winning coalition is to place a successor who could unite and control the military apparatus. In this light, the observation of elite-cohesion would result from Kaka`s ability to rectify some of the internal tensions within the armed forces. It also presupposes the idea that the military in Chad will be the leading institution in the transition process.

H2.2: “There will be no significant splits within the military apparatus, and this government sector will be leading in the transition process.”

Hypothesis 3: “Elite-cohesion is a feature of self-regulating and balanced internal alliances in a functioning militarized gatekeeper state.”

If there are self-regulating and balanced internal alliances in Chad, one would assume that there would be no drastic power struggles within the elite groups within the first six months. The transition would also be

less reliant on the easing of external actors and individual figures within the transition. The splits within the military, the ethnic and family-based rivalries, and the level of civilian discontent reduce the hypothesis's probability. Yet, it would also function to test the strength of the hypothesis since if elite-cohesion is a feature of self-regulating and balanced internal alliances, then these mechanics would withstand severe pressure. With these observations in mind, for H3 to be accurate, one would need to observe no internal power struggles relevance - no significant moves by members of the winning coalition or even the greater selectorate to topple the regime.

H3.2 "There will be few internal power struggles and no challenge from within the selectorate."

These specifications now steer my search for observations in following process tracing, and during my construction of a timeline. During these six months I draw upon all open sources, some of the observations, who might be of importance in other regards, are kept away, unless they are clearly linked to the succession dynamic. I therefore look for how the regime acts, within this period.

6. Analysis II: The king is dead, long live the king

This section – a causal process tracing - will be split into two sections, the first will be a description/timeline, the second a series of snapshots and a discussion of the findings. My timeline creates a comprehensive storyline of the process which allows me to analyze the temporal and sequential nature (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 81) of the Chadian case.

6.1 Timeline: 20th April to 20th of October

April

On the 20th of April, Idriss Déby succumbed to injuries received the days prior in clashes with rebels from Front pour l'alternance et la Concorde au Tchad, hereby FACT, in Mele Kanem Province (Olivier, 2021b). FACT is a recent constellation, founded in 2016, yet includes longtime rebels and politico-military figures in Chad. Mahamat Mahadi Ali, the FACT leader, has ties to the UFR group led by Déby's nephew. Yet, he is not a Zaghawa but a Gorane, the ethnic group of Hèbre (Bissada, 2021).

A military council was quickly established, and within the same day, they decided to implement a curfew, dissolve the parliament and government and seal off their borders (Harding, 2021). The head of the military council was the son of Idriss, Mahamat Idriss Déby Into, nicknamed "Kaka". The declared intention of the council is to rule for 18 months, yet both observers and local opposition groups question this claim (BBC, 2021). Kakà – a figure of relatively low profile, despite his key posts – has extensive

army experience. He has led forces in battle (Africa Intelligence, 2021a) as a general and was the head of the DGSSIE (Hansen, 2020).

Kaka first consulted with his 14, primarily military, colleagues meant to join the Kaka`s TMC. He consulted the French ambassador next, followed by representatives of the African Union, Chadian religious figures, and other Chadians of importance (Scheele, 2022, p. 175). According to Intelligence Online (2021), at approximately 13:00 local time, Kaka called President Macron. The head of the French intelligence, the DGSE, also attended the call, with his Chadian equivalent in Ahmed Nogri, the head of **the** Agence Nationale de sécurité (ANS), the Chadian intelligence service. The new ruler in N`Djamena followed his talks with France by talking with the CIA station chief in the capital N`Djamena, then Mossad contacts and Turkish state officials. These moves were two-fold: to ensure tacit support for the TMC and to use these powerful allies to pressure the Libyan warlord Khalifa Haftar to cut his support to the FACT-rebels (Intelligence Online, 2021) Kaka consulted with the French ambassador first, except those in the TMC themselves. The order of talks with dignitaries, drive home the point about France`s importance, the first to call.

On the 20th EU commission president Ursula von der Leyen also stressed Déby`s role as a key ally in the region (RFI, 2021a). The consistent appearance intelligence agencies and key international actors underscores this situation`s delicate and volatile nature and geostrategic context. Kaka, the new de facto ruler of Chad, was neither the most known nor, arguably, the most connected of Déby`s close family, yet he has reached the top; with his brother Abedlkerim as one of his closest aides (Olivier, 2021d).

Already the next day, opposition voices condemned the new TMC as a “*dynastic coup*” and expressed that “*Chad is not a monarchy.*” (BBC, 2021). Yet, in these early days, rumors of a family feud existed. On the 21st Chadian media (Abatoni, 2021) reported scuffles between Kaka and Zakaria – Kaka`s step-brother - at the presidential palace, with some sources claiming that shots had been fired.

By the 22nd of April, French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian expressed concern over Chadian stability. In this statement - mostly centered on stability and Chad's continued commitment to regional security and the G5 Sahel force - Le Drian went on to say that "*Once true stability is established, it will be the right time for the transition*" (RFI, 2021b) Even French President Emmanuel Macron, who would go onto attend Déby's funeral on the 23rd, called for the TMC to ensure "stability, inclusion and democratic transition" (AfricaNews, 2021) despite the lofty rhetoric, Macron put his weight behind the TMC as the legitimate force for this transition. According to FACT the TMC is aided by French airstrikes, the French have not verified the claim, but have stated that they do supply "*logistical support*" to the regime in N'Djamena (RFI, 2021c). Few from the MPS were willing to voice opinions on this day, yet their spokesperson described the TMC as a lesser of two evils (Toukara, 2021). Chad's most important labor union, UST, a part of the Wakit Tama coalition, also called for a general strike in response to the unconstitutional seizure of power by the TMC (Saharareporters, 2021).

On the 23rd, the FACT rebels – still in combat with the Chadian government's forces – paused their offensive to honor the late president's funeral (RFI, 2021c). This was a funeral with clear diplomatic undertones, as several key Sahelian leaders and the French president –the only Western head of state – attended it. Keen to reassure neighbors, allies, and the international community, the Chadians did not - despite rumors - call back their G5 contingent of 1200 soldiers sent abroad (JeuneAfrique, 2021).

By the 26th of April, the Transitional Military Council (TMC) had appointed a civilian prime minister, Albert Pahimi Padacke, a former ally of Déby, who previously held this post between 2016 and 2018 (Reuters, 2021a). Despite the appearance of a civilian executive, true power lies in the TMC and Kaka. While the circumstances are extraordinary, the Chadian TMC have bypassed the constitutional rules, making their move a de jure Coup d'état.

On the 27th, at least five protesters were killed in Chad, according to Amnesty International (2021). In addition to their demands for a civilian government and democratic transition, protesters also voiced their dissatisfaction with the French involvement in Chad. On the same day, Kaka held his first televised speech, calling for “an inclusive national dialogue”³⁵ (Asala, 2021a). On the 29th of April, The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) sent a fact-finding mission to N`Djamena (Tadesse, 2021). By the 30th of April, at least 700 had been arrested in N`Djamena and Chad`s second-largest city Moundou according to the UN (Larson, 2021). In addition to their demands for a civilian government and democracy, protesters also voiced their dissatisfaction with the French involvement in Chad (RFI, 2021e).

By April, the TMC was still in control, despite an ongoing FACT offensive and protests in N`Djamena and Moundou, fueled by unspent anger and opposition figures calling for protests (Asala, 2021b). The opposition has been vocal in its views of the TMC and a perceived dynastic coup. The Wakit Tama platform - a joint opposition network formed in response to Déby`s 6th election run - and the key oppositional figure and leader of the transformers, Success Masra, has been responsible for facilitating, organizing, and driving the civilian opposition (Kaoum, 2021).

