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Journal of Democracy, Volume 24, Number 3, July 2013, pp. 104-115
(Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/jod.2013.0040

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ALGERIA VERSUS THE ARAB SPRING

Frédéric Volpi

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What accounts for continuing authoritarian success in the Arab world today? In light of the “Arab Spring,” explanations of “authoritarian resilience” in the region clearly need to be revised. Yet it is important to remember that many of these authoritarian regimes have weathered the storm well. As Sean Yom and Gregory Gause recently noted in these pages, most of the region’s monarchies have so far remained unbowed by the winds of revolutionary change.1 It is much harder—though not impossible—to identify Arab republics that have not been deeply and adversely affected by the wave of uprisings. In the Republic of Algeria, not only did the regime survive this tumultuous period, but it hardly deviated from its habitual methods of authoritarian governance. Is Algeria the exception that confirms the rule? Or does it underscore the complexity of the mechanisms underpinning authoritarianism in the region, and the limitations of revolutionary models of regime change of the Arab Spring? In my view, Algeria illustrates a type of authoritarian resistance to popular challenges that is based on pseudodemocratization, redistributive patronage, and an effective use of the security apparatus.

It would be misguided to evaluate the prospects for political change in the Middle East simply in light of the recent uprisings. The patterns of democratic revolutions and authoritarian resilience observed during the Arab Spring indicate that specific combinations of factors can be conducive to regime failure, but they hardly provide a comprehensive map of all the causes that can lead to regime change in the region. For one thing, authoritarian elites do learn from their mistakes and those of others; in that respect, the Algerian regime is no exception.2 Furthermore, and somewhat counterintuitively, just because a particular regime
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survived this wave of revolts does not mean that it is strong or stable in the full sense, but only that it was not vulnerable to the particular forms of mobilization that marked those uprisings. Here again, Algeria is a good illustration. Despite its unsteady mode of authoritarian governance, the Algerian regime currently possesses the means to cope with the difficulties presented by popular uprisings. Yet it cannot survive in its current form for long, given its dwindling legitimacy, its lack of truly institutionalized mechanisms for transferring power, and the intrinsic limits of its system of patronage.

How did Algeria reach this pass, and what does that tell us about authoritarian resilience in the region today? Authoritarian stability during the Arab Spring was path-dependent and sprang from the combination of three sets of factors related, respectively, to institutions, the socioeconomic situation, and the security services. If an authoritarian regime survives mass protests, it does so because its mechanisms for decoupling social unrest from political mobilization—namely, pseudodemocratization, state patronage, and robust militarism—are effective. The authoritarian rulers prop themselves up with the help of a pseudodemocratic multiparty system that coopts and divides the opposition while generating a modicum of international recognition. They also entrench a patronage-based rentier economy that, in effect, buys social quiet with financial rewards. Finally, the well-resourced repressive apparatus is both willing and able to put down social unrest and armed rebellions.

A Hijacked Transition

What makes the case of Algeria during the Arab Spring all the more puzzling is that, compared to its North African neighbors (Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt), it had long been a troubled polity where social order remained elusive. Colonized by France in the nineteenth century, Algeria won independence in 1962 after a deadly eight-year war. The National Liberation Front (FLN) had led the fight for independence, and afterward formed a one-party state. The National Liberation Army would repeatedly impose its choices on the FLN after the military coup of Colonel Houari Boumediene in 1965. After severe rioting and social unrest in 1988, the government introduced a series of political and economic reforms, and the country held multiparty local elections in 1990 and the first round of national parliamentary elections in late 1991.

This first attempt at democratization saw an Islamic constituency mobilize and come close to gaining state power—until the electoral gains of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were wiped out by the military coup of January 1992. The fallout from this ill-fated move was nearly a decade of civil conflict between the military-backed regime and the newly created Armed Islamic Groups. It engulfed ordinary Algerians in a vicious cycle of brutality and retribution that claimed around 150,000
lives. Although the general armistice that marked the end of the Islamist insurrection in 1999 reduced the fighting to a level that was manageable for the government of newly elected President Abdelaziz Bouteflika (b. 1937) of the FLN, residual violence has continued to plague the country—most notably due to the activities of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, an organization that in 2007 rebranded itself al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

A principal consequence of the civil conflict was a fragmented political community in which nationalists, secularists, liberals, and Islamists distrusted each other as much as they distrusted the regime. Although the state had reclaimed a degree of legitimacy through the reestablishment of a (rather unrepresentative) parliamentary system, the regime had also been rocked by powerful social and political protests. The Berber “Black Spring” of 2001, in which more than a hundred demonstrators in the Kabylie region were killed while protesting against the regime’s policies toward Berbers, showed how continuing failures of political dialogue—this time with Kabyle social movements—and heavy-handed repressive tactics ensured an atmosphere of mutual distrust in the country.

Algeria’s electoral system—which lacked credibility despite praise from the international community for the regime’s democratic reforms—did little to change these perceptions. Backed by the military, Bouteflika won the presidency unopposed in 1999. The other six candidates had withdrawn from the contest on the eve of the election, claiming that it was rigged. Bouteflika went on to win the 2004 and 2009 elections with 84 percent and 90 percent of the vote, respectively. (He was allowed to run in 2009 only after a constitutional amendment permitted him a third term.) Bouteflika’s administration has been careful to include the Islamist Movement for a Peaceful Society (MSP) and the National Democratic Rally (RND; a party founded in 1997 by entrenched elites who backed the then-president, retired general Liamine Zeroual) in the governing coalition in order to widen its support base. Yet the token Islamist participation of the MSP, former competitors of the FIS, is not an indication of a substantive political opening; rather, it shows how the regime uses cooptation and patronage.

During the 2000s, the socioeconomic climate in Algeria remained harsh despite state subsidies and infrastructural investments paid for by oil and gas rents. In a leaked 2008 cable, U.S. ambassador Robert Ford told Washington that Algerians were striking nearly every week and that “almost daily there are isolated demonstrations, with the occasional government office in some distant town attacked.” In the year before the Arab Spring, Algerian newspapers regularly reported episodes of rioting in various parts of the country. Yet by the end of 2010, if the Algerian regime was not proving to be as solidly in control as its neighbors seemed to be, neither did it appear to be on the brink of collapse. Crucially, most Algerians did not consider the aging and increasingly
incapacitated Bouteflika to be the main driver of the country’s predatory regime, and therefore did not think that ousting him would dramatically improve their lives. Moreover, the partial political opening that the regime had orchestrated kept the dissensions within the opposition alive while giving many a stake in the status quo.

Missing the Revolutionary Bandwagon

At the beginning of 2011, Algeria was one of the first countries in the region to be affected by the wave of uprisings that had begun in Tunisia as 2010 ended. In Algeria, a deregulation of the state-subsidized economy triggered price hikes and shortages just as Algerians could see unrest reaching a crisis next door in Tunisia. Protests broke out in several of the poorer suburbs of Algiers and Oran on January 3. By the next day, rioting had spread to other areas near the capital. On January 5, there was major unrest in Algiers, Oran, and many other towns all around the country. Algeria’s relatively free press covered the events, and soon riots were reported in twenty regions (wilayat). As the rioters—mainly young men—blocked roads, burned tires, and ransacked government buildings and commercial centers, the initial discontent over a decrease in subsidized staple goods gave way to protests over a wide range of socio-economic grievances.

The shadow of the October 1988 riots loomed over these events, and the connection was explicitly made in the domestic press. While the socioeconomic complaints did resemble those of 1988, the roles of the military and the Islamists were different. Although former FIS leader Ali Belhadj and his supporters turned up at the demonstrations in Algiers, Islamists did not lead the protest or even turn out in large numbers. Likewise, the response of the security forces was nowhere near as brutal or lethal as it had been in 1988, when the army fired live ammunition at the crowds. In January 2011, by contrast, the security forces targeted key urban areas—in central Algiers around the Parliament, the Senate, and other government buildings—and simply abandoned the suburbs to the rioters.

A few days after the riots began, the government announced a reversal of the price increases and put in place new policies designed to lower the cost of food imports. This swift action appeared to meet the protesters’ demands. Within a couple of days, most protests had subsided and mass public disobedience was losing momentum. Moreover, the relative restraint of the security forces ensured that state repression itself did not become the cause of further protests (as had happened in Tunisia). In this context of subsiding revolutionary fervor, even radical acts, such as a self-immolation on January 12, failed to reignite the contestation.4

During the Arab Spring, popular unrest and regime responses in Algeria ended up following rather predictable patterns and thus strengthened preexisting dynamics of state-society interactions. This does not
mean that the Algerian regime used the “correct” combination of repression and cooptation to defuse a revolution, but merely that on this occasion what it did worked well enough. In 2011, popular unrest did not gather enough momentum to deinstitutionalize routine authoritarian practices and induce a reframing of the roles of the regime and the protesters. In the ensuing months, however, “normalcy” in Algeria still included regular protests—clashes with police, road blockades, strikes, ransacking of buildings, and so on—but these were disparate episodes rather than part of a nationwide event.

In the aftermath of the riots, however, a group of social and political organizations started a new and far less spectacular protest movement. On January 20, several opposition parties, nonlegalized unions, and civil society organizations joined forces to articulate the implicit political demands of the protesting crowds. These groups formed the National Coordination for Change and Democracy (NCCD) and issued a call for greater democracy, social justice, an end to the state of emergency, relaxation of media laws, and the release of imprisoned protesters, as well as more job opportunities.

As the movement signaled its intention to organize a demonstration against the regime, its call for public protest was swiftly echoed by the pro-Islamist activist network Rachad. Soon after, Said Saadi, the leader of the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), a Berber political party, announced that the RCD was organizing a march for democracy in Algiers on January 22. The demonstration, which gathered a few hundred activists in central Algiers, was quickly broken up by a large police force that also prevented busloads of activists from entering the city to join the protest. In its turn, the NCCD announced that it would organize its own march on February 12. The regime made good use of the lull between the two protests to ease socioeconomic and political tensions. On February 3, the government indicated that the nineteen-year-old state of emergency would soon be lifted, opposition parties would be allowed greater airtime on state-controlled television and radio, and a new job-creation scheme was about to be implemented.

On 12 February 2011—the day after Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak resigned—protestors in Algeria responding to the NCCD’s call converged on May First Square in central Algiers. In an event that some viewed as a miniature version of Cairo’s Tahrir Square protests, around three-thousand protesters managed to occupy the square for a while after breaking through police lines. Yet in Algiers, unlike in Cairo, security forces outnumbered protesters by ten to one; about thirty-thousand police had been mobilized for the occasion. Riot police blocked would-be protesters from neighboring suburbs and other towns from reaching the center of the capital to participate in the demonstration in May First Square.

One incident in particular illustrated the NCCD’s difficulties at unify-
ing the opposition: Former FIS leader Ali Belhadj and several dozen of his supporters were pushed back while trying to join the demonstration. The expulsion of Belhadj and his cohort was not the work of the police, however, but rather of the demonstrators themselves, who feared that the Islamists might hijack their protest. The impact of the 1992 military coup and the civil conflict on Islamic-secular relations is such that leftist and liberal actors prefer to go it alone against the regime at the risk of failure, rather than seek a potentially more powerful coalition with the Islamists.

The February 12 demonstration illustrated the limited capabilities of the NCCD to unite different opposition forces in the country and to connect with the large number of depoliticized youth who had driven January’s social protests. Undaunted, the NCCD called for demonstrations to continue every Saturday in May First Square. The following week, on February 19, a similar protest was duly organized, with the same disappointing turnout. The choice of Saturday for weekly demonstrations—despite earlier calls by Islamic groups such as Rachad to hold the protests on Fridays—further entrenched the divide between liberal secularists and Islamists. The symbolic death knell for the NCCD was probably a March 7 rally in Algiers of tens of thousands of communal guards—local police auxiliaries that the regime had organized in the countryside to hinder the activities of Islamist guerrillas—demanding better pay and greater recognition for their role during the civil conflict. This rally mobilized far more protesters than the NCCD ever had and temporarily disrupted police control of central Algiers. It illustrated that even a well-oiled security apparatus could be outfoxed, as long as protesters had the numbers and surprise on their side.

