**Synopsis of implemented changes**

Once again, we would like to thank all three Reviewers for their speedy review of our manuscript. In the following, we describe in detail how we revised our manuscript in the light of the Reviewers’ suggestions. We address each comment in the chronology of the reviews.

**Reviewer 1**

*Theoretical Framework*

Reviewer 1 has the impression that the decision-theoretic model raises more questions. In fact, the restructuring of our section *Theory and Expectations* was stimulated by comments of Reviewer 2 and 3 in the first round of reviews. We have the impression that our manuscript has substantially benefitted from these changes especially in terms of clarity and structure. Therefore, we decided to generally keep the decision-theoretic model in the manuscript. In detail, however, we agree with Review 1 that some aspects could be presented better. We have revised our manuscript with regard to these points of criticism.

Precisely, Reviewer 1 points out that the utilities remain unclear in our model. In fact, Reviewer 1 is correct that we do not know how much the autocrat knows about the states of the world and it is unlikely that the autocrat has full information. At the same time, we do not expect them to have comprehensive information, nor is this a requirement of the model. It is much more about making a decision with the available information. To clarify this point, we added a sentence to the first paragraph on page 5 of the manuscript.

In this regard, Reviewer 1 also questions, whether margins are a suitable measure for the contestation of elections and whether these are available before the elections. It is correct, that the actual margins are available only after the election. Still, the autocrat has information sources that provide information about the expected margins before the elections (e.g., previous margins of national elections and margins in elections at sub-national elections, surveys and opinion polling). We added a short explanation in the section on *Data* (page 10).

*Hypothesis 6*

Reviewer 1 correctly points out, that we included a new hypothesis in the manuscript. It is true that we treated the GDP (% Service) in the previous versions as a control variable. The underlying logic of the original version of the manuscript was to address only election-related variables. However, the restructuring around the decision-theoretic model highlights costs associated with shutdowns. In the text on the composition of the economy, we highlight different costs associated with shutdowns. Therefore, the idea behind the variable arises from the decision-theoretic model and we decided to treat it as such by including a hypothesis. We are sorry that this change was not communicated in the first synopsis.

*Robustness of the Findings*

Reviewer 1 suggests to increase the transparency concerning the robustness of our findings. In the first round of reviews, we added the results of the robustness-checks to the online appendix. We now highlight the availability of these information in the revised manuscript.

Furthermore, the Reviewer suggested to include alternate model specifications from the previous round of reviews at least to the online appendix and discuss the robustness of our findings in greater detail. We agree, that the suggested variables are commendable from the perspective of research on autocracy. In fact, we reran the analysis with the latest version of the QOG-dataset and report and discuss the results in online appendix A3 which is now referenced in the manuscript in footnote 13.

**Reviewer 2**

Reviewer 2 had no further comments. We appreciate the feedback in the first round and the affirmative decision.

**Reviewer 3**

*Limitations*

Reviewer 3 suggests to go deeper into the discussion of limitations in the conclusion of the manuscript. We are very restricted by the word limit. However, we tried to add limitations in a very aggregated manner to the conclusion.