May

On the 2nd of May, the nighttime curfew was lifted, as tensions somewhat dampened in the capital (Forku, 2021). On the same day, none other than Goukoni Wedei, president from 1979 until Habré ousted him in 1982 - made some key statements (EYEWITNESS NEWS, 2021). Wedei called for including rebels in the oft-cited national dialogue that the TMC promised to deliver. This day of events also saw Kaka name a transition government. He appointed 40 ministers, including a designated national reconciliation ministry.

³⁵ A recurring demand, given the political turmoil caused by popular discontent and numerous instances of rebellion (see Debos & Tubiana, 2017).

Two key figures, former rebel chief Acheick Ibn Oumar, who served as a diplomatic advisor to the late Déby from 2019, and Mahamat Ahmat Ahlabo from the opposition (France24, 2021). The European Union, a key donor to the Déby regime³⁶, visited N`Djamena on the 5th of May (Charfadine, 2021). The EU`s stance on the succession is key, as it will likely affect and shape the response and room for maneuver for other international actors such as the AU. Thus far, the TMC has repelled any severe critique from the international community, the EU among them.

By the 6th of May, the FACT rebels were – according to the Chadian TMC – repelled back to Libyan territory after taking significant casualties (Asala, 2021c). On the 9th, the offensive officially ended, and Chadian troops rolled back to N`Djamena. Kaka held meetings in Niger on the 10th of May (RFI, 2021f) and five days later, on the 15th in Nigeria (Tchadinfos, 2021a). The rationale behind both visits was twofold, firstly, to reassure their allies about Chad`s continued engagement in the G5 Sahel and their commitment to regional security, as well as to seek assurances that rebel groups would not get the freedom to roam and establish rear-bases in the border areas (RFI, 2021d). In stark contrast to their values and principles, the AU`s PSC (ISSAfrica, 2021) decided not to sanction Chad. This sets Chad apart from similar cases in Africa, highlighting the unusual leniency of the AU on the TMC (ISSAfrica, 2021).

The 19th saw new protests in the capital. Security forces used tear gas and batons to disperse the masses, and at least 30 protesters - among them, leader of the Reformist Party Yacine Abderaman Sakine – were arrested (Ousmane, 2021; Reuters, 2021a). (Tchadinfos, 2021b) reported that the Chadian transitional government had prohibited the march and added that marchers would be held responsible for the outcome. On the 20th, the AU delivered a statement understating the need to see a “democratic transition” within the 18-month transition period, adding that it “*categorically rejects any form of extension of the transition*”

³⁶ In the period 2014-2020 the EU released €542 million to Chad, through its European Development Fund (European Commission, 2019)

period” (Reuters, 2021b). This marks one of the few moments of any substantive critique between the AU and the TMC and would cause a diplomatic spat. On the same day, the IMF stated its desire to continue the venture of restructuring Chad’s debt, resulting from a request running back to January 2021 (Mohammed & Thomas, 2021).

The first scenes of simmering intra-state conflict in the wake of Déby’s death appeared on the 31st of May as soldiers from the Central African Republic – aided by the Russian Wagner Group – skirmished with Chadian soldiers. The skirmish allegedly took place on Chadian territory, and five Chadian prisoners of war were brought to the Central African Republic and executed (Pabandji, 2021).

June

On the 1st of June, emissaries from CAR visited N’Djamena to calm tensions after the skirmish between soldiers from CAR and Chadian soldiers. Yet tensions remained over comments about Chad-CAR border security, perceived as inflammatory by N’Djamena. The dynamic is further complicated by the geostrategic rivalry between Russia – deeply involved in the CAR and with alleged influence reaching its highest offices (Olivier, 2021a) – and France, Chad’s most important security partner (Pabandji, 2021). The next day both states agreed on an independent international investigative commission and work on enhancing border security (Africanews, 2021b).

On the 8th, just 4 days after the announced decision of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Wakit Tama expressed their severe disappointment with the AU on the issue of the TMC. They now see the AU and other international supporters as complicit in the coup (RFI, 2021g). The same day the ambitious political figure (see Crisis Group, 2020), Masra, was given a visa for his party, the

Transformers. It marks the legalization of the opposition party, providing him opportunities for the upcoming election after years of being unable to run for president due to legality issues (Nguemadji, 2021)

On the 11th, Africa Intelligence (2021e) reported that Chad had placed an order for 60 armored vehicles from US-UAE manufacturer The Armored Group (TAG) back in May. Despite the country's dire economic woes, the new leaders in N`Djamena see a growing need for security procurement in this volatile period and follow an ambition of rewiring their arms supplies, from mainly eastern-European suppliers to western suppliers (Africa Intelligence, 2021g).

On the 11th & 12th Francois Soudan (2021) interviewed Kaka in N`Djamena. Here Kaka reiterated the need to see the hereditary succession in Chad as sharply distinct from developments in Bamako, as events in N`Djamena were the result of unexpected and tragic circumstances. Given Haroun Kabadi's alleged refusal to take command, he had to step in (Soudan, 2021). He credited the army's professionalism and the maturity of the Chadian populace for the successful succession, which had run contrary to many Chadian experts' expectations. Kaka also reinforced the Chadian commitment to the G5 Sahel and the UN mission to Mali while communicating the need for logistical and material support from Western partners.

June also saw a continued struggle within the MPS, the former party of Déby, who before becoming a legitimate political party was the rebel group whom Déby led to seize N`Djamena in 1990. The MPS has been sidelined in the succession process (Jeune Afrique, 2021a) with a civilian prime minister, Padacke, who leads the MPS' rival party. A power struggle within the MPS has ensued in the absence of Déby. The party's general secretary Mahamat Zen Bada was a favorite for the leadership position among members of the "old guard". In contrast, members of the younger generation – among those the influential Abdelkerim, brother to Kaka and arguably second in command, according to some sources (Olivier, 2021d) – wanted

Ruth Padja Majidian in charge³⁷. This conflict culminated with the election of Haroun Kabadi on June 14th (Chambraud, 2021); according to several sources, this election was highly strategic. Kabadi is a compromise meant to mend the divide between the old and young guard within the winning coalition (24heures, 2021). Zen Bada remains in France, exiled from any influence, as Kaka pushed through new elections within the MPS despite efforts to delay the process by Zen Bada (Jeune Afrique, 2021a).

On the 15th, Africa Intelligence (2021) could report that Kaka had ordered a reshuffling within the management of the Chadian state-owned oil company SHT. The director-general of the company and his deputy are lost their jobs. The director-general is connected to the Acyl network, and his deputy was the younger brother of Hinda Déby. The departure of these Hinda loyalists marks a decrease in the power of Hinda and the so-called Acyl network (Abatoni, 2021). It is part of a greater drive to contain possible coalitions within the elites.

Only two days after SHT's reshuffling, on the 17th, it was reported that the IMF and World Bank were pressing for Glencore Inc., the raw-commodity behemoth³⁸, together with a syndicate of lenders, to renegotiate a 1 billion USD loan to the Chadian state (Payne, 2021). This development came after the Paris Club – a coalition of 22 lender countries (*Club de Paris*, 2022) – and non-member countries: India, China, and Saudi Arabia together agreed on an IMF plan to shore up a crisis-stricken Chadian economy (SWI, 2021).

³⁷ According to some sources Abdelkerim himself was a possible contender for the role (

³⁸ At the time the largest raw-commodity trader in the world (SWI, 2021)

July

Kaka traveled to his most valuable foreign backer, France, on the 5th of July, where he met the French president at the Elysée Palace in Paris. Their discussions were centered around the transition and the national dialogue to come. Kaka was joined by several key ministers, notably his powerful brother Abdelkerim. The following day, still in Paris, Kaka and his delegation met with Le-Drian, the French foreign minister (theafricareport, 2021).