**Patronage and Militarism**

Comparing Algeria to Tunisia, Jack Brown observed how counterintuitive it was that Algerian civil society had not done a better job of harnessing the momentum of the January 2011 riots for their February demonstrations, since Algeria under Bouteflika had a freer and livelier civil and political society than Tunisia under Ben Ali. What the February political protests showed, however, is that this greater political space can actually be a hindrance to large-scale mobilization if opposition forces are powerful enough to turn out their core constituencies but too weak to attract support beyond them, not least because of an unwillingness to create cross-ideological alliances. The political unrest in February was far less significant in scope than the social unrest in January, when the motley crew of demonstrators could join in the protest for any reason. In February, protesters had to subscribe to a particular agenda to join the movement, which disempowered the crowds by dividing them into competing factions. This same predicament prevailed throughout the 2000s and was most vividly illustrated by the Berber Black Spring of 2001.
By March 2011, it was clear that the initial wave of Arab uprisings would not affect Algeria in the way that it had its eastern neighbors. In Algeria, the return to normalcy meant the routinization of discontent and disorder through semi-institutional mechanisms designed to render such displays of disaffection nonthreatening to the ruling elite. In March in Algiers, typical instances of social unrest included nearly two-hundred youths throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at the police, a crowd of several hundred protesters similarly attacking the police and contractors headed to bulldoze a shantytown, and the like. That same month, socioeconomic discontent generated at least seventy strikes throughout the country by professional associations and unions—from teachers to rail workers and doctors to court clerks. As Ali Chibani remarked at the time, the regime’s position of relative weakness “is well understood by Algerians who recognize that now is the time to obtain promotions and improve their working conditions and their social circumstances.”6 The dynamics of these strikes, which would remain commonplace throughout the year, illustrate the continuing relevance of the traditional social contract proposed by the Algerian regime: The administration provides better socioeconomic conditions in exchange for continuing (albeit grudging) political quiescence.

In May 2011, in an effort to finance the concessions made to various striking sectors, the Algerian government unveiled a revised budget that increased public-sector spending by a massive 25 percent. This spending spree constituted an affordable short-term option for a regime seeking to buy its way out of trouble, Gulf-monarchy style. Yet, with an ever-expanding public sector—and a much larger population than in the Gulf—the Algerian state has burdened itself with a soaring wage bill that can only be paid as long as oil and natural-gas prices keep rising.7

As Luis Martinez has noted, the regime’s ability to reorient system-challenging unrest into more mundane benefit-seeking protests stems from the economic system, which has been modeled over the years to buttress the patronage structures that ensure dependence of the population and local elites on the state elite’s redistribution of oil and gas rents. In 2010, these rents “accounted for 60 percent of [Algeria’s] budget revenues, 36 percent of its GDP, and over 97 percent of its export earnings.”8 This patronage system can expand and contract depending on the economic and political circumstances, and as the events of the late 1980s and early 1990s illustrate, periods of contraction are costly for the regime. Tellingly, throughout the 2000s, the Bouteflika administration consistently and deliberately underestimated the price of oil and gas in
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its budget calculations so as to build large reserves of foreign currency that could be used precisely at times when the regime needed to counter dissent with financial incentives.

In addition to the support that it derives from the patronage system, the regime also owes its resilience to the backing of the security forces, as the 2011 protests illustrated. This is not to be understood simply in terms of the sheer repressive capability of the state, impressive though it is—the police and the gendarmerie were bolstered during the civil conflict of the 1990s, and by the end of the 2000s they numbered more than 200,000 all told. The strength of the security forces stems more from the effectiveness of their response to the unrest. In that respect, the repressive apparatus of January 2011 was far superior to that of October 1988, when the army killed more than five-hundred demonstrators in just over ten days. During the week of rioting in January 2011, only three demonstrators died. In addition, at the end of February 2011, the government lifted the state of emergency that had been in place since the 1992 military coup. This symbolic concession was counterbalanced, however, by the adoption of new “antiterrorism” measures granting the security forces extensive freedom of action with regard to any matter that they deemed “a threat to the nation”—demonstrations in the capital included.

Some analyses of “robust” authoritarianism in the Middle East note that, in addition to the actual repressive capabilities of the security forces, two other aspects of repression are crucial to authoritarian rule: The first is the willingness of the military leadership (and other key security actors) to use force, and the second is the material and ideational interests of the military and other key security forces.9 For the Algerian military, these material interests have included not only a budget that has increased yearly during the 2000s in order to sustain existing levels of patronage, but also a more direct interest in various public and private-sector ventures. Steven Cook likened the 1980s-era generals to “godfathers” who intervened in the delivery of business licenses and exclusivity contracts.10 The 2000s, meanwhile, have seen the ongoing involvement of military figures in crony capitalism and corruption scandals—most spectacularly in relation to the national oil company, Sonatrach, in early 2010.11

The rank-and-file security personnel have benefited, too. In December 2010, the government announced that the wages of most police forces—totaling 170,000 personnel—were to increase by 50 percent and would include a three-year back-pay deal. Similarly, in December 2011 military personnel saw their salaries go up by 40 percent, also with a three-year back-pay package. Unmistakably, the postcolonial social contract of socioeconomic gratification in exchange for quiescence applied even more to rank-and-file members of the security apparatus than it did to the populace at large.

Over the years, the upper ranks of the Algerian military have repeatedly proved willing and able to use lethal force on a massive scale to
secure their preferred system of political governance. This pattern of intervention—and the belief of many junior officers that their oversight of politics is good for the country—has entrenched a neopraetorianism that leaves little chance for a protest-induced regime-change scenario in which the military stands by and lets a revolt run its course. Specialists have been predicting for years that the military would progressively lose influence—not least due to the dying off of the older generation of leaders—but this has not yet translated into significant institutional and behavioral changes. In the current international and sociohistorical context, it seems unavoidable that the military’s influence will wane over time; the Turkish model and some steps taken by the Egyptian military illustrate such trends. In the short term, however, the neopraetorian dynamics in Algeria constrain the kinds of political changes that are likely to occur. The vicious circle created between low mobilization and low-cost repression is self-reinforcing. In addition, the population’s weariness of conflict since the 1990s contributes to the perception that, even if a revolt were to succeed, it could generate more unwanted violence and misery.

**Authoritarian Upgrading After the Revolts**

In April 2011, President Bouteflika went on national television to tout his Arab Spring–inspired program of reforms. The president announced “political reforms to deepen the democratic process and to enable the citizens to better contribute to the choices that shape their future.” In practice, however, this initiative resulted only in the establishment of a commission to organize limited constitutional reforms, broader access to national television and radio for opposition parties, and a revision of the electoral code to facilitate the creation of new political organizations. The underwhelmed response of the main opposition parties and civil society organizations to these propositions was reflected in their decision to boycott the consultation process of the committee charged with drafting the constitutional amendments the following month.

In an effort to show that the electoral reforms had substance, the Interior Minister Daho Ould Kablia eagerly announced at the start of October 2011 that all new parties applying for recognition would be legalized before the end of the year. In practice, however, the proliferation of microparties—nearly doubling the number of existing political parties from 22 to 40—merely enabled the expansion of the regime’s patronage network via business politics. Most of the new parties were either splinter groups of existing parties—especially the FLN and the RND—or vehicles for self-promotion by personalities and businessmen close to the regime.

The electoral victories of Islamist parties in Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt raised some international observers’ concerns about an Islamist resurgence in Algeria’s 10 May 2012 elections for the National People’s Assembly (the lower house of Parliament). Lending credence to these
Fears was the MSP’s withdrawal from the ruling coalition in January 2012 in order to join forces with two smaller Islamist opposition groups, Islah and Ennahda, to form the Green Algeria Alliance. Algerians, however, were skeptical of the credentials of this new Islamist alliance, which was dominated by political actors with a long history of cooperating with the regime—even during the unrest in 2011—and who only moved to the opposition during the run-up to the elections. Moreover, the regime reaffirmed its policy of containing the Islamist vote with legislative amendments that prohibited political actors previously associated with the FIS from creating new parties. In this context, as seasoned analysts of Algeria had predicted and as the regime had planned, the parliamentary elections brought few surprises.\textsuperscript{15}

Most of the new parties struggled to win just 1 or 2 percent of the vote, and none—not even the vaunted Green Algeria Alliance, which stayed stuck in single digits and won only 49 of 462 seats—emerged as a significant opposition force. If anything, the regime’s tinkering with the electoral rules may have been too effective for its own good. Although the country’s proportional-representation, largest-remainder system with a 5 percent threshold for earning seats remained intact, having so many opposition parties compete considerably boosted the FLN’s electoral performance. The ruling party won 45 percent (208) of the seats in the Assembly—an outcome that was all the more remarkable given that the FLN received only a little over 17 percent of the vote. The RND, also a member of the ruling coalition, was the next-highest seat earner with 69. The Front of Socialist Forces and the Workers’ Party won 27 and 24 seats, respectively. The remaining seats were divided among independent candidates and more than twenty other parties.\textsuperscript{16}

Internationally, the stability of Algeria’s pseudodemocratic system was once again commended. The elections were “a welcome step in Algeria’s progress toward democratic reform,” said U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton.\textsuperscript{17} Domestically, the election results generated the usual level of suspicion and incredulity from the Algerian public and political actors, and accusations of vote rigging and manipulation flew. In short, by encouraging an explosion of tiny new parties in an attempt to make the political field appear more pluralistic, the regime in fact (re)produced an ultradominant-party system. Yet in the new post–Arab Spring regional context, such authoritarian maintenance of the status quo suddenly appeared abnormal.\textsuperscript{18}

The patron-client economic programs that the regime had devised in the run-up to the 2012 local and parliamentary elections helped to mobilize those voters who would directly benefit from these subsidies. The show of electoral strength by the pro-regime parties (FLN and RND) was akin to the mass demonstrations of public support that the state party organized in the 1960s and the 1970s. Indeed, since the 1992 military intervention, elections have always swung massively (and suspiciously)
in favor of candidates and parties representing the incumbent leadership. At the same time, this system of political patronage generates constant infighting in and among regime-aligned parties, as different networks try to maximize their gains and leverage vis-à-vis the central administration. In Algeria, the flurry of political activity leading up to the 2014 presidential election should not obscure the limited political opportunities that the country’s electoral model allows. As long as the ruling elite makes sure to keep power within its ranks, it will be able to manage a smooth transition, and the state-party system and its pseudodemocratic successor will remain mere tools for this rotation of power.

Thus, who better to replace the current president in the forthcoming election than someone just like him? Who better to sit at the head of state than a longtime member of the ruling elite who knows how not to upset a system that works (at least for members of the elite)? The presidential election scheduled for April 2014 presents an opportunity for the regime to ease into office someone ostensibly new, but who would not upset the status quo in any significant way. Unsurprisingly, in the first half of 2013 the most touted potential replacements for Bouteflika are all well known to both the regime and the electorate—FLN secretary-general Abdelaziz Belkhadem, current prime minister Abdelmalek Sellal, and former prime ministers Ahmed Ouyahia, Ahmed Benbitour, Mouloud Hamrouche, and Ali Benflis.

As for the Islamists, will they eventually be able to mount a successful, institutionalized political challenge to obtain at least a share of state power, as has happened elsewhere in the region? For now, that seems an unlikely possibility in Algeria, even if we take into consideration the foothold inside ruling circles of former public-works minister Amar Ghoul, formerly of the MSP. Indeed, both Islamist and liberal opposition forces are still searching for a new kind of leadership and organization that will enable them to mount a convincing challenge to the ruling elites, either on their own or as part of a yet-to-be-imagined grand coalition. It is doubtful that will happen in time for the 2014 presidential election, but it is bound to happen at some point. When it finally does, the dynamics of authoritarianism in Algeria—patronage, neopraetorianism, and all—will change significantly.

NOTES

The author wishes to thank Francesco Cavatorta and Yahia Zoubir for their valuable comments on previous versions of this essay.


4. There would be dozens of attempted or successful self-immolations across the country in the following few weeks. See Chawki Amari, “Je brûle, donc je suis,” Courrier International (Paris), 21 January 2011.


14. These include the Future Front, led by Abdelaziz Belaid; the Youth Party, led by Hamana Boucharma; the Party of Dignity, led by Mohamed Ben Hammou; the Front of Rightly Guided Governance, led by Aissa Bel-Hadi; the Movement of Free Citizens, led by Mustapha Boudina; and New Dawn, led by Tahar Benbaibeche.


Framing Political Revolutions in the Aftermath of the Arab Uprisings

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Published online: 22 Nov 2013.

To cite this article: Frédéric Volpi (2014) Framing Political Revolutions in the Aftermath of the Arab Uprisings, Mediterranean Politics, 19:1, 153-156, DOI: 10.1080/13629395.2013.856186

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2013.856186

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Framing Political Revolutions in the Aftermath of the Arab Uprisings

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ABSTRACT What was revolutionary in the wave of revolutionary regime changes that began to sweep the Middle East and North Africa in 2011 was not a particular set of political ideas but a set of social practices. The unexpected popular uprisings that changed the very notion of effective political behaviour in the region introduced a new perspective on political revolutions and regime stability that still remains to be fully appreciated in contemporary theoretical perspectives on revolutions and Arab politics.

Approaching Revolutions before the Arab Uprisings

Those Marxist-Leninist variants of revolutionary theory that were particularly fashionable, academically and politically, in the 1960s and 1970s always emphasized the importance of political agency in particular circumstances – i.e. revolutionary situations. In the colonial/third world context, this revolutionary drive was deemed to take the form of nationalist movements bringing together momentarily different social classes in order to change first the nature of the colonial/imperial political system before transforming the underlying socio-economic order. While liberal accounts of revolutions commonly were influenced by these Marxian perspectives, they emphasized the rational choice dimension of political behaviour over the economically derived class rationale preferred by the left. Nonetheless, the grand ‘social revolutions’ analysed by Barrington Moore (1966) or Skocpol (1979) were meant to be more than a change of political system, and as such the explanatory narrative stressed again the importance of particular combinations of structural conditions for such events to take place.

In such perspectives, revolutions had to be complete transformations of state and society to deserve the title. However the dismal predicament of most of the postcolonial states that called themselves socialist and, ultimately, the failure of the USSR itself, refocused the debates about revolutions by default on the more inter-subjective notion of political change (Foran, 1993). In this respect, the velvet...
revolutions and other democratic revolutions of Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s point more directly to the kind of political transformations witnessed during the Arab uprisings – i.e. the causal relevance of the actions of a loosely coordinated mass movement in favour of a transition to a ‘non-revolutionary’ democratic system.

What the approaches to revolutions developed at the turn of the millennium retained from their predecessors is a tendency to rein in the voluntarist dimension of political change by associating it with long-term socio-economic and political structures that are deemed to underpin agency. This aspect was all the more noticeable with the rise to prominence of social movement theory and its notion of political opportunity structure in the study of revolutionary phenomena – events which are presented as extreme cases of contentious politics by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (1997).

The continuing dominance of structural explanatory models is hard to miss today. One would be hard pressed today to find an account of the Arab uprisings that does not include a lengthy account of the social, economic and political structures that underpinned the uprisings; thereby making these uprisings the direct outcomes of a specific crisis of authoritarianism (Goodwin, 2011). Unsurprisingly, therefore, a major part of the post-Arab uprisings debate is about better identifying those states and regimes which have created circumstances susceptible of facilitating a revolutionary uprising, and those which have not.

**Reflecting on the Revolutions of the Arab Uprisings**

Comparative studies of revolutions commonly face two kinds of difficulties, both of which were clearly evidenced at the time of the Arab uprisings. The first one, already well known, is that explanatory frameworks best accounting for past revolutions are not particularly concerned with identifying the conditions of possibility of new revolutionary models. In 2011 in the Middle East and North Africa, analysts did not foresee dramatic political changes happening in the region at least in part because ‘Arab uprisings-type’ popular uprisings were highly unconventional forms of (effective) revolutionary mobilization in authoritarian regimes that were thought to be stable and resourceful (Brownlee, 2007; Lust-Okar, 2005).

The second more relevant observation and criticism to make is that traditional approaches to revolution consistently failed to convincingly approximate the role of human agency and the reasons people do what they do in revolutionary situations. In terms of a ‘theory of action’, contemporary analyses use rational choice-based models that constitute a limited improvement on Marxian-inspired class-based analyses (Weyland, 2009). In the language of social movement theory, people respond to changing political opportunity structures which the analyst is somewhat able to identify beforehand as being there, or not (Jasper, 2010).

Already before the Arab uprisings, internal debates among social movement theorists addressed this structural bias, with Goodwin and Jasper (2004) and their colleagues advocating a more inter-subjective approach to the framing of political opportunity. From this new framing angle, perceptions of an opportunity are
generated and shared between protesters (and the regime, and international actors),
to the point where there can emerge a de facto possibility for political change that is
not structurally identifiable beforehand. The suggestion that people can create their
own political opportunities rather than respond to pre-existing structural
opportunities does fit well the case of the revolutions of the Arab uprisings
(Kurzman, 2012).

The notion that people can create their own opportunities when nothing
significant appears to be changing does not invalidate the more structural notion of
revolutionary situations, but it does expand the range of possibilities. Even though
one can identify situations of economic, political or military failure of regimes that
are propitious for a successful revolution, there are other situations that can lead to a
similar outcome through the inter-subjective framing of possibilities of change. It is
this last process that remains to be investigated more thoroughly in the post-Arab
uprisings period.

Last but not least, if we take seriously the perspective of a continuum of contentious
politics ranging from social activism to revolutionary change, then social movement
theory accounts of mobilization challenges institutionalist approaches to measuring
political change. This tension centres on the importance of formal institutional
transformation versus the relevance of longer-term processes of mobilization,
demobilization and remobilization. The Arab uprisings, not least through the second
Egyptian uprising, illustrates that as important as questions about how revolutions
start are questions about how revolutionary mobilization ends or evolves.

Challenges Ahead

All accounts of revolutions usually combine, in an imbalanced way, top-down
institutional accounts – revolutions as institutional transformations – and bottom-
up behavioural accounts – revolutions as changes in practices. Conceptually,
however, it needs be recognized that the structural and institutional explanations of
the Arab uprisings that best connect the causes and consequences of these events to
other revolutionary events elsewhere in the world and throughout history cannot best
account for the specific causal behaviours of the people that made these uprisings –
a similar observation was made earlier in the case of the Iranian revolution by

Comparative structural analyses identifying common features of political change
over space and time are precisely looking for similarities and, as a result, discard
some of the less generalizable factors linked to agency. They suggest that future
revolutionary change will be shaped by similar conditions and processes – with
variations that they seek to determine as precisely as possible. The more
inter-subjective framing approaches to mobilization suggest by contrast that this
way of looking at revolutionary events not only can generate false positives but also
that it overlooks how in different situations processes of mobilization can generate
similar outcomes.

Re-centring narratives of revolutions on how the uprisings (Arab or otherwise)
actually happened and what made them effective at the time – including the
perceptions of the actors involved – would generate a denser understanding of political causality (Allal & Pierret, 2012). The challenge that remains to be addressed after the Arab uprisings is to include and make sense of a wider range of causally effective mechanisms of mobilization, even if they may not be relevant (let alone determining) in all instances of revolutionary political change. The Arab uprisings may just have been yet another indication of the limitations of the current approaches to revolutions and social movement activism. However, the implications of a serious reconceptualization of popular agency in times of political crisis may fundamentally challenge the dominance of the theoretical models that are most used today to frame political causality.

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What Democracy Is. . . and Is Not

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Journal of Democracy, Volume 2, Number 3, Summer 1991, pp. 75-88 (Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/jod.1991.0033

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WHAT DEMOCRACY IS
... AND IS NOT

Philippe C. Schmitter & Terry Lynn Karl

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For some time, the word democracy has been circulating as a debased currency in the political marketplace. Politicians with a wide range of convictions and practices strove to appropriate the label and attach it to their actions. Scholars, conversely, hesitated to use it—without adding qualifying adjectives—because of the ambiguity that surrounds it. The distinguished American political theorist Robert Dahl even tried to introduce a new term, "polyarchy," in its stead in the (vain) hope of gaining a greater measure of conceptual precision. But for better or worse, we are "stuck" with democracy as the catchword of contemporary political discourse. It is the word that resonates in people's minds and springs from their lips as they struggle for freedom and a better way of life; it is the word whose meaning we must discern if it is to be of any use in guiding political analysis and practice.

The wave of transitions away from autocratic rule that began with Portugal's "Revolution of the Carnations" in 1974 and seems to have crested with the collapse of communist regimes across Eastern Europe in 1989 has produced a welcome convergence towards a common definition of democracy.¹ Everywhere there has been a silent abandonment of dubious adjectives like "popular," "guided," "bourgeois," and "formal" to modify "democracy." At the same time, a remarkable consensus has emerged concerning the minimal conditions that polities must meet in order to merit the prestigious appellation of "democratic." Moreover, a number of international organizations now monitor how well
these standards are met; indeed, some countries even consider them when formulating foreign policy.2

What Democracy Is

Let us begin by broadly defining democracy and the generic concepts that distinguish it as a unique system for organizing relations between rulers and the ruled. We will then briefly review procedures, the rules and arrangements that are needed if democracy is to endure. Finally, we will discuss two operative principles that make democracy work. They are not expressly included among the generic concepts or formal procedures, but the prospect for democracy is grim if their underlying conditioning effects are not present.

One of the major themes of this essay is that democracy does not consist of a single unique set of institutions. There are many types of democracy, and their diverse practices produce a similarly varied set of effects. The specific form democracy takes is contingent upon a country’s socioeconomic conditions as well as its entrenched state structures and policy practices.

Modern political democracy is a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives.3

A regime or system of governance is an ensemble of patterns that determines the methods of access to the principal public offices; the characteristics of the actors admitted to or excluded from such access; the strategies that actors may use to gain access; and the rules that are followed in the making of publicly binding decisions. To work properly, the ensemble must be institutionalized—that is to say, the various patterns must be habitually known, practiced, and accepted by most, if not all, actors. Increasingly, the preferred mechanism of institutionalization is a written body of laws undergirded by a written constitution, though many enduring political norms can have an informal, prudential, or traditional basis.4

For the sake of economy and comparison, these forms, characteristics, and rules are usually bundled together and given a generic label. Democratic is one; others are autocratic, authoritarian, despotic, dictatorial, tyrannical, totalitarian, absolutist, traditional, monarchic, oligarchic, plutocratic, aristocratic, and sultanistic.5 Each of these regime forms may in turn be broken down into subtypes.

Like all regimes, democracies depend upon the presence of rulers, persons who occupy specialized authority roles and can give legitimate commands to others. What distinguishes democratic rulers from nondemocratic ones are the norms that condition how the former come to power and the practices that hold them accountable for their actions.
The public realm encompasses the making of collective norms and choices that are binding on the society and backed by state coercion. Its content can vary a great deal across democracies, depending upon preexisting distinctions between the public and the private, state and society, legitimate coercion and voluntary exchange, and collective needs and individual preferences. The liberal conception of democracy advocates circumscribing the public realm as narrowly as possible, while the socialist or social-democratic approach would extend that realm through regulation, subsidization, and, in some cases, collective ownership of property. Neither is intrinsically more democratic than the other—just differently democratic. This implies that measures aimed at "developing the private sector" are no more democratic than those aimed at "developing the public sector." Both, if carried to extremes, could undermine the practice of democracy, the former by destroying the basis for satisfying collective needs and exercising legitimate authority; the latter by destroying the basis for satisfying individual preferences and controlling illegitimate government actions. Differences of opinion over the optimal mix of the two provide much of the substantive content of political conflict within established democracies.

Citizens are the most distinctive element in democracies. All regimes have rulers and a public realm, but only to the extent that they are democratic do they have citizens. Historically, severe restrictions on citizenship were imposed in most emerging or partial democracies according to criteria of age, gender, class, race, literacy, property ownership, tax-paying status, and so on. Only a small part of the total population was eligible to vote or run for office. Only restricted social categories were allowed to form, join, or support political associations. After protracted struggle—in some cases involving violent domestic upheaval or international war—most of these restrictions were lifted. Today, the criteria for inclusion are fairly standard. All native-born adults are eligible, although somewhat higher age limits may still be imposed upon candidates for certain offices. Unlike the early American and European democracies of the nineteenth century, none of the recent democracies in southern Europe, Latin America, Asia, or Eastern Europe has even attempted to impose formal restrictions on the franchise or eligibility to office. When it comes to informal restrictions on the effective exercise of citizenship rights, however, the story can be quite different. This explains the central importance (discussed below) of procedures.