On the 8th, it became known that some of the most important Chadian rebel groups, FACT and UFR, under the Erdimi brothers, had been meeting in Togo since April. The Togolese authorities played a crucial role in facilitating these talks, meant to collect demands for the national dialogue promised by the TMC (RFI, 2021i) The leaks came just seven days after an exiled relative of late Déby returned from Togo to N'Djamena, a part of a larger pattern and strategy by the TMC to allow the return and co-optation of enemies of the late Déby (RFI, 2021h)

In July, the AU and TMC came to diplomatic loggerheads (Ndikumana, 2021) as Chad refused to approve the appointment of the Senegalese diplomat Ibrahima Fall as a High Representative of the AU to Chad (DW, 2021). The AU-TMC dynamic is also made delicate because the Chairman of the AU Commission is the Chadian Moussa Faki Mahamat, hereby Faki. Faki was an ally of the former president and a significant figure in Chad with potential political punching power, having served as minister of several cabinets, including foreign minister (2008-2017) and prime minister (2003-2005) (Debos & Tubiana, 2017, p.16; AU, n.d.). His stints in office were unusually long – in a country where these positions are rarely held for more than a year (Debos & Tubiana, 2017). Yet Faki is both limited and partly chosen by

his only half Zaghawa lineage, making him a strategic choice due to both his ethnic alliances but also his lacking legitimacy as an actual challenger for the top position in Chad. Yet despite these seeming limitations, impressions of potential Faki-TMC rivalry have circulated.

The AU is also caught in a tricky balancing act between being too harsh on what it believes to be a potential powder keg and too soft on a TMC it fears might extend its 18-month stay (Koubakin, 2021). July finished with substantial protests in N'Djamena on the 29th, with slogans such as “no to monarchy” and “out with France.” The transformers party, one of the key opposition parties in Chad, played a pivotal role in organizing these protests (AFP, 2021a).

August

On the 11th of August the TMC, previously reluctant to rebel negotiations, extended an offer for rebels to join in the national dialogue and a ceasefire between the regime and the FACT group (Filseth, 2021). One of late Déby's greatest political opponents, Saleh Kebzabo leader of the Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Renouveau (UNDR) since 1992 (Hansen, 2022) were appointed to the National Dialogue Committee on the 14th. This development comes two months after two party members were included in the civilian transition government. Saleh (AFP, 2021b) commented that he supported the necessity of the TMC and stated, “*The big obstacle that was Déby is no longer there.*”

These moves by Kebzabo is an example of a previously outspoken opposition figure, endorsing both the TMC and its planned dialogue. It is also interesting given Kebzabo's role as a critical political opposition figure since he is – unlike many of the other contenders of late Déby - a southerner (Debos & Tubiana, 2017, p. 29). The Chadian TMC announced on the 22nd the redeployment of half its G5 Sahel Force contingent, equaling 600 soldiers (Africanews, 2021c); this development comes just a few months after the

TMC's stressing of their willingness to maintain their foreign operations. This choice could rest upon two motives, but likely a combination of seeking to secure their internal security in this volatile moment and to signal dissatisfaction to external stakeholders stemming from a perceived lack of commitment and sporadic critique from stakeholders such as the AU. Even France has gotten the brunt of this dissatisfaction, caused by both a reduction in its troops to the region and a feeling of faltering commitments to N'Djamena (Africa Intelligence, 2021b).

On the 26th of August, Kaka met with Mossa Al Koni, the Deputy Head of the Libyan Presidential Council, to relaunch a proposed multi-national border force (Assad, 2021). This is one of several moves attempted at securing the Chadian government's large northern flank - as achieved on its western front through negotiations with Niger earlier – as rebel groups such as FACT use the largely un-governed south-Libyan territory as a rear-base (Africa Intelligence, 2021c). On the 28th of August, the FACT rebel-group communicated their willingness to join the national dialogue (Reuters, 2021c), marking its entry into the patrimonial marketplace.

Kaka traveled to Khartoum in Sudan between the 28th-30th of August; his chief objective was reaching an agreement on border security with the Sudanese Transitional Sovereignty Council (TSC) – a key challenge given Sudan's historical role as a rear-base for several successful coup makers. These talks have not gone as smoothly as hoped by Kaka, likely due to the tumultuous past between important figures³⁹ within the TSC and the Déby clan (AI, 2021).

³⁹ Especially Vice-president Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo (Africa Intelligence, 2021d).

September

A delegation claiming to be from the UFR met with Kaka on the 6th of September in N'Djamena. The purpose of the meeting was to assure the TMC of UFR members' readiness to join in the upcoming national dialogue. Yet, Timan Erdimi, the head of UFR, dismissed the delegation as not acting with the authority of the UFR, claiming that it represented elements loyal to a rebel named Mahamat Abdelkerim Hanno, a former political advisor to the UFR who split with Erdimi (Jeune Afrique, 2021b). Erdimi has not yet been part of the talks in Togo, where there, by September 2021, had been held at least seven meetings between rebel leaders and Togolese authorities, acting as mediators between these and the TMC for setting terms for the upcoming national dialogue. This move by the TMC is part of its co-optation efforts and highlights the "divide and conquer" nature of Chadian political life. These events are further blurred by the arrival of Goukouni Wedei, former president of Chad, as he had been appointed head of the technical committee for the participation of these influential rebels in the dialogue. Wedei is arguably seeking to carve out his position in the post-Déby era (Olivier, 2021e)

The IMF again pushed private lenders to reach agreements on debt restructuring, as "A credible debt restructuring process with private creditors is needed to unlock the official financing that Chad urgently needs" (Reuters, 2021d) This marks the third considerable development within the restructuring effort and underscores the evident desire of the international community to tackle these issues swiftly.

On the 12th, Tchadinfos (Ngarndinon, 2021b) reported that Kaka had flown to Qatar that morning to meet the Qatari Emir. The meeting is a part of a diplomatic dialogue between the TMC and the Qatari state. The TMC is seeking the facilitation and funding of the upcoming national dialogue. Along with the subject of the national dialogue, the key rebel leader and chief rival of the late Déby, Timan Erdimi, were discussed. So too, was the possible restructuring of Glencore Inc.'s loan to Chad. The national dialogue is supposed to be convened in Doha, where Timan resides in exile (Africa Intelligence, 2021d).

On the 15th, forces loyal to the Libyan general Khalifa Haftar fought with FACT rebels on Libyan soil, just north of the border to Chad. According to FACT, Haftar`s forces were supported by Sudanese mercenaries, French airstrikes, and Special Forces (Ahmed, 2021)

The TMC elected a 93-member interim parliament, called the Conseil national de transition (CNT), including former rebels who were rivals or enemies of Déby. A key observation is the lack of representation of the Wakit Tama platform or any other oppositional civil society groups; inclusions were mainly restricted to politico-military elements (Jeune Afrique, 2021c).

On the 28th, a key foreign policy breakthrough occurred, as German chancellor Angela Merkel called Kaka and gave her and Germany`s support to a “credible transition process” (Africa Intelligence, 2021e). This move is partly because of the significant lobbying by Macron. Macron has also lobbied for financial assistance to the Chadian government by Germany through the EU, yet this issue is still up for discussion in Brussels. This financial support would likely mirror the budgetary aid Chad received from France in early July (Africa Intelligence, 2021e).

October

On the 2nd of October, new protests, called for by Wakit Tama, erupted over N`Djamena, with several hundred protesting around Success Masra`s party headquarters. It led to at least ten wounded civilians and one dead policeman (Reuters, 2021e). Seven days later, on the 9th, new protests erupted, met again by heavy repression (Amnesty International, 2021). It also resulted in legal action against five leaders of the Wakit Tama, with the Wakit Tama responding to these actions by promising to maintain civil obedience (Ngarndinon, 2021a). The next day on the 10th Chadian police executed a search of the offices of Success

Masra's opposition party the Transformers, these events, on three separate dates in early October, form a greater pattern of protests arranged by Wakit Tama and parties such as the Transformers, and an increasingly repressive response (see Amnesty International, 2021b; Djimhodoum, 2021).