Competition has not always been considered an essential defining condition of democracy. "Classic" democracies presumed decision making based on direct participation leading to consensus. The assembled citizenry was expected to agree on a common course of action after listening to the alternatives and weighing their respective merits and demerits. A tradition of hostility to "faction," and "particular interests"
persists in democratic thought, but at least since The Federalist Papers it has become widely accepted that competition among factions is a necessary evil in democracies that operate on a more-than-local scale. Since, as James Madison argued, "the latent causes of faction are sown into the nature of man," and the possible remedies for "the mischief of faction" are worse than the disease, the best course is to recognize them and to attempt to control their effects. Yet while democrats may agree on the inevitability of factions, they tend to disagree about the best forms and rules for governing factional competition. Indeed, differences over the preferred modes and boundaries of competition contribute most to distinguishing one subtype of democracy from another.

The most popular definition of democracy equates it with regular elections, fairly conducted and honestly counted. Some even consider the mere fact of elections—even ones from which specific parties or candidates are excluded, or in which substantial portions of the population cannot freely participate—as a sufficient condition for the existence of democracy. This fallacy has been called "electoralism" or "the faith that merely holding elections will channel political action into peaceful contests among elites and accord public legitimacy to the winners"—no matter how they are conducted or what else constrains those who win them. However central to democracy, elections occur intermittently and only allow citizens to choose between the highly aggregated alternatives offered by political parties, which can, especially in the early stages of a democratic transition, proliferate in a bewildering variety. During the intervals between elections, citizens can seek to influence public policy through a wide variety of other intermediaries: interest associations, social movements, locality groupings, clientelistic arrangements, and so forth. Modern democracy, in other words, offers a variety of competitive processes and channels for the expression of interests and values—associational as well as partisan, functional as well as territorial, collective as well as individual. All are integral to its practice.

Another commonly accepted image of democracy identifies it with majority rule. Any governing body that makes decisions by combining the votes of more than half of those eligible and present is said to be democratic, whether that majority emerges within an electorate, a parliament, a committee, a city council, or a party caucus. For exceptional purposes (e.g., amending the constitution or expelling a member), "qualified majorities" of more than 50 percent may be
required, but few would deny that democracy must involve some means of aggregating the equal preferences of individuals.

A problem arises, however, when *numbers* meet *intensities*. What happens when a properly assembled majority (especially a stable, self-perpetuating one) regularly makes decisions that harm some minority (especially a threatened cultural or ethnic group)? In these circumstances, successful democracies tend to qualify the central principle of majority rule in order to protect minority rights. Such qualifications can take the form of constitutional provisions that place certain matters beyond the reach of majorities (bills of rights); requirements for concurrent majorities in several different constituencies (confederalism); guarantees securing the autonomy of local or regional governments against the demands of the central authority (federalism); grand coalition governments that incorporate all parties (consociationalism); or the negotiation of social pacts between major social groups like business and labor (neocorporatism). The most common and effective way of protecting minorities, however, lies in the everyday operation of interest associations and social movements. These reflect (some would say, amplify) the different intensities of preference that exist in the population and bring them to bear on democratically elected decision makers. Another way of putting this intrinsic tension between numbers and intensities would be to say that "in modern democracies, votes may be counted, but influences alone are weighted."

*Cooperation* has always been a central feature of democracy. Actors must voluntarily make collective decisions binding on the polity as a whole. They must cooperate in order to compete. They must be capable of acting collectively through parties, associations, and movements in order to select candidates, articulate preferences, petition authorities, and influence policies.

But democracy's freedoms should also encourage citizens to deliberate among themselves, to discover their common needs, and to resolve their differences without relying on some supreme central authority. Classical democracy emphasized these qualities, and they are by no means extinct, despite repeated efforts by contemporary theorists to stress the analogy with behavior in the economic marketplace and to reduce all of democracy's operations to competitive interest maximization. Alexis de Tocqueville best described the importance of independent groups for democracy in his *Democracy in America*, a work which remains a major source of inspiration for all those who persist in viewing democracy as something more than a struggle for election and re-election among competing candidates.

In contemporary political discourse, this phenomenon of cooperation and deliberation via autonomous group activity goes under the rubric of "civil society." The diverse units of social identity and interest, by remaining independent of the state (and perhaps even of parties), not
only can restrain the arbitrary actions of rulers, but can also contribute to forming better citizens who are more aware of the preferences of others, more self-confident in their actions, and more civic-minded in their willingness to sacrifice for the common good. At its best, civil society provides an intermediate layer of governance between the individual and the state that is capable of resolving conflicts and controlling the behavior of members without public coercion. Rather than overloading decision makers with increased demands and making the system ungovernable, a viable civil society can mitigate conflicts and improve the quality of citizenship—without relying exclusively on the privatism of the marketplace.

Representatives—whether directly or indirectly elected—do most of the real work in modern democracies. Most are professional politicians who orient their careers around the desire to fill key offices. It is doubtful that any democracy could survive without such people. The central question, therefore, is not whether or not there will be a political elite or even a professional political class, but how these representatives are chosen and then held accountable for their actions.

As noted above, there are many channels of representation in modern democracy. The electoral one, based on territorial constituencies, is the most visible and public. It culminates in a parliament or a presidency that is periodically accountable to the citizenry as a whole. Yet the sheer growth of government (in large part as a byproduct of popular demand) has increased the number, variety, and power of agencies charged with making public decisions and not subject to elections. Around these agencies there has developed a vast apparatus of specialized representation based largely on functional interests, not territorial constituencies. These interest associations, and not political parties, have become the primary expression of civil society in most stable democracies, supplemented by the more sporadic interventions of social movements.

The new and fragile democracies that have sprung up since 1974 must live in "compressed time." They will not resemble the European democracies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they cannot expect to acquire the multiple channels of representation in gradual historical progression as did most of their predecessors. A bewildering array of parties, interests, and movements will all simultaneously seek political influence in them, creating challenges to the polity that did not exist in earlier processes of democratization.

Procedures that Make Democracy Possible

The defining components of democracy are necessarily abstract, and may give rise to a considerable variety of institutions and subtypes of democracy. For democracy to thrive, however, specific procedural norms
must be followed and civic rights must be respected. Any polity that fails to impose such restrictions upon itself, that fails to follow the "rule of law" with regard to its own procedures, should not be considered democratic. These procedures alone do not define democracy, but their presence is indispensable to its persistence. In essence, they are necessary but not sufficient conditions for its existence.

Robert Dahl has offered the most generally accepted listing of what he terms the "procedural minimal" conditions that must be present for modern political democracy (or as he puts it, "polyarchy") to exist:

1) Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
2) Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.
3) Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
4) Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in the government.
5) Citizens have a right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined.
6) Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by law.
7) Citizens also have the right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups.¹⁰

These seven conditions seem to capture the essence of procedural democracy for many theorists, but we propose to add two others. The first might be thought of as a further refinement of item (1), while the second might be called an implicit prior condition to all seven of the above.

8) Popularly elected officials must be able to exercise their constitutional powers without being subjected to overriding (albeit informal) opposition from unelected officials. Democracy is in jeopardy if military officers, entrenched civil servants, or state managers retain the capacity to act independently of elected civilians or even veto decisions made by the people's representatives. Without this additional caveat, the militarized polities of contemporary Central America, where civilian control over the military does not exist, might be classified by many scholars as democracies, just as they have been (with the exception of Sandinista Nicaragua) by U.S. policy makers. The caveat thus guards against what we earlier called "electoralism"—the tendency to focus on the holding of elections while ignoring other political realities.

9) The polity must be self-governing; it must be able to act independently of constraints imposed by some other overarching political system. Dahl and other contemporary democratic theorists probably took
this condition for granted since they referred to formally sovereign nation-states. However, with the development of blocs, alliances, spheres of influence, and a variety of "neocolonial" arrangements, the question of autonomy has been a salient one. Is a system really democratic if its elected officials are unable to make binding decisions without the approval of actors outside their territorial domain? This is significant even if the outsiders are themselves democratically constituted and if the insiders are relatively free to alter or even end the encompassing arrangement (as in Puerto Rico), but it becomes especially critical if neither condition obtains (as in the Baltic states).

Principles that Make Democracy Feasible

Lists of component processes and procedural norms help us to specify what democracy is, but they do not tell us much about how it actually functions. The simplest answer is "by the consent of the people"; the more complex one is "by the contingent consent of politicians acting under conditions of bounded uncertainty."

In a democracy, representatives must at least informally agree that those who win greater electoral support or influence over policy will not use their temporary superiority to bar the losers from taking office or exerting influence in the future, and that in exchange for this opportunity to keep competing for power and place, momentary losers will respect the winners' right to make binding decisions. Citizens are expected to obey the decisions ensuing from such a process of competition, provided its outcome remains contingent upon their collective preferences as expressed through fair and regular elections or open and repeated negotiations.

The challenge is not so much to find a set of goals that command widespread consensus as to find a set of rules that embody contingent consent. The precise shape of this "democratic bargain," to use Dahl's expression,\textsuperscript{11} can vary a good deal from society to society. It depends on social cleavages and such subjective factors as mutual trust, the standard of fairness, and the willingness to compromise. It may even be compatible with a great deal of dissensus on substantive policy issues.

All democracies involve a degree of uncertainty about who will be elected and what policies they will pursue. Even in those polities where one party persists in winning elections or one policy is consistently implemented, the possibility of change through independent collective action still exists, as in Italy, Japan, and the Scandinavian social democracies. If it does not, the system is not democratic, as in Mexico, Senegal, or Indonesia.

But the uncertainty embedded in the core of all democracies is bounded. Not just any actor can get into the competition and raise any issue he or she pleases—there are previously established rules that must
be respected. Not just any policy can be adopted—there are conditions that must be met. Democracy institutionalizes "normal," limited political uncertainty. These boundaries vary from country to country. Constitutional guarantees of property, privacy, expression, and other rights are a part of this, but the most effective boundaries are generated by competition among interest groups and cooperation within civil society. Whatever the rhetoric (and some polities appear to offer their citizens more dramatic alternatives than others), once the rules of contingent consent have been agreed upon, the actual variation is likely to stay within a predictable and generally accepted range.

This emphasis on operative guidelines contrasts with a highly persistent, but misleading theme in recent literature on democracy—namely, the emphasis upon "civic culture." The principles we have suggested here rest on rules of prudence, not on deeply ingrained habits of tolerance, moderation, mutual respect, fair play, readiness to compromise, or trust in public authorities. Waiting for such habits to sink deep and lasting roots implies a very slow process of regime consolidation—one that takes generations—and it would probably condemn most contemporary experiences *ex hypothesi* to failure. Our assertion is that contingent consent and bounded uncertainty can emerge from the interaction between antagonistic and mutually suspicious actors and that the far more benevolent and ingrained norms of a civic culture are better thought of as a *product* and not a producer of democracy.

**How Democracies Differ**

Several concepts have been deliberately excluded from our generic definition of democracy, despite the fact that they have been frequently associated with it in both everyday practice and scholarly work. They are, nevertheless, especially important when it comes to distinguishing subtypes of democracy. Since no single set of actual institutions, practices, or values embodies democracy, polities moving away from authoritarian rule can mix different components to produce different democracies. It is important to recognize that these do not define points along a single continuum of improving performance, but a matrix of potential combinations that are *differently* democratic.

1) *Consensus*: All citizens may not agree on the substantive goals of political action or on the role of the state (although if they did, it would certainly make governing democracies much easier).

2) *Participation*: All citizens may not take an active and equal part in politics, although it must be legally possible for them to do so.

3) *Access*: Rulers may not weigh equally the preferences of all who come before them, although citizenship implies that individuals and groups should have an equal opportunity to express their preferences if they choose to do so.
4) Responsiveness: Rulers may not always follow the course of action preferred by the citizenry. But when they deviate from such a policy, say on grounds of “reason of state” or “overriding national interest,” they must ultimately be held accountable for their actions through regular and fair processes.

5) Majority rule: Positions may not be allocated or rules may not be decided solely on the basis of assembling the most votes, although deviations from this principle usually must be explicitly defended and previously approved.

6) Parliamentary sovereignty: The legislature may not be the only body that can make rules or even the one with final authority in deciding which laws are binding, although where executive, judicial, or other public bodies make that ultimate choice, they too must be accountable for their actions.

7) Party government: Rulers may not be nominated, promoted, and disciplined in their activities by well-organized and programmatically coherent political parties, although where they are not, it may prove more difficult to form an effective government.

8) Pluralism: The political process may not be based on a multiplicity of overlapping, voluntaristic, and autonomous private groups. However, where there are monopolies of representation, hierarchies of association, and obligatory memberships, it is likely that the interests involved will be more closely linked to the state and the separation between the public and private spheres of action will be much less distinct.

9) Federalism: The territorial division of authority may not involve multiple levels and local autonomies, least of all ones enshrined in a constitutional document, although some dispersal of power across territorial and/or functional units is characteristic of all democracies.

10) Presidentialism: The chief executive officer may not be a single person and he or she may not be directly elected by the citizenry as a whole, although some concentration of authority is present in all democracies, even if it is exercised collectively and only held indirectly accountable to the electorate.

11) Checks and Balances: It is not necessary that the different branches of government be systematically pitted against one another, although governments by assembly, by executive concentration, by judicial command, or even by dictatorial fiat (as in time of war) must be ultimately accountable to the citizenry as a whole.

While each of the above has been named as an essential component of democracy, they should instead be seen either as indicators of this or that type of democracy, or else as useful standards for evaluating the performance of particular regimes. To include them as part of the generic definition of democracy itself would be to mistake the American polity for the universal model of democratic governance. Indeed, the parliamentary, consociational, unitary, corporatist, and concentrated
arrangements of continental Europe may have some unique virtues for guiding polities through the uncertain transition from autocratic to democratic rule.¹²

What Democracy Is Not

We have attempted to convey the general meaning of modern democracy without identifying it with some particular set of rules and institutions or restricting it to some specific culture or level of development. We have also argued that it cannot be reduced to the regular holding of elections or equated with a particular notion of the role of the state, but we have not said much more about what democracy is not or about what democracy may not be capable of producing.

There is an understandable temptation to load too many expectations on this concept and to imagine that by attaining democracy, a society will have resolved all of its political, social, economic, administrative, and cultural problems. Unfortunately, "all good things do not necessarily go together."

First, democracies are not necessarily more efficient economically than other forms of government. Their rates of aggregate growth, savings, and investment may be no better than those of nondemocracies. This is especially likely during the transition, when propertied groups and administrative elites may respond to real or imagined threats to the "rights" they enjoyed under authoritarian rule by initiating capital flight, disinvestment, or sabotage. In time, depending upon the type of democracy, benevolent long-term effects upon income distribution, aggregate demand, education, productivity, and creativity may eventually combine to improve economic and social performance, but it is certainly too much to expect that these improvements will occur immediately—much less that they will be defining characteristics of democratization.

Second, democracies are not necessarily more efficient administratively. Their capacity to make decisions may even be slower than that of the regimes they replace, if only because more actors must be consulted. The costs of getting things done may be higher, if only because "payoffs" have to be made to a wider and more resourceful set of clients (although one should never underestimate the degree of corruption to be found within autocracies). Popular satisfaction with the new democratic government's performance may not even seem greater, if only because necessary compromises often please no one completely, and because the losers are free to complain.

Third, democracies are not likely to appear more orderly, consensual, stable, or governable than the autocracies they replace. This is partly a byproduct of democratic freedom of expression, but it is also a reflection of the likelihood of continuing disagreement over new rules and
institutions. These products of imposition or compromise are often initially quite ambiguous in nature and uncertain in effect until actors have learned how to use them. What is more, they come in the aftermath of serious struggles motivated by high ideals. Groups and individuals with recently acquired autonomy will test certain rules, protest against the actions of certain institutions, and insist on renegotiating their part of the bargain. Thus the presence of antisystem parties should be neither surprising nor seen as a failure of democratic consolidation. What counts is whether such parties are willing, however reluctantly, to play by the general rules of bounded uncertainty and contingent consent.

Governability is a challenge for all regimes, not just democratic ones. Given the political exhaustion and loss of legitimacy that have befallen autocracies from sultanistic Paraguay to totalitarian Albania, it may seem that only democracies can now be expected to govern effectively and legitimately. Experience has shown, however, that democracies too can lose the ability to govern. Mass publics can become disenchanted with their performance. Even more threatening is the temptation for leaders to fiddle with procedures and ultimately undermine the principles of contingent consent and bounded uncertainty. Perhaps the most critical moment comes once the politicians begin to settle into the more predictable roles and relations of a consolidated democracy. Many will find their expectations frustrated; some will discover that the new rules of competition put them at a disadvantage; a few may even feel that their vital interests are threatened by popular majorities.

Finally, democracies will have more open societies and polities than the autocracies they replace, but not necessarily more open economies. Many of today’s most successful and well-established democracies have historically resorted to protectionism and closed borders, and have relied extensively upon public institutions to promote economic development. While the long-term compatibility between democracy and capitalism does not seem to be in doubt, despite their continuous tension, it is not clear whether the promotion of such liberal economic goals as the right of individuals to own property and retain profits, the clearing function of markets, the private settlement of disputes, the freedom to produce without government regulation, or the privatization of state-owned enterprises necessarily furthers the consolidation of democracy. After all, democracies do need to levy taxes and regulate certain transactions, especially where private monopolies and oligopolies exist. Citizens or their representatives may decide that it is desirable to protect the rights
of collectivities from encroachment by individuals, especially propertied ones, and they may choose to set aside certain forms of property for public or cooperative ownership. In short, notions of economic liberty that are currently put forward in neoliberal economic models are not synonymous with political freedom—and may even impede it.

Democratization will not necessarily bring in its wake economic growth, social peace, administrative efficiency, political harmony, free markets, or "the end of ideology." Least of all will it bring about "the end of history." No doubt some of these qualities could make the consolidation of democracy easier, but they are neither prerequisites for it nor immediate products of it. Instead, what we should be hoping for is the emergence of political institutions that can peacefully compete to form governments and influence public policy, that can channel social and economic conflicts through regular procedures, and that have sufficient linkages to civil society to represent their constituencies and commit them to collective courses of action. Some types of democracies, especially in developing countries, have been unable to fulfill this promise, perhaps due to the circumstances of their transition from authoritarian rule. The democratic wager is that such a regime, once established, will not only persist by reproducing itself within its initial confining conditions, but will eventually expand beyond them. Unlike authoritarian regimes, democracies have the capacity to modify their rules and institutions consensually in response to changing circumstances. They may not immediately produce all the goods mentioned above, but they stand a better chance of eventually doing so than do autocracies.

NOTES

1. For a comparative analysis of the recent regime changes in southern Europe and Latin America, see Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds., Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, 4 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). For another compilation that adopts a more structural approach see Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., Democracy in Developing Countries, vols. 2, 3, and 4 (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1989).


3. The definition most commonly used by American social scientists is that of Joseph Schumpeter: "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote." Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1943), 269. We accept certain aspects of the classical procedural approach to modern democracy, but differ primarily in our emphasis on the accountability of rulers to citizens and the relevance of mechanisms of competition other than elections.

4. Not only do some countries practice a stable form of democracy without a formal constitution (e.g., Great Britain and Israel), but even more countries have constitutions and
legal codes that offer no guarantee of reliable practice. On paper, Stalin’s 1936 constitution for the USSR was a virtual model of democratic rights and entitlements.

5. For the most valiant attempt to make some sense out of this thicket of distinctions, see Juan Linz, “Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes” in Handbook of Political Science, eds. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1975), 175-411.


WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT DEMOCRATIZATION AFTER TWENTY YEARS?

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KEY WORDS: democratization, transition, regime, authoritarian, military

ABSTRACT
This essay synthesizes the results of the large number of studies of late–20th-century democratization published during the last 20 years. Strong evidence supports the claims that democracy is more likely in more developed countries and that regime transitions of all kinds are more likely during economic downturns. Very few of the other arguments advanced in the transitions literature, however, appear to be generally true. This study proposes a theoretical model, rooted in characteristics of different types of authoritarian regimes, to explain many of the differences in democratization experience across cases in different regions. Evidence drawn from a data set that includes 163 authoritarian regimes offers preliminary support for the model proposed.

INTRODUCTION
As the twentieth century ends, elected officials govern more countries than at any previous time in human history. Transitions to democracy have occurred with surprising frequency during the past 20 years, and a great deal has been written on the subject by enthusiastic and intrigued observers. This essay summarizes what we have learned about such transitions and proposes a theory that makes sense of a number of apparently disparate findings.

Since 1974, identified by Huntington (1991) as the beginning of the “third wave” of democratization, 85 authoritarian regimes have ended. These transitions have resulted in 30 surviving and mostly quite stable democracies (not including democracies in some of the new states created as a consequence of
regime change); 9 democracies that lasted only a very short time before being overthrown; 8 cases in which there have been elections and leadership changes but in which either democracy appears very unstable or important groups are excluded from competition; 4 descents into warlordism; and 34 new authoritarian regimes.¹

Four regime changes led directly to the break-up of states, and 3 to the reunion of previously divided nations. Of the 21 new states created in the wake of regime changes, 5 seem at this point to be full democracies and 8 have held competitive elections but remain in important respects undemocratic. In 8, either elections have not been held or competition has been severely constrained. Six have been ravaged by civil war or impoverished by war with neighbors.

Thirty-two countries that either had authoritarian regimes in 1974 or have succumbed to them since then remain authoritarian, though most of them have taken some steps in the direction of political liberalization. In an additional 7 countries, long-ruling parties or rulers who had previously reinforced their dominance by fraud, limitations on competition, and selective repression have held competitive elections considered free and fair by observers, but have not been turned out of office. These regimes are hard to classify because well-entrenched incumbents have so many advantages with regard to control of state resources and the media that the lifting of restrictions on competition may not create a level playing field. Though several appear to have started irreversibly down the road to democracy, it is impossible to know whether such long-ruling parties and leaders will really step down if voted out of office until we see them do so.

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since the beginning of the third wave, so perhaps the owl of Minerva is waking up and readying its wings for flight. With all the years for study and all these cases to explore, what have we learned about late-twentieth-century regime transition and democratization?

¹Figures here and elsewhere are drawn from a data set collected by the author, which includes all authoritarian regimes (except monarchies) lasting three years or more that either existed in 1946 or came to power after 1946, in countries that achieved independence before 1990 and have a million or more inhabitants. Regimes are defined as sets of formal and informal rules and procedures for selecting national leaders and policies. Using this definition, periods of instability and temporary “moderating” military interventions (Stepan 1971) are considered interregna, not regimes. The three-year threshold is simply a way of excluding such periods from the data set. This cut-off point was chosen, after considerable empirical investigation of very short-lived authoritarian interludes, as the one that introduced the least misclassification into the data. I counted an authoritarian regime as defunct if either the dictator and his supporters had been ousted from office or if a negotiated transition resulted in reasonably fair, competitive elections and a change in the party or individual occupying executive office. Cases in which elections deemed free and fair by outside observers have been held but have not led to a turnover in personnel are treated here as uncertain outcomes because, until they actually step down, we do not know if long-ruling parties such as the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in Mexico or the Revolutionary Party of Tanzania (CCM) in Tanzania really will relinquish power.
Scholars have greeted the increasing number of democratizations with delight, intense attention, and theoretical puzzlement. It seems as though there should be a parsimonious and compelling explanation of the transitions, but the explanations proposed thus far have been confusingly complicated, careless about basic methodological details, often more useful as description than explanation, and surprisingly inconsistent with each other. The basic problem faced by analysts is that the process of democratization varies enormously from case to case and region to region. Generalizations proposed have failed either to accommodate all the real-world variation or to explain it.

This essay first reviews several of the most prominent arguments about the causes of democratization and briefly considers the evidence supporting and challenging them. It then suggests that different kinds of authoritarianism break down in characteristically different ways and sketches the theoretical underpinnings for this difference. Many of the contradictory conclusions reached by analysts who focus primarily on one region or another make sense once we take into account the predominance of different forms of authoritarianism in different parts of the world and the systematic differences in the ways these different forms disintegrate. A study of 163 authoritarian regimes in 94 countries provides evidence that the differences in breakdown patterns hypothesized actually do exist.