On the 4th, the German ambassador and representatives from the EU, the UK, the US, and France were received by the Chadian foreign minister, a continuation of the developments on the 28th of September (Africa Intelligence, 2021e). The following day, Kabadi was again put in a key position, as he was selected as president of the CNT (Bendhaou, 2021a), a sign of the willingness of the TMC to strategically place loyal and contained elites at crucial positions along this transition process.

On the 13th, the lawyers of Tom Erdimi's family announced that they had referred the matter of his disappearance in Egypt in late 2020 to the UN Human Rights Committee (Bendhaou, 2021b). Tom is the missing twin brother of Timan Erdimi and was among those leading the UFR during previous attempts to topple Déby. This issue is believed to further strain the relationship between Timan and N'Djamena, making dialogue more difficult. Still, Tom could also be used as a bargaining chip to get Timan to the table and make agreements in Kaka's favor more likely.

Shakeups within the shadowy intelligence community took place on the 14th, as Kaka named a new head of intelligence in Chad, giving the position to former rebel, and newly released Baba Laddé. The co-optation and appointment of this former rebel are tied to his extensive networks in CAR and Nigeria. Laddé functions as a potential lynchpin for these volatile border areas, which the TMC fear could produce potential rear-bases for contenders to power. The appointment comes at a time of friction and uncertainty within the Chadian intelligence community, as members of the TMC are wary of a perceived encirclement by ethnically Arab leaders in the neighboring states they rely upon. Ahmed Kogri - one of the Arabs within the Chadian elites - who run the ANS has thus ended up in the crosshairs of certain elements within the winning coalition (Africa Intelligence, 2021f).

On the 16th, Glencore Inc and its co-lenders, a consortium of banks, opened talks for restructuring its 1 billion USD loan to the Chadian state⁴⁰(Payne, 2021). If these were to reach a satisfactory agreement, this would enable institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, together with key lenders such as the Paris Club and their co-lenders (Paris Club+), to finalize a debt restructuring.

By the 20th, the TMC is very much in control in N`Djamena. The TMC has been able to quickly beat the FACT-rebels, repress much of the opposition and co-opted key opposition figures, and started planning a national dialogue, to be convened in Doha. Their international partners have shown support, but to varying degrees, yet despite murmurs and signaling from N`Djamena of discontent with their level of external backing, the backing is unparalleled compared to recent coups in the region. The narrative of this succession`s unique and unprecedented nature has won evidently won through (ISSAfrica, 2021).

6.1 Snapshots and discussion of findings

The previous section has produced an extensive and comprehensive timeline that outlines the relevant observations of the first six months. In the following section, I will look more in-depth at a few key events and a broader picture. As stated in Chapter 2, my theory and case-specific expectations, formalized through a set of hypotheses, have steered my data selection thus far. In this section, I will not refrain from this; I chose to look specifically at the creation of the TMC and the three running themes of these six months. These are (1) the leniency of the international community, (2) the co-optation and repression strategies of the TMC, (3) and the role of the patrimonial marketplace. To expand upon these three themes,

⁴⁰ A substantial bulk of Chad`s total 3 billion USD debt (Payne, 2021).

I discuss them based on single events and general reflections of the process and finish this analysis by problematizing the role of Kaka as a leviathan, as promised in Chapter 1. In my concluding remarks I link my three hypotheses with the discussion and elaborate on them explicitly.

The establishment of the TMC

20th of April saw the establishment of the TMC in the immediate aftermath of the death of Déby. The TMC is the body in de-facto control of the Chadian state throughout the first six months; it is where all critical executive decisions are made. True power resides with the head of the TMC, Kaka. The move is explicitly supported by key elites within late Déby and Kaka's power base. Of those, 14 joined the TMC, but support can also be seen by power figures who either vocally supported the creation of the TMC or at least abstained from denouncing it. The TMC performed an unconstitutional coup spearheaded by Kaka. It suspended the government, legislature, and the constitution. It has also given unrivaled power to Kaka, who, seemingly tied by his 18-month timetable, can extend this period by a further 18 months (Eizenga, 2021). Yet this move and its execution were in line with the theoretical lens of the Militarized gatekeeper state and implications from the literature on autocratic succession⁴¹.

As the head of the DGSSIE, a general, de facto head of the military, and son of Déby, Kaka was an almost inevitable choice. He is well acquainted with the elites in the Chadian state⁴², with the right family bonds, and importantly a depth to his military experience. Kaka made sure to be on terms with what would become his TMC, who make up some of the most important members of his winning coalition. He ensured these were on board the project of preserving the Déby regime. Most of the regime-insiders of Déby, with some exceptions, remain relevant within this architecture. The TMC consists of various Déby-family

⁴¹ Perhaps, except for the lack of primogeniture, which will be discussed further.

⁴² Admittedly less so than his brother Abdelkerim (Olivier, 2021d).

loyalists, men close to Kaka with significant seniority within the military, security services, together with less powerful technocrats. Some key figures include Taher Erda, the head of the military intelligence, former police chief, and army chief of staff; as well as the current chief of police, Ahmat Youssouf Mahamat Itno (Olivier & Duhem, 2021; Olivier, 2021b)

Why did these members of the TMC choose to join Kaka? To answer this, I rely on a realist interpretation of how bounded-rational actors (see Fearon, 1995) operate within a leaderless gatekeeper. Within this logic, surrounded by enemies, the members of the TMC picked Kaka so rapidly to ensure the continuation of the gatekeeper. Elite-cohesion is necessary to preserve internal stability, a matter of tremendous importance to those in the winning coalition. Late Déby skillfully tied key elites to the continuation of his regime. This is reflected in the chosen men of the TMC and later strategic appointments within both members of the late president's winning coalition and the wider selectorate. Ensuring a smooth succession cannot be underplayed as an ambition of the winning coalition and the coopted elites within the selectorate. Their fortunes - often gained through meticulous planning and work⁴³ over the years and often decades - rely on the regime's continuation. The elites, therefore, have high vested interests in finding a viable successor. Still, they must navigate the process as possible splits caused by issues of coordination (Kokkonen & Møller, 2020) that potentially causes a succession crisis. Haroun Kabadi, according to the official narrative, refused the position. Like other observers (Olivier & Duhem, 2021), I doubt he had much choice in this matter. He is not a legitimate successor; he lacks military experience and the right family and political background. Kabadi, as I will elaborate on later, is a crucial piece, yet he is no king.

The importance of hereditary arrangements and correct lineage is further underscored by the malevolent circulation and instrumentalization of rumors meant to sow doubt about Kaka's paternal origins (Africa Intelligence, 2021a). There are some key reasons why Kaka was specifically picked in favor of any of his

⁴³ Often through corruption, patrimony, and other means, often seen as highly immoral.

siblings. Kaka represents - like his younger brother Abdelkerim – the “young guard” within the presidential family and the Chadian elite⁴⁴. According to some inside sources, the Déby wished for this generation – a generation with vastly more opportunities for foreign experiences and training before their N’Djamena tenures - to take over (Olivier, 2021). In contrast to his older stepbrother Zakaria, Kaka is a battle-hardened veteran, having, for instance, led the crushing victory against the Erdimi brothers at Am-Dam in 2009 (Africa Intelligence, 2021a).

Zakaria is a colonel but has not seen the frontlines like Kaka, lacking the same level of legitimacy within the military apparatus. Kaka’s younger brother Abdelkerim, who has taken a vital role in the succession and within the new presidential palace. He makes up for some of Kaka’s charismatic shortfalls, working as a diplomatic tool for opening new and continuing existing alliances and deals (Olivier, 2021). Kaka has a legitimate claim founded on the belief in his and his loyalists’ ability to defeat the challengers to the regime. These points underscore the need to understand the militaristic nature of the Chadian state. As I stated in the introduction, personalist regimes have charismatic rulers who create a sort of legitimacy vacuum as they depart. This supposed vacuum has been effectively filled by his son Kaka, giving credence to the earlier reflections, where I discussed the need to see legitimation as a broader phenomenon. In the case of Chad legitimation is clearly tied the ability to operate the militarized gatekeeper-state.

The oldest Déby child, Brahim Idriss Déby, was allegedly a favorite to be formally named as successor - causing rifts inside the family. Brahim died in a Paris car park in 2007 (France24, 2008), and Déby never named a successor. Still, I argue that Kaka is the closest one comes to a designated successor, as several moves in his career arguably led to his current position. Kaka’s status as an heir is strikingly similar to the case of Bashar Al-Assad in Syria. He was not named as a formal successor, yet the positions and experience he gained paved his way as arguably the only viable candidate to ensure a smooth succession

⁴⁴ Older Déby children, as well as a large segment of the MPS, represent the so-called “old guard” within the Chadian elites (Olivier, 2021).

(Brownlee, 2007; J. Stacher, 2011; J. A. Stacher, 2007; Yates, 2021) Bashar, like Kaka were groomed informally through his placements in the military. Hafez Al-Assad knew that his death could cause a succession crisis, in his similarly personalistic and minority led state (Yates, 2021, p. 456-457).

Kaka holds the sway of the military establishment, yet Zakaria showed signs of discontent, as there were reports of scuffles on the day after the TMC`s inception. Since then, these tensions have been hidden outside the public`s view and most likely dealt with through the distribution of rents. The Zakaria-Mahamat rivalry has been long-lasting; back in 2020, Zoom Tchad (2020) could report that the Chadian first lady Hinda stepped in as temporary head of state for a sick Déby. According to Zoom Tchad`s sources (2020), neither Zakaria nor Kaka were chosen, a tactical choice to reduce the immediate risk of succession conflict.

In the early days of the succession, many speculated that both Abdelkerim and Zakaria would represent challengers to Kaka (Abatoni, 2021; Olivier, 2021d), but these six months, we have seen that these apparent cleavages have been amended. As I will show, these issues are likely solved through the power sharing vehicle, referred to as the patrimonial marketplace. His powerful brother Abdelkerim has been included, as one of Kaka`s closest aides, often traveling with the new ruler on essential missions. His deeper connections and diplomatic abilities (Olivier, 2021d) allow the regime to utilize its delicate “divide-and-conquer” strategy, as it gives the regime significant diplomatic and military legitimacy.

The immediate threat emanated from the FACT-rebels and their offensive, but also, as shown, there are other potential challengers lurking in the shadows. The events of the 20th of April are strikingly like those of the rise of Joseph Kabila in Congo (see Stearns, 2012) there was a clear external threat and thus a genuine fear of a powder-keg within a winning coalition with relatively uniform goals and ambitions. The causal conditions of the situation create a perception of a powder-keg, tossed into a sudden state of nature, with no central authority. As they believe to be on the verge of chaos they submit to this new leviathan.

Yet, this leviathan-theory have a few weaknesses, highlighted in both Kabila and Bashar`s cases. They had expectations of a weak leader, whom they could control. They did not see the need for a leviathan in the strict Hobbesian sense, but rather a manager. The elites failed as both leaders removed their initial backers – they were chosen as managers and became leviathans.

The agreement within the TMC was a necessary condition for the international backers. After ensuring that his TMC co-members were backing the move, Kaka ensured international support. As stated, numerous times, France is the most important foreign backer. It should not, therefore come as a surprise that the French were first in line on the 20th. Kaka did not only brief the French ambassador, but also Macron, and the head of the DGSE, by phone. He also briefed the CIA station chief in the capital, the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, and Turkish officials. Less certain about how invested his father`s foreign backers were, and with FACT “knocking on their doors”, he made sure to communicate the need for stability and support. Kaka know the importance of the DGSE, their contact runs deep, it was after all a DGSE operative that helped Déby seize power in 1990 (Hansen, 2020).

In the early days of the succession, the TMC`s willingness to continue security operations as usual, was stressed – the new regime recognized the need to communicate to their backers that supply would continue. The regime knew that it needed to convince backers of their ability to uphold the status quo. The TMC was clearly successful, met by an understanding tone by France, the US, and muteness from actors with a trend of heavy critique of African Coups⁴⁵. Both the French president and foreign minister stressed the stability of Chad in the first week of the succession. Despite Macron`s mentioning of democratic values, in his remarks on the day of Déby`s funeral, his emphasis was certainly on the first part of his statement – stability.

⁴⁵ AU, the EU most notably.

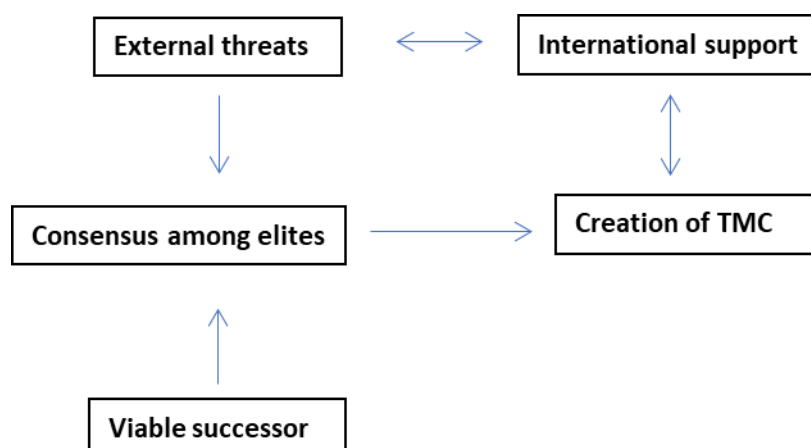
What do these observations entail? The Militarized Gatekeeper is reasserting its international legitimacy, and thus assuring international support, under a new leader. This development was dependent on the success of the previous events, namely the creation of a TMC. Without a legitimate successor who the international backers would see as both viable internally and internationally, these developments would likely unfold differently. This is key, the method of process tracing allow one to identify causal conditions and causal chains, where, if one part of the chain were missing or came at different time or place, then the outcome (Y) might differ entirely (Blatter & Haverland, 2012).

Legitimacy must again not be seen in any Weberian sense, as part of the of the Militarized Gatekeeper state. In this light, legitimacy is tied to an successors ability to uphold the preexisting social contract between the ruler and his winning coalition. This legitimacy is needed for international supporters to know that this new ruler can continue operations as usual and uphold the stability of the state, and its international commitments. An historic example can be drawn from relatively recent Chadian history, Déby himself almost fell in 2008, and the French were according to (Hansen 2017) fine with letting the Erdimi-Nour alliance seize N'Djamena, as their felt that Déby had outplayed his usefulness, and were now more hassle than gain. As Erdimi and Nour squabbled over who were to rule and how a new regime would look, the French, in the eleventh hour, decided to push the rebels back.