PAST RESEARCH

One of the few stylized facts to emerge from studies of regime transition is that democracy is more likely in more developed countries. The positive relationship between democratic government and economic development was empirically established beyond reasonable doubt by Jackman (1973) and Bollen (1979) and has been confirmed more recently by Burkhart & Lewis-Beck (1994). Several recent studies have increased our understanding of the process that results in this relationship. Using sophisticated statistical models to capture the complicated interaction between regime type and economic growth, Londregan & Poole (1990, 1996) have shown that the most important predictor of transitions to authoritarianism, whether from democracy or from other forms of authoritarianism, is poverty. Working in the same vein, Przeworski & Limongi (1997) show that once democratization has occurred, for whatever reason, it survives in countries above a certain level of economic development. Among countries below that threshold, the probability of a reversion to authoritarianism rises as the level of economic development falls.

Przeworski & Limongi interpret their findings as a challenge to modernization theory, though it seems to me a revisionist confirmation—in fact, the strongest empirical confirmation ever. Noting that transitions to democracy can occur for many reasons, they argue that the observed relationship between
democracy and development is caused not so much by the greater likelihood that more developed countries will democratize as by the improbability of authoritarian interventions in developed countries. This argument challenges all previous work on democratization; from Lipset (1959) and others associated with the early articulation of modernization theory to Moore (1966) and his descendants to those who have advocated a focus on contingent choices, _fortuna_, and _virtu_ in the study of transitions (most notably O’Donnell et al 1986), all analysts have focused their attention on transitions _to_ democracy. Przeworski & Limongi’s findings do not, however, disconfirm the basic arguments made by any of these schools of thought unless it turns out that modernization, the class composition of society, or contingent choices have no effect on the probability of transitions to authoritarianism, which seems unlikely.

From a large number of studies based on large numbers of cases covering several different time periods, the best of which use very sophisticated statistical models, we can conclude that a positive relationship exists between economic development and the likelihood of democratic government. A useful way to think about this relationship is shown in Figure 1.

This graphic image of modernization theory helps to interpret both standard observations and those that might otherwise be puzzling. First, we note that

![Figure 1](image)

_Figure 1_ Modernization theory. The relationship between economic development (_horizontal axis_) and the probability of democracy (_vertical axis_) is nonlinear, taking on the standard “S” shape we expect when the dependent variable is a probability ranging between zero and one.
among countries above a certain level of development, the probability of democracy is close to 100%, consistent with both casual observation and the findings of Przeworski & Limongi (1997). The probability of authoritarianism is similarly close to 100% below some threshold. Few countries currently remain below that threshold, but we can interpret it as consistent with the overwhelming historical prevalence of authoritarianism since the invention of states. The middle area of the graph is in many ways more interesting. Here, the probability of democracy is close to 50%, and we should not be surprised that countries at middle levels of development tend to alternate between different regime types. This is the group of countries in which transitions to both democracy and authoritarianism should be most common. It is also the group of countries in which human choices and serendipitous events—virtu and fortuna—could most easily affect outcomes, since underlying structural causes are fairly evenly balanced.

Of course, not all countries have the form of government this graph would lead us to expect. At the moment (summer 1998), Mongolia, Benin, and Madagascar have what appear to be viable democratic governments, and Singapore remains authoritarian. But we do not expect any social science theory to explain everything or predict perfectly, and certainly “modernization theory,” whatever underlying process it actually reflects, does not.

In short, after 20 years of observation and analysis during the third wave of academic interest in democratization, we can be reasonably certain that a positive relationship between development and democracy exists, though we do not know why.

A second stylized fact is also reasonably well established. Virtually all transition specialists believe that poor economic performance increases the likelihood of authoritarian breakdown, as it increases democratic breakdown and defeat of incumbents in stable democracies (e.g. Diamond & Linz 1989, Bermeo 1990). Most quantitative studies support their view. Przeworski & Limongi (1997) find the expected relationship between low economic growth and transition. Haggard & Kaufman (1995) emphasize the effects of economic crisis on regime change.

I turn now to a consideration of some of the more controversial arguments proposed by scholars. The body of literature on transitions now includes hundreds, if not thousands, of case studies of particular transitions; dozens of comparisons among small numbers of cases; and at least half a dozen important efforts at theoretically informed general synthesis. Many of the finest minds in comparative politics have worked on the subject. Virtually every suggested generalization to arise from this literature, however, has been challenged. Should social scientists throw in the towel, or is there some way to integrate the findings of different specialists working on different parts of the world and different time periods?
Until recently, one of the most widely accepted generalizations was that “there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence—direct or indirect—of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself” (O’Donnell & Schmitter 1986:19). Carefully documented case studies of a number of Latin American transitions supported the idea that the first steps toward what eventually became democratization could be traced to splits within military governments. The transition from military rule in Greece also fit. Analogous studies of the roots of transition in Spain and Portugal showed the existence of similar splits within the old regimes and were thus not seen as challenging the argument, though they brought some anomalies to analysts’ attention.

The democratizations that occurred in the wake of the Soviet collapse, however, could not in most cases be traced to splits within the old regime. Nor can most regime transitions in Africa. Bratton & van de Walle conclude from a study of 42 African countries that “transitions in Africa seem to be occurring more commonly from below.... [R]ulers are driven by calculations of personal political survival: They resist political openings for as long as possible” (1997:83).

In keeping with the argument about elite-initiated democratization, most observers of Latin American transitions assign little importance to popular mobilization as a cause of democratization. Popular mobilizations took place in many countries, but they usually occurred relatively late in the process, when democratization was well underway and the risks of opposition had diminished. Popular protest may have pushed democratization farther and faster than regime elites initially intended (Collier & Mahoney 1997; Bermeo 1997; R Collier, unpublished manuscript), but in most Latin American cases it did not cause the initiation of liberalization. In contrast, popular protest was the main reason old-regime elites agreed to begin negotiation in a number of East European and African cases (Bratton & van de Walle 1992, 1997).

Another often repeated claim is that pacts between elites facilitate successful transition to democracy (Burton et al 1992, Karl 1990). Pacts, as the term is used in the transitions literature, are agreements among contending elites that establish formulas for sharing or alternating in office, distributing the spoils of office, and constraining policy choice in areas of high salience to the groups involved, while excluding other groups from office, spoils, and influence over policy. Arguments about the usefulness of pacts have arisen from studies of Latin American and European cases of democratization, but, again, Bratton & van de Walle (1997) find no evidence of pacts in their African cases.

Yet another common argument is that “stronger” outgoing regimes are able to negotiate transition outcomes more favorable to themselves than those forced out by crisis. Agüero (1992, 1995), for example, argues that military governments that have ruled more effectively, such as those in Chile and Brazil, are able to secure a continuing role for officers in the policy process and
safeguard themselves from prosecution for crimes committed in office, whereas those that lose wars or otherwise leave in disgrace, such as the Argentine and Greek militaries, have little leverage. Haggard & Kaufman (1995, 1997) concur with Agüero about military bargaining power, though they disagree about which regimes were stronger. Further, they maintain that regimes exiting during economic crisis have less ability to obtain opposition agreement to institutions that are conducive to the moderate future politics and policies they prefer. It has to be true that actors with more bargaining power can get more in negotiations, so this argument is highly plausible if not earthshaking. It has been challenged, however, not by evidence from a larger number of cases, but by the passage of time. Stronger outgoing leaders can certainly get more during negotiations, but what they get may only matter for a short time after the transition.

THEORETICAL SYNTHESIS

One of the reasons regime transitions have proved so theoretically intractable is that different kinds of authoritarianism differ from each other as much as they differ from democracy. They draw on different groups to staff government offices and different segments of society for support. They have different procedures for making decisions, different ways of handling the choice of leaders and succession, and different ways of responding to society and opponents. Because comparativists have not studied these differences systematically, what theorizing exists about authoritarian regimes is posed at a highly abstract level, and few authors have considered how characteristics of dictatorships affect transitions. These differences, however, cause authoritarian regimes to break down in systematically different ways, and they affect transition outcomes. Here I propose theoretical foundations for explaining these differences among types of authoritarianism.

As virtually all close observers of authoritarian governments have noted, politics in such regimes, as in all others, involves factionalism, competition, and struggle. The competition among rival factions, however, takes different forms in different kinds of authoritarian regimes and has different consequences.

To facilitate the analysis of these differences, I classify authoritarian regimes as personalist, military, single-party, or amalgams of the pure types. In military regimes, a group of officers decides who will rule and exercises some influence on policy. In single-party regimes, access to political office and control over policy are dominated by one party, though other parties may legally exist and compete in elections. Personalist regimes differ from both military and single-party in that access to office and the fruits of office depends much more on the discretion of an individual leader. The leader may be an officer and may have created a party to support himself, but neither the military nor

Military regimes, as shown below, carry within them the seeds of their own disintegration; transitions from military rule usually begin with splits within the ruling military elite, as noted by much of the literature on Latin American transitions. In contrast, rival factions within single-party and personalist regimes have stronger incentives to cooperate with each other. Single-party regimes are quite resilient and tend to be brought down by exogenous events rather than internal splits (cf. Haggard & Kaufman 1995, Huntington 1991). Personalist regimes are also relatively immune to internal splits except when calamitous economic conditions disrupt the material underpinnings of regime loyalty. They are especially vulnerable, however, to the death of the leader and to violent overthrow (Huntington 1991). The lower probability that internal splits will lead to regime breakdown in non-military forms of authoritarianism explains why observers of transitions in Africa and Eastern Europe usually find the beginnings of change outside the regime rather than inside. Below I elaborate these arguments.

To explain why military regimes are more susceptible to internal disintegration, I focus here on rivalries and relationships within the ruling entity of an authoritarian government: the officer corps, single party, clique surrounding the ruler, or some amalgam of two or more of these three. Action within the ruling entity, of course, tells only a part of the story of regime change. Opposition from outside the ruling group and exogenous shocks [e.g. Soviet collapse, international economic crisis, International Monetary Fund (IMF)-induced economic reform] affect, sometimes decisively, regime survival. However, by focusing on political dynamics within different kinds of authoritarian regimes, I aim to show precisely how exogenous shocks and popular mobilization affect different kinds of regimes and thus the likelihood of transition. Building a theoretical foundation for understanding different kinds of authoritarian regimes makes it possible to move beyond lists of causes that sometimes matter (found in many studies of transitions) and toward systematic statements about when particular causes are likely to matter.

Most authoritarian regimes are established through either military intervention or the elimination of competition by a party that has gained office via election. What I call personalist regimes generally develop after the actual seizure

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2 Many authoritarian regimes go through changes over time that affect their classification. It is common for officers who seize power in military coups, for example, to attempt to concentrate power in their own individual hands, to hold plebiscitary elections to legitimate their personal rule, and to create parties to organize their supporters. In these ways, they sometimes succeed in changing basic features of the regime. Where such changes occurred over time, I used the later, in most cases stabler, period as the basis for classification.
of office, as a consequence of the struggle for power among rival leaders. In most military and some single-party regimes, struggles among factions, one backing the leader and others led by potential rivals, become visible to observers within the first few months after the seizure of power. When one individual wins such a struggle, successfully continuing to draw support from the organization that brought him to power but limiting his supporters’ influence on policy and personnel decisions, I label the regime personalist. Winning the initial struggle is no guarantee of long-term security, but individual leaders sometimes achieve a position from which, with continuous monitoring and rapid, shrewd, and unscrupulous responses to incipient opposition, they can for a time prevent serious challenges from arising.

Coup plotters, especially those with past experience in power, can often foresee the possibility of regime personalization, and they attempt in various ways to prevent it. Institutional arrangements designed to insure power sharing and consultation among high-ranking officers can be very elaborate. It took months for the various factions within the Argentine armed forces to hammer out power-sharing arrangements before the 1976 coup, and the resultant complicated and cumbersome governing institutions all but immobilized decision making at various times (Fontana 1987). As another way to reduce the probability that one officer will succeed in consolidating personal power at the expense of his colleagues, plotters often choose an officer known for correctness, adherence to rules, fairness, lack of personal ambition, and low charisma to lead the junta or military command council. General Augusto Pinochet, for example, was chosen to lead what was supposed to be a collegial junta in Chile because he had the most seniority within the junta, and his colleagues thought him a safe choice precisely because of his professionalism, respect for rules, and wooden, uncharismatic demeanor. Their assessment of his character was mistaken, as many others have been before and since. But power does not always corrupt; General Humberto Castello Branco, chosen to lead the first military government in Brazil for much the same reasons, lived up to expectations and resisted the temptation to consolidate personal power. Groups that seize power extraconstitutionally often try to prevent the personalization of the regime, but pre-coup contracts are often unenforceable.