In line with the thinking of causal conjunction and causal chains (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, pp. 94-97). A series of causal conditions worked in tandem to produce the creation of the TMC, firstly the existence of an immediate external threat - the FACT rebels, in addition to the underlying political and social tensions within the Chadian society, worked together to create a tremendous incentivizing effect for a rapid succession. The swift consensus reached within the winning coalition, without any delays to consider more deeply who and how to run the succession given the abruptness of Déby's death point is explained by two aspects. The TMC became an emergency response to both external and internal threats and created a causal chain where the existence of a sufficiently experienced and legitimate successor led to an agreement

within the broader winning coalition. Both the members of the TMC but also essential figures from outside the TMC who supported the seizure of power either explicitly or implicitly saw this as a necessary development given the precarious security situation. Kakas extensive French correspondences during the early hours work as a smoking gun (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, pp. 115-117), it is a key observation due to its temporal dimension, as well as its clear links with the other observations and reflections. It shows how important Chad remain on its geostrategic agenda. Yet, even smoking guns are not fool-proof evidence (Blatter & Haverland, 2012, p. 117), they only become, when they exist in conjunction with several other pieces of evidence. France is the foreign stakeholder which is the easiest to prove as a backer of the regime. Its importance in N`Djamena is also striking.

Paradoxically the looming security crisis gave the TMC its right to existence. Still, this should not come as a surprise to those acquainted with the instrumentalization and augmentation of apparent weakness, so-called fragility.



During the discussion above we have clearly seen the strength of both H1 and H2. H1 has strong explanatory power for the appearance of elite-cohesion, while H2 strongly explain the choice of ruler, through a broader understanding of legitimacy. All these three hypotheses will be discussed further in the concluding chapter.

The lenient backers

As shown above, this process hinged on the approval of key foreign backers. This was clearly achieved, as shown by the unusually understanding stance on the TMC; by both France, the US, and later both the AU and ECCAS. This leniency is unprecedented, as already stated, the response stands in stark contrast to those applied to Mali, Burkina Faso, or Guinea. But why? The French have been leading in shaping this international response, seen in the French president's extensive lobbying within the EU and in his contact with the German chancellor. The international supporters are motivated by the geostrategic value of Chad seen again by the rhetoric seen on the day of Déby's death, not just by the French but by for instance, the EU, a number of African leaders and the Chinese (Jingxi, 2021; RFI, 2021a).

The realization that a faltering Chad would both mean a reduction in regional security operations, as well as the potential for an internal crisis, would proliferate within the fragile Sahel region. This perspective was arguably reinforced by the developments in Mali and Burkina Faso in 2021, with coups and strained relations with both countries (Olivier, 2022). In connection to the prior statement of the smoking gun, this rhetoric, and actions by France work as confessions (Blatter & Haverland, p. 117). A smoking gun is not sufficient in understanding the motivation of actors, meaning that one must rely on other evidence for this

venture. In relation to the smoking gun, which were the French approach on the 20th, we have seen the repeated willingness to back up the TMC. The rhetoric can not be mistaken

Déby did in some senses co-opt his international backers during his reign. He built a regime, in which regime security became embedded in the regional security architecture, in such a way that his security became intertwined with the fates of the greater region. This allows one to explain the willingness of the international community to look past very overt measures of repression, despite reports by organizations such as Amnesty International, Transparency International, Reporters sans frontières⁴⁶ and Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2021).

The international community's willingness to look past the autocratic style of Chad, its human rights violations and rampant repression is evident and is not a new phenomenon. A series of events that underscores this, is the willingness of the IMF, and World Bank in coalition with leading economies and lender-nations in pushing private debtors to restructure Chadian debt and their own willingness to extend credit to the faltering state. This is an effort driven much by the lobbying the great powers, such as the French and Americans, but it's also a symptomatic of a greater recognition within the international community that security concerns matter. This case has underscored how international politics is still greatly defined by realpolitik. The last and interesting dynamic that one sees through these six months is the use and manipulation of democratization in the branding of both the regime and the opposition. As noted earlier, rebels have historically been skilled and diligent in their efforts to fuse democracy to their driving motivations during their attempts to seize the capital. Late Déby himself rose up as a champion of democracy, yet as I have argued and will do further, this explains and is part of the logic of how hybrid regimes like the Chadian one, use democratic institutions, language and signaling both in their co-optation and repression efforts, but also to legitimize their rule with their international backers. This hybridity is

⁴⁶ Cited in the prior chapter.

therefore a necessity to this form of state, since it is reliant upon, not being necessarily well-liked⁴⁷, but acceptable and politically viable for their backers. As I will go onto show further down, repression and co-optation is the crux of the TMC's strategy, and embedded in this strategy is the strategic moments of "giving in". By shrewdly deciding to, for instance, legalize the Transformers led by the popular Masra, to reduce pressure internationally. It allows international backers to excuse or rationalize their operations, as well as to reduce internal tension. The latter is harder to trace the effects of, the Wakit Tama did certainly not reduce its drive to challenge the TMC, but they have also continued to be effectively side-lined, as I show below. The international community, meanwhile, has been unusually patient and understanding of the TMC, but this opportunity is arguably made possible by these choices that lay in the flexibility of the hybrid regime in N'Djamena. As I will go in to further, the Chadian regime has been diligent in its use of co-optation. Co-optation is a valuable tool for regime survival in Chad, such as in most other autocracies (see Geddes et al., 2018; Gerschewski, 2013; Mesquita & Smith, 2011) choice of a superficial acceptance of certain segments of the opposition and a degree⁴⁸ of restraint in its response has been tied to its marketing itself as a legitimate actor. As part of its commodification of military projection, it has attempted to whitewash its "brand" in face of international scrutiny. Still, the fact remains that in regard to external stakeholders the TMC uses concessions and co-optation also to gain favor among its allies. The TMC is constrained by its backers and has adapted its unique character to meet this fact. But as we have seen also in these six months, the TMC is very aware of its own geostrategic importance and uses strategic redeployment and aggressive diplomacy to reiterate their importance and to ease international dissent. The redundant "subject-object" narrative of old, which refers to the Chadians as puppets has been totally repelled during these months. The TMC need the backers, but the backers certainly do need them too – it's a marriage of convenience not of love.

⁴⁷ Arguably these regimes are rather often headaches for international policy makers.

⁴⁸ It's key to point out how «degree» must be seen as relative, as one could hardly explain many of the horrific actions of the Chadian repression of civil society voices as portraying "restraint" in most senses.

The Wedei challenge

While most political actors outside of Kaka himself find themselves either repressed or co-opted, depending on the strategic calculations made from the “pink palace”⁴⁹, some can seemingly renegotiate these on their own initiative. Goukkouni Wedei is a case of the latter. By his statements on the 2nd of May, Wedei challenged Kaka’s hardline stance against the FACT group. By underlining the grave danger that the Chadian state would face if rebel groups were left out and war became the sole option, he attempted to tilt the TMC into a diplomatic route. This diplomatic gamble by Wedei is interesting. It has since come to define and is also symptomatic of the prudent approach that the TMC has taken in the face of former and currently operating rebel leaders. With subsequent talks in Togo, for rebels to formulate their stance on the upcoming national dialogue. Wedei holds a special position within the political landscape of Chad. The former rebel - son to the traditional leaders of the Chadian Toubu and former co-leader of Frolinat⁵⁰ - has become a statesman, enjoying the courting of several relevant players within the highest echelons of the Chadian state (Olivier, 2021). He is both a former President before Håbre drove him out in 1982, but he is also Teda and a northerner. His transformation from rebel, to president, and then to experienced statesman has given him much respect (EWN, 2021). He can ease tensions within his native region plagued by civil strife, engage in talks with rebel groups currently exiled, and has upheld his links with the regime in N’Djamena. He has thus become an asset to the regime, and a centerpiece of the TMC’s diplomatic overtures to the rebels, especially in northern Chad.

Wedei also pushed the narrative of a security vacuum in the face of late Déby’s absence, thus seeking to legitimize the TMC’s rule while simultaneously going for an inclusive national dialogue. Wedei is positioning himself wisely, to maintain his influence through the TMCs ability to keep stability and as an

⁴⁹ The presidential palace in N’Djamena (Soudan, 2021).

⁵⁰ The group that the three most important current Chadian rebel leaders come from (Olivier, 2021).

asset to the succession. What Wedei`s example highlight, is how certain political actors within the selectorate operate to carve out their positions, through the patrimonial marketplace of the Chadian state. This room of maneuver is enabled by the uncertainty and destabilizing of the former order, and the need to consolidate under a new one.

The road of cooptation: the carrot

So far, we have only briefly touched on the role of co-optation and repression. As stated above the elite-cohesion within the winning coalition and certain members of the selectorate is a result of vested interests. But what about those who do not have vested interests in the regime`s continuation, and who do perceive costs to outweigh gains? This is where a specific strategy comes to use, namely co-optation and repression.

Co-optation is a strategy of tying the strategically relevant actors to the regime elite and its survival (Gerschewski, 2011, p. 22). As Bueno de Mesquita & Smith (2011, p.) explains it, one must tie members of the “*selectorate*” to the fate of the “*winning coalition*”. Throughout these six months, we have seen repeated instances of this happening, but they`re also observations of already co-opted elites who were tied to the regime prior to the succession. At every turn the TMC and Kaka have effectively coopted or repressed rivals and former allies. True to the nature of hybrid regimes the Chadian state effectively strangled opposition voices and challengers through formal institutions. The regime has strategically coopted, and thus split the opposition at every opportunity such as through the establishment of the civilian government the CNT and most likely this is the strategy that is aimed at for upcoming national dialogue. In Chad, as in other regimes of hybridity, co-optation happens often happens through formal channels such as elections and legislatures but also through informal channels, in the neo-patrimonial marketplace. Corruption, clientelism, and patronage are the hallmarks of these regimes and their co-optation efforts. Given Chad`s already mentioned high level of corruption, this is likely a symptom of the role that corruption plays in stabilizing these kleptocratic regimes (Gerschewski, 2011, p. 22).

I argue that this early challenge by Wedei marked a shift in the TMC's strategy; Wedei is a relevant elite figure used to coopt disloyal vassals as part of the strategy of cooptation. Since the 20th of April, the TMC and Kaka continued late Déby's two-lane approach of cooptation and repression. This cooptation has been observed at several key moments of the succession. The Chadian regime used repression and co-optation in almost every major political decision in these six months. As argued in the literature (see Pepinsky, 2014, pp. 631653) the formal institutions within autocracies become tools for elites to hold power; in the case of the transition, they have been a key part of the cooptation efforts. The appointment of the new civilian prime Padacke, and the appointment of Saleh Kebzabo - one of, if not the greatest political rival to late Déby - on the 14th of August, exemplify this approach. Another case of particular interest is the appointment of Mahamt Ahmat Ahlabao, an opposition heavyweight, to the post of justice minister (Africanews, 2021)

Lastly, the case of Haroun Kabadi, the man who according to the constitution should be ruling Chad, shows how cooptation directly relates to its opposite, repression. Kabadi's appointments are symptomatic of how the Chadian regime exploit actors with reduced power-potential, and how fluidity and flexibility in the alliance structure often make the ethnic, geographic, and family ties blurrier than what one might assume at first sight. Kabadi stepped out of the de-jure line of succession, as he immediately refused to take the helm and have since put his weight behind the TMC. This reflect both his reduced role, being an MPS outsider and lacking the military backing of a figure like Kaka, but Kabadi navigates this terrain by utilizing his position to both cements himself in the transitional government and allowing the TMC to use him in a bid to limit or contain possible contenders. This is part of a strategy of repression, which I will expand upon further below, yet already here it's key to state that this move is part of what Frantz (2018, p. 46) refers to as coup-proofing, through splitting possible coalitions within the regime.

Dividing through repression: the stick

The co-optation approach is symbiotic with the other side of this Janus-faced greater strategy used by the Chadian state, namely repression⁵¹. The co-optation of people such as Kabadi is not only part of a drive to win over these possible contenders and by including them in relevant positions of the new regime, but they are also meant to contain and repress others. Such as containing and weakening the MPS, done by reducing their role in the early period of the transition, by both coopting oppositional figures and strategically placing some in key positions. While leaving members of the MPS out in the cold. The MPS were also shocked by the election of an opposition party leader, in Padacke, as civilian prime minister, as well as the addition of many technocrats with little to no real political ambition. These moves together highlight the dual strategy of repression and cooptation, as the cooptation of some equates to the repression of others. This is a delicate balance, and as I will show, the MPS have not been totally left out of the succession. Yet their power and eventually, in July their leadership has been steered by the new ruler in N'Djamena.

This strategy of repression takes a different form depending on whom is targeted, and one can divide these targets into three groups: (1) the politico-military opponents, made up of former rebels, such as the (in)famous rebel Timan Erdimi; (2) the civilian political opponents, such as Masra or leaders of other political parties or relevant civilian bodies such as the Wakit Tama, and lastly (3) we have the civilian population. The two first groups are repressed similarly, by either being left out of the transition, forced into exile, or arrested⁵². The former MPS general secretary has been excluded from the transition, just one

⁵¹ Repression is not new to the Chadian state but rather a constant, after the fall of oil prices and resulting economic decline and popular discontent the Chadian state met dissent with severe repression (see Amnesty, 2017).

⁵² Political assassinations are a distinct possibility but are no credible reports of such happening during the six-month period.

example of the TMC`s efforts to weaken the “old guard” and to further control the MPS through the interference in the new MPS elections (Jeune Afrique, 2021a).

The eruption of protests is not a wholly new phenomenon in Chad, yet it truly remerged in the wake of Idriss Déby`s 6th and last presidential months running up to his death and has since then continued as dissatisfaction with the TMC`s unconstitutional seizure of power continues. These expressions of discontent have been mostly met by fierce repression, none of the Wakit Tama members have been included in any substantive way in the transition. This differing approach between the civil society and those who form part of the so-called selectorate, further highlight the need to understand Chadian politics as a domain in which the civilian is excluded. As stated in Chapter 3, the social contract does not extend to those who are not enmeshed in the elites or key figures with the key societal groups.

Auction in the patrimonial marketplace

The “carrot and stick” are part of a greater “divide and conquer” strategy, one which late Déby, especially in his latest years, truly mastered (see Hansen, 2013). The end of Déby momentarily weakened the Chadian regime and highlighted an exposed gatekeeper, as a response the TMC and Kaka have decided to choose a more conciliatory approach, like how late Déby acted after his almost toppling in 2008. This shows how the repression and cooptation dynamic is affected by the balance of power and how consolidated the regime in N`Djamena is. When the Chadian regime is gravely threatened, and the Militarized Gatekeeper state is “out of balance” - for instance, due to its inability to shore up its border areas or inability to uphold the internal alliances, due to rent-flow mismanagement or other grievances – it must increase its co-optation efforts. This means that the stability of the regime correlates with the price of “rents” or other privileges accessible through the patrimonial marketplace. The disrupting effects of the succession and the potential for a crisis have caused political actors within Chad to renegotiate the social contract between ruler and selectorate, as there is a form of “sale” in the patrimonial marketplace. This highlights the role of

this marketplace as a highly effective power sharing vehicle, Wolford (2016) is right in his assessment that successions do increase power-sharing. Yet, seeming effectiveness of the patrimonial marketplace it is key to note that its premise is centered around rent-flows, if they stop, the market breaks down – the “patrimonial traders” grab their guns.

Kaka – a leviathan or mediator?