Classification Issues

Although most authoritarian regimes are easy to classify, some are not. The criteria for classification used here emphasize control over access to power and influence rather than formal institutional characteristics. A military regime, in contrast to a personalist dictatorship led by a military officer, is one in which a group of officers determines who will lead the country and has some influence on policy. In an institutionalized military regime (many are not), senior officers have agreed on some formula for sharing or rotating power, and
consultation is somewhat routinized. Military hierarchy is respected, perhaps after an initial purge of supporters of the previous government. Examples of military regimes include the Brazilian (1964–1985), in which senior officers, in consultation with a small number of civilians, picked each successive president in keeping with rules specified by the institutions of the authoritarian regime; the Argentine (1976–1983), in which senior officers never completely lost the power to choose the president, despite intense factional struggle and the efforts of the first military president to renege on pre-coup agreements among the conspirators to rotate the office; and the Salvadoran (1948–1984), in which military manipulation of elections insured that the officer selected by the military as its candidate always won the presidency.

In contrast to these cases, many regimes headed by military officers are not in reality controlled by a group of senior officers. It is common for military interventions to lead to short periods of military rule followed by the consolidation of power by a single officer and the political marginalization of much of the rest of the officer corps. These are personal dictatorships, even though the leader wears a uniform. Regimes such as Rafael Trujillo’s in the Dominican Republic (1930–1961), Idi Amin’s in Uganda (1971–1979), and Jean-Bédel Bokassa’s in the Central African Republic (1966–1979) are somewhat extreme instances of the transformation of military intervention into personal tyranny. Others, such as Pinochet’s in Chile and Suharto’s in Indonesia, are harder to classify because the military institution retained some autonomy and influence. Here I classify them in intermediate categories (on Chile, see Remmer 1989 and Arriagada 1988; on Indonesia, see Jenkins 1984, Liddle 1989).

Because many dictators form parties to support themselves, distinguishing between “real” and nominal single-party regimes involves the same careful judgments as distinguishing between military regimes and personalist ones led by officers. In the ideal-type single-party regime, a party organization exercises some power over the leader at least part of the time, controls the career paths of officials, organizes the distribution of benefits to supporters, and mobilizes citizens to vote and show support for party leaders in other ways. Holding regular elections in which there is some competition, either from opposition parties or within the dominant party, is a strong indication that a party has achieved a level of organization and influence sufficient to be taken seriously as a political actor. Examples of single-party regimes include that of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in Mexico, the Revolutionary Party of Tanzania (CCM), and the Leninist parties in various East European countries. Regimes such as Juan Perón’s in Argentina, in which the leader himself maintains a near monopoly over policy and personnel decisions despite having founded a support party, are personalist.

Area experts’ criteria for distinguishing dominant-party authoritarian regimes from democracies vary by region. Latin Americanists generally consid-
er Mexico authoritarian at least until 1996, but most African specialists consider Botswana, Senegal, and even Zimbabwe democratic. To compare across regions, the same set of criteria must be applied everywhere. In this study, regimes are considered authoritarian and labeled single-party if other parties have been banned or subjected to serious harassment or institutional disadvantage, or if the dominant party has never lost control of the executive since coming to power and usually wins more than two thirds of the seats in the legislature. Once a regime is labeled single-party, I do not consider it fully democratized until one turnover of executive power has occurred. Where it appears that conclusions might be affected by the considerable stringency of these criteria, I also show results using a less demanding rule.3

**Theoretical Foundations**

Standard theories of politics in democratic regimes begin with two simplifying assumptions: (a) Politicians want to get into office and remain there; (b) the best strategy for doing so is to give constituents what they want. Both of these assumptions need modification in the context of authoritarianism. Although even very coercive regimes cannot survive without some support, in the absence of routine ways for citizens to remove authoritarian leaders from office, questions of who exactly their constituents are, how satisfied they have to be, and what factors besides satisfaction with regime performance affect their level of acquiescence require empirical investigation and cannot be answered in the abstract. Moreover, before questions about the identity of constituents and how to keep them acquiescent can be relevant, we need to ask whether it is plausible to assume that potential authoritarian leaders always want to achieve office and, once having achieved it, always try to hold onto power. If they do not, we need a new theory to account for their behavior. One of the central arguments of this essay is that military officers, in contrast to leaders in single-party and personalist regimes, often do not.

**The Interests of Military Officers**

Research on the attitudes and preferences of military officers in many different societies shows that officers in different countries come from different socioeconomic, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. They have different ideologies and feel sympathetic toward different societal interests. No generalizations can be made about the interests or policies they are likely to support.

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3 These regime type classifications are similar to Huntington’s (1991), and my “coding” judgments are very close to his. My decision rule for determining whether a political system had crossed the threshold to democracy is essentially the same as that of Przeworski & Limongi (1997). The biggest difference between my classification scheme and that of Linz & Stepan (1996) is that I collapse what they call sultanistic and civilianized regimes into one category, personalist. Which classification scheme is most useful depends on the purpose to which it is being put.
There is, however, a consensus in the literature that most professional soldiers place a higher value on the survival and efficacy of the military itself than on anything else (Janowitz 1960, 1977; Finer 1975; Bienen 1978; DeCalo 1976; Kennedy 1974; Van Doorn 1968, 1969).

This corporate interest implies a concern with the maintenance of hierarchy, discipline, and cohesiveness within the military; autonomy from civilian intervention; and budgets sufficient to attract high-quality recruits and buy state-of-the-art weapons. Officers also value highly the territorial integrity of the nation and internal order, but they feel unable to pursue these goals effectively unless the military itself remains unified and adequately supplied (Stepan 1971, Nordlinger 1977, de Oliveira 1978, Barros 1978). In countries in which joining the military has become a standard path to personal enrichment (for example, Bolivia for a time, Panama, Nicaragua under Somoza, Guatemala, Ghana before 1981, Nigeria, Thailand, Congo), acquisitive motives can be assumed to rank high in most officers’ preferences—highest for some, and second or third for most, if only because the continued existence of lucrative opportunities for officers may depend on the survival of the military as an effective organization.

Such preferences imply that officers agree to join coup conspiracies only if they believe that the civilian government prevents the achievement of their main goals, and that many, in fact, will only join if they believe that the military institution itself is threatened. These preferences are thus consistent with Stepan’s (1971) and Nordlinger’s (1977) observations about the importance of threats to the military as an institution in the decisions of officers to join coup conspiracies.

Only a small proportion originally entered the military in the hope of attaining governmental offices. Many praetorians took up the reins of government with little enthusiasm. Most of them would probably have much preferred to remain in the barracks if their objectives, particularly the defense or enhancement of the military’s corporate interests, could have been realized from that vantage point. (Nordlinger 1977:142).

The worst possible outcome for the military as an institution is civil war in which one part of the armed forces fights another. Consequently, the most important concern for many officers deciding whether to join a coup conspiracy is their assessment of how many others will join.

What Nordlinger, Stepan, and others are describing is similar to a classic Battle of the Sexes game. The insight behind Battle of the Sexes games comes from the following scenario: One member of a couple would prefer to go to a movie and the other would prefer the opera, but each would prefer doing something together to doing something alone. Going to either event together is a potential equilibrium, but no dominant strategy exists, since the best outcome for either player always depends on what the other does.
The logic of decisions about seizing power or returning to the barracks is the same. Some officers are tempted to intervene, others have legalist values that preclude intervention except in the most extreme circumstances, and most are located somewhere in between—but almost all care most about the survival and efficacy of the military and thus want the military to move either in or out of power as a cohesive whole. Figure 2 depicts this set of preferences as a game.

In the game shown in Figure 2, the majority prefers to remain in the barracks. A minority would prefer to intervene, but would be far worse off if they tried to intervene without support from the majority than if they remained unhappily in the barracks. Participants in an unsuccessful coup attempt face possible demotion, discharge, court martial, and execution for treason, so their payoff is shown as a negative number. The majority faction that opposed the coup is also likely to be worse off after the attempt, since the armed forces will have been weakened, and the government is likely to respond with greater oversight, reorganization, and interference with promotions and postings to try to insure greater loyalty, all of which reduce military autonomy. The final possible outcome is a successful coup carried out despite minority opposition. In this event the minority that remains loyal to the civilian government is likely to face the same costs as unsuccessful conspirators: demotion, discharge, prison, death. The winners achieve power, but a weakened military institution reduces their chances of keeping it. Future conspiracies supported by those demoted or discharged after the coup become more likely. Once factions of the military take up arms against each other, it takes years or decades to restore unity and trust.

This is a coordination game; once the military is either in power (upper left cell) or out of power (lower right cell), neither faction can improve its position unilaterally. Each faction must have the other’s cooperation in order to secure its preferred option. When the military is out of power, even if the majority

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*Figure 2*  Game between military factions. The two numbers in each cell represent the respective pay-offs to the two factions. *Upper left cell:* pay-offs of a successful intervention by the unified military. *Lower right cell:* pay-offs of remaining in or returning to the barracks. *Lower left cell:* pay-offs of an unsuccessful coup attempt by a minority faction. *Upper right cell:* pay-offs of a successful coup carried out despite minority opposition.
comes to believe it should intervene, it cannot shift equilibria without cooperation from the minority.

Where interventionists have wide support and an open political system makes plotting relatively safe and easy, coups are often preceded by extensive consultation among officers, delays until almost total consensus within the officer corps is achieved, and elaborate negotiations over power sharing and rotation in office. These consultations and negotiations aim to insure the cooperation of all major factions in the intervention. Such elaborate efforts to achieve coordination have been described, e.g. in Brazil leading to the 1964 coup (Stepan 1971), in Argentina prior to the 1976 coup (Fontana 1987), and in Chile in 1973 (Valenzuela 1978).

Where interventionists have only minority support and plotting is more difficult, another, though riskier, strategy is available. Conspirators can keep the plot secret from all but a few key officers and hope that the rest will go along once key central institutions have been seized. (Often the presidential palace, garrisons in and around the capital city, radio and TV stations, central telephone and telegraph exchanges, and the airport will suffice.) This is the strategy Nordlinger (1977) identifies as most common. It often succeeds precisely because most of the officer corps cares more about military unity than about whether officers control government or not. It is a characteristic of games like Battle of the Sexes that the actor who succeeds in moving first can always get what he or she wants. In the real world, however, the first-mover strategy sometimes fails, usually because the first mover fails to persuade the rest that most other officers will support the coup.

The attempted Spanish coup in 1981 is an example of a failed first-mover strategy. Passive support for intervention was widespread within the Spanish military, mostly because of the threat to national integrity posed by the Suárez government’s willingness to negotiate with Basque and Catalán nationalists. The small group of active conspirators believed that once they had seized control of the Cortes and key installations in Madrid, King Juan Carlos and the rest of the officer corps would go along with the fait accompli. The evidence available suggests that most of the officer corps would have gone along if the king had not immediately begun telephoning the captains-general and other high-ranking officers to inform them that he would resist the coup (Colomer 1995). For some officers, loyalty to the king was stronger than other values and led them to oppose the intervention. For others, the king’s unequivocal opposition indicated which position the rest of the officer corps was likely to take, and this information led them to resist intervention in order to end up on the same side. The coup might well have succeeded if the king’s access to telephones and television had been blocked. Colomer (1995:121) quotes one of the erstwhile conspirators as saying, “The next time, cut the King’s phone line!”
For some military leaders, the game changes after a successful seizure of power, but most officers always see their situation as resembling a Battle of the Sexes game, even in the most politicized and factionalized militaries. Repeated coups by different factions, as in Syria prior to 1970 or Benin ( Dahomey) before 1972, would not be possible if most of the army did not go along with the first mover, either in seizing power or in handing it back.