Like in the cases of both Congo and Syria, one could ask if this idea of a leviathan is overstating the power of Kaka. I argue that this view is reasonable, in line with (artikkel om contested og established) regimes; after succession end up as either consolidated or contested regimes. The gatekeeper has been exposed and has had to resort to an intensified use of the patrimonial marketplace to secure loyalty among those not sufficiently tied to the regime. It has thus broadened the winning coalition at the expense of Kaka. Close family members of Kaka, such as Abdelkerim has taken a larger role in the regime, admittedly at the detriment of other family members. Yet, I still argue that the current regime is less personalistic than during Déby. What we observe is a more contested autocracy, but still, one closer to a dynasty, with Kaka at the top, enjoying unrivaled power; but still, like his father (Scheele, 2022), he needs to play the role of mediator as much as leviathan. With time (see Abramson & Rivera, 2016) one might still wonder how established of a dictator Kaka may become, time may be on his side.

7. Concluding remarks

This thesis has studied how the Chadian regime dealt with the question of succession during, and how and why we saw elite-cohesion during the first six months after Déby's death. It explains how and why one saw a clear trend of elite-cohesion, marked by a willingness of key members of the winning coalition of Déby to re-consolidate the regime under his son Kaka. This elite-cohesion relied upon international backing, but Kaka's effectiveness as a successor was also a significant factor in this smooth succession.

My lens, in which the Chadian state operates according to the logic of a Militarized Gatekeeper state, proved demonstrably valuable when assessing the first six months of the Chadian transition. Perhaps most noticeable is the impetus to uphold the relevant internal alliances through the strategy of co-optation and repression. This divide-and-conquer strategy is tied to the hybrid nature of the Chadian state. This hybridity allows it to use informal and formal institutions to tie relevant elites and oppositional figures to the continuation of the Chadian regime. For the upcoming national dialogue, the Chadian regime went on an offensive diplomatic path to ensure sufficient funding, as it knows that rent management is necessary to buy the loyalty of possible contenders. Kaka has undoubtedly learned from his father, who convened just a similar dialogue in 1993, to please international audiences, only to use the occasion to splinter his opposition (Azevedo, 1998, Chapter 3)

In Chad, "going out" has become synonymous with taking up arms (Debos, 2016). The regime during Déby, and now under Kaka, through his policies of co-opting and reintegration of former rebels, made violence a legitimate way to increase one's value in this patrimonial marketplace. While this marketplace is always present in the Chadian political context, these six months have shown that a weakened regime and exposed gatekeeper incentivize key figures - included in the Hobbesian social contract - to renegotiate their positions. This dynamic is driven by the regime, which due to its security vulnerabilities, realizes that it

needs to compromise and accommodate certain contenders to the detriment of others. There has therefore been an ongoing auction in the patrimonial marketplace, and this dynamic of renegotiation shows how the level of consolidation and perceived stability of the Chadian regime negatively correlate with the price of “positions” or “rents” within this marketplace. Just as in the aftermath of Déby’s near toppling in 2008, the marketplace has experienced a “sale”. Yet, like in 2008 and beyond, if one found oneself within the ranks of the repressed rather than the co-opted, life could become extremely tough. The patrimonial marketplace is a harsh, unforgiving, and secluded arena - it favors the bold, lucky, and clever.

My three hypotheses aimed to assess if elite-cohesion could be best explained by (1) the need for a new leviathan due to internal fears, (2) the legitimacy of Kaka, which he derives from the military or (3) if the elite cohesion is truly the mark of a functioning gatekeeper state in which internal alliances are self-regulating.

I argue that Hypothesis 3 is the furthest from delivering a sufficient answer. Hypothesis 1 do hold credence, but to see Kaka as a leviathan neglects the complex nature of his rule. The new Chadian regime is, to a higher degree, reliant on several key figures at the top; while Kaka is the head of operations, his younger brother Abdelkerim still holds much sway but also accommodates some of the competency shortfalls of Kaka. To say that we see the emergence of a Déby dynasty would not be outlandish, yet the longevity of this dynasty, I cannot predict. The winning coalition has also been widened during this succession, meaning that the regime in N’Djamena is less consolidated than prior. Hypothesis 2 also delivers solid explanatory power. As stated in my introduction, these two hypotheses are complementary; but while I initially believed them to compete for credence, they harmonize. While Hypothesis 1 explains the primary rationale for elite-cohesion, as internal fear played a key role in rallying the winning coalition. Hypothesis 2 amends the coordination problem and the essential “question of who succeeds”. Kaka’s legitimacy within the Chadian winning coalition and parts of the selectorate is derived from his experience and control of the military. This is in line with what this study has repeatedly shown. True power in the

Chadian state does not lie in formal institutions or the political domain but rather in the realm between the military and the political and through the manipulation of formal and informal arrangements. Chad is indeed a state characterized by the rule of the politico-military class. Within this class, Kaka is king.

Another key takeaway from this analysis is how the civilian is disenfranchised from political life. Per the Militarized Gatekeeper theory, the ordinary man does not figure in the Hobbesian social contract. It is accessible only to those who have climbed the ladder of the politico-military figures or other elites. Civil society has been excluded entirely from the transition, it has been heavily repressed and has only been met by compromises of insubstantial value. These compromises are arguably - rather than an attempt to please the populace - meant for international audiences and tied to the political feasibility of backing this highly authoritarian and repressive regime.

A unique case?

In introduced this as unique case, the unique nature of the case was a key motivator for my quest to understand this case. Yet, as I also stated in the concluding parts of my opening chapter, this uniqueness can certainly be problematized. Certain elements of the Chadian case are clearly unique, such as the nature of Déby's death, the first state leader to die in battle since the mid-19th century. Much of the characteristics of the regime, which I have attempted to encapsulate through my theory of the Militarized Gatekeeper state. I do not find any comparisons in which this degree of militarization and extraversion is as high. Yet, the entrepreneurial and pragmatic nature of Chadian security policy and its leveraging of regional security vulnerabilities to both repel critique and justify support can be seen in the cases of Rwanda and Uganda.

An uncertain future: Future research and policy implications

The international community and western powers, such as France, the United States, but also organizations such as the European Union and the African Union must ask themselves how tenable a continued reliance

upon authoritarian regimes to secure geostrategic goals is in the long term. For the upcoming national dialogue, the Chadian regime went on an offensive diplomatic path to ensure sufficient funding, as it knows that rent management is necessary to buy the loyalty of possible contenders. I do not doubt the ability of foreign stakeholders to continue their effective support to the Chadian regime, nor the ability to turn a blind eye to one of the poorest and most repressive states in the world. If the geostrategic impetus trumps the agenda, as it has thus far, western policymakers will elect to be swayed by the democratic touting and window dressing of this hybrid regime. It's evident how these external stakeholders - princely France - have played a pivotal part in the formation and continuation of an African gatekeeper. These foreign stakeholders have been a key facilitator of illiberal state-building, within a state in which the civilian is largely irrelevant and where development is not even stagnating but rather deteriorating. The ire of many civilians who take to the streets of N'Djamena and other cities should be of no surprise, the link between the "king" in N'Djamena and the "kingmaker" in Paris still exists. The question of how and why these gatekeepers persist in places such as Chad, over 50 years after independence, the truth is that we, the outside, is not willing to. The fact that we can see parallels between the Chadian security strategies and the Rwandan and Ugandan reiterate the need for thorough policy discussions, and future research. Lastly, the upcoming dialogue and the alleged willingness of the younger guard to seek a more conciliatory route gives some hope. despite Déby's many faults, he was less brutal than Håbre. One can hope that this generation signals a positive evolution for the Chadian population, despite my and many others' doubts. If this generation within the regime means any substantive change or just mark the next band of democracy-touting pragmatists, remains to be seen. As I see it many questions, with critical and real-world implications, remain both unanswered and in reality, unasked.

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