The Interests of Party Cadres in Single-Party Regimes

The preferences of party cadres are much simpler than those of officers. Like democratic politicians, they simply want to hold office. Some value office because they want to control policy, some for the pure enjoyment of influence and power, and some for the illicit material gains that come with office in some countries. The game between party leaders and cadres, sometimes called Staghunt, is shown in Figure 3. (The insight behind the Staghunt game is that in a primitive stag hunt, everyone’s cooperation is needed in order to encircle and kill the prey. If anyone wanders off, leaving a hole in the circle, all including the wanderer are worse off.)

The minority’s pay-off in opposition is lower than when the party holds power because the opposition has fewer opportunities to exercise influence or line pockets. If the minority faction is excluded from office but the party continues in power, the minority continues to receive some benefits, since its policy preferences are pursued and party connections are likely to bring various opportunities.

Factions form in single-party regimes around policy differences and competition for leadership positions, but everyone is better off if all factions remain united and in office. This is why cooptation rather than exclusion is the rule in established single-party regimes. Neither faction would be better off ruling alone, and neither would voluntarilywithdraw from office unless ex-

**Figure 3** Staghunt game between factions in single-party regimes. The best outcome for everyone is for both factions to hold office (upper left cell). The worst outcome occurs when both are out of power (lower right cell). Upper right cell: the pay-off to the minority of holding office in the opposition (i.e. after the dominant party no longer rules), and to the majority out of office. Lower left cell: The minority faction is excluded from office, but the party continues in power.
ogenous events changed the costs and benefits of cooperating with each other (and hence the game itself)—a possibility to which I return below.

The Interests of Members of Cliques

Membership in personalist cliques tends to be more fluid and harder to identify than membership in parties or the officer corps. During and after a seizure of power, personalist cliques are often formed from the network of friends, relatives, and allies that surrounds every political leader. In personalist regimes, one individual dominates both the military and state apparatus. As in single-party regimes, factions form around potential rivals to the leader, but during normal times they have strong reasons to continue supporting the regime and leader.

Insiders in a patrimonial ruling coalition are unlikely to promote reform.... Recruited and sustained with material inducements, lacking an independent political base, and thoroughly compromised in the regime’s corruption, they are dependent on the survival of the incumbent. Insiders typically have risen through the ranks of political service and, apart from top leaders who may have invested in private capital holdings, derive livelihood principally from state or party offices. Because they face the prospect of losing all visible means of support in a political transition, they have little option but to cling to the regime, to sink or swim with it. (Bratton & van de Walle 1997:86)

In game-theoretic terms, this description means that the pay-offs to members of personalist cliques differ from the pay-offs in the game between factions in single-party regimes in two ways. First, the pay-off to members of a minority faction excluded from office is likely to be much lower, in part because this faction is unlikely to receive benefits from the leader’s policy choices. Factions excluded from the inner circle by a personalist leader often face poverty, exile, prison, or the risk of assassination. Second, the majority faction may actually increase benefits to itself by excluding the minority from participation. Where the main benefits of participation in the government come from access to rents and illicit profit opportunities, benefits to individual members of the ruling group may be higher if they need not be shared too widely. It may also be easier to keep damage to the economy below the meltdown threshold, and thus increase the likelihood of regime survival, if the predatory group is relatively small. Despite these differences, however, the basic logic of the game is similar to that in single-party regimes. Neither faction would voluntarily leave office.

THE EFFECT OF CADRE INTERESTS ON REGIME BREAKDOWN

The interests described above determine whether the splits and rivalries that exist within all kinds of governments lead to regime breakdown. Because most
military officers view their interests as following a logic similar to that of a Battle of the Sexes game, they acquiesce in continued intervention regardless of whether military rule becomes institutionalized, the leader concentrates power in his own hands, or a rival ousts the original leader. The officer corps will not, however, go along with disintegration of the military into openly competing factions. If elite splits threaten military unity and efficacy, most of the officer corps will opt for a return to the barracks.

Military regimes thus contain the seeds of their own destruction. When elite rivalries or policy differences become intense and factional splits become threatening, a return to the barracks becomes an attractive option for most officers. For officers, there is life after democracy, as all but the highest regime officials can usually return to the barracks with their status and careers untarnished and their salaries and budgets often increased by nervous transitional governments (Nordlinger 1977, Huntington 1991).

Leaders of single-party regimes also face competition from rivals, but most of the time, as in personalist regimes, the benefits of cooperation are sufficiently large to insure continued support from all factions. Leadership struggles and succession crises occur, but except in some extraordinary situations, ordinary cadres always want to remain in power. During leadership struggles, most ordinary cadres just keep their heads down and wait to see who wins. Thus, in contrast to military regimes, leadership struggles within single-party regimes do not usually result in transitions.

This difference explains why the early transitions literature, drawing insights primarily from the transitions from military rule in Latin America, emphasized splits within the regime as causes of the initiation of democratization. In other parts of the world, where rule by the military as an institution is less common, factions and splits could be identified within authoritarian regimes but did not seem to result in transition. Instead, observers emphasize the importance of economic crisis (Haggard & Kaufman 1995), external pressure (Huntington 1991), and popular protest (Bratton & van de Walle 1992, 1997; Casper & Taylor 1996) in bringing down long-standing dictatorships.

Because military regimes have more endogenous sources of instability than do personalist or single-party regimes, they are more fragile. Military regimes in existence at any time between 1946 and the present have lasted on average about 9 years. Personalist regimes survived about 15 years on average, and single-party regimes (excluding those maintained by direct foreign occupation or military threat) endured on average almost 23 years. Even more dramatic

4The data set excludes regimes formed since 1995 (in keeping with the three-year rule) and all regimes in states formed since 1990. The vast majority of temporary authoritarian interludes excluded by the three-year rule are military. If they were included, the average duration of military regimes would be much lower. Nordlinger, who did not exclude them from his calculations, found that military regimes last five years on average (1977:139).
are the differences in the ages of currently surviving regimes of different types. The average age of military regimes still in existence in 1998 is 7 years; personalist regimes, almost 19 years; and single-party regimes, 35 years.\footnote{Figures were calculated using stringent criteria for democratization. Table 1 also shows regime lengths when less stringent criteria are used.} Table 1 shows the average duration and survival rates of all regime types, including hybrids.

Survival rates for different types of regime also differ markedly. Only about 11\% of the military regimes that have existed since 1946 still exist in 1998. The proportion of surviving personalist regimes is not much higher (15\%). In contrast, 50\% of single-party regimes continue to exist. The proportion of each type of regime that ended during each five-year period after 1945 is shown in Table 2. This chronological presentation reveals the effects of exogenous shocks, such as the economic crisis of the 1980s, that affect all regimes. On average, the proportion of military regimes that fell during any particular five years between 1945 and 1994 was about 50\% higher than the proportion of personalist regimes and about four times the proportion of single-party regimes.

Personalist regimes are less vulnerable to internal splits than are military regimes, but three characteristics make them less robust than single-party regimes. First, personalist regimes rarely survive long after the death of the leader, perhaps because, in their effort to defend themselves from potential rivals, leaders so assiduously eliminate followers who demonstrate high levels of ability and ambition. Of the 51 personalist regimes included in my data set, only four survived more than a short time after the dictator’s death or ouster: Salazar’s in Portugal, Somoza’s in Nicaragua, Tubman’s in Liberia, and Duvalier’s in Haiti. These exceptions underscore the importance of the elimination of able potential rivals as an explanation for why personalist regimes so seldom last longer than their founders. Salazar was incapacitated two years before his death and personally chose Marcello Caetano as his successor, thus lending him the old man’s personal protection during the initial stage of his administration. Caetano, who lasted six years, has been described as “a follower, not a leader. His caution, legalism, and indecision proved fatal to the regime he headed. He had stood too long in the shadow of a mentor who rewarded diligence but distrusted initiative” (Maxwell 1986:112). Somoza and Duvalier passed the scepter to their sons and Tubman to his son-in-law, perhaps the only potential successors likely to be tolerated for long by most personalist dictators.

Personalist regimes arise when the military and party are not sufficiently developed or autonomous to prevent the leader from taking personal control of decisions and the selection of regime personnel. The fear of potential rivals leads such rulers to undermine these and other institutions that might serve as power bases for challenges (Linz & Chehabi 1998, Snyder 1998). Personalist
rulers rely instead on informal and often quite unstable personal networks, sometimes based on kinship, ethnicity, or region, within which particularistic favors are exchanged for loyalty. Typically, regime personnel are rotated frequently to prevent them from developing autonomous bases of support, and erstwhile supporters who become rivals or dissidents are quickly and uncERemoniously excluded from office, influence, and sometimes life (Bratton & van de Walle 1994, 1997). Currently, Saddam Hussein provides a vivid example of a personalist dictator in action. “[S]enior officers have been switched, fired, executed or so tarred with Mr. Hussein’s brush that they have no future outside his orbit” (Economist 1995:46).

The second characteristic that affects the longevity of personalist regimes is the relative narrowness of their support bases. They distribute benefits and office to a smaller proportion of citizens than do single-party regimes, and the group of beneficiaries is more likely to be dominated by a single familial, clan, ethnic, or regional group. With both rewards for loyalty and penalties for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime Type</th>
<th>Average Length of Rule (years)</th>
<th>Average Age of Surviving Regimes</th>
<th>Percent of Regimes Surviving in 1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>8.8 (31)</td>
<td>7.3 (4)</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military/Personal</td>
<td>10.3 (3)</td>
<td>12.3 (3)</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>15.1 (43)</td>
<td>18.8 (8)</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Party/Personal</td>
<td>15.0 (8)</td>
<td>39.0 (3)</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Party (stringent transition criteria)</td>
<td>22.7 (17)</td>
<td>35.1 (17)</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Party (less stringent criteria)</td>
<td>25.7 (22)</td>
<td>33.5 (11)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Party/Military</td>
<td>23.8 (4)</td>
<td>— (0)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Party/ Military/Personal</td>
<td>31.0 (2)</td>
<td>37.3 (3)</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aRegimes imposed and maintained by foreign occupation or military threat are excluded.

bIncludes all regimes that had ended by 1998.

cIncludes regimes in existence in 1946, or that have come into existence since then, that still survived in 1998.

dThe number of regimes on which averages are based is shown in parentheses.

fSix countries in this category have held elections deemed free and fair by international observers, but nevertheless returned the ruling party to power. The results if these countries are classified as having democratized are shown immediately below.
unsuccessful defection very high, internal splits become unlikely. But groups excluded from participation and benefits may be tempted to challenge the regime, even though the penalty for unsuccessful attempts is grave for them too.

Because personalist regimes sustain the loyalty of their supporters by providing access to material rewards, they are vulnerable to economic catastrophe—a salient fact in the current international economy. Poor economic performance does not destabilize them, since performance need not be good in order to reward those who benefit from inefficient policies. Disasters of such magnitude that public employees and soldiers cannot be paid, however, are another matter. Economic reforms that reduce state intervention and hence rent-seeking opportunities can also undermine regime support, though people are pretty inventive about finding ways to benefit from reforms.

Single-party regimes also have few endogenous sources of instability and, in addition, can usually weather the death of founders and leaders. Through their control over the allocation of educational opportunities, jobs, and positions in government, single parties can typically claim the loyalty (or at least acquiescence) of many of the most able, ambitious, and upwardly mobile individuals in society, especially those from peasant and urban marginal backgrounds whose social mobility might otherwise have been quite limited. Single parties are more likely to be open to all loyal citizens than are personalist regimes and are less likely to limit their clientele to particular clan, regional, or ethnic groups. In the absence of exogenous shocks, they are unlikely to be destabilized by either internal rivalries or external opposition, as shown by their remarkably low average five-year morbidity rate prior to 1990 (see Table

### Table 2  Failure rate of authoritarian regimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Single-Party</th>
<th>Personalist</th>
<th>Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945–1949</td>
<td>0.14* (7)b</td>
<td>0.11 (9)</td>
<td>0.25 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950–1954</td>
<td>0.0 (8)</td>
<td>0.0 (12)</td>
<td>0.33 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955–1959</td>
<td>0.0 (11)</td>
<td>0.27 (15)</td>
<td>0.40 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960–1964</td>
<td>0.05 (21)</td>
<td>0.19 (16)</td>
<td>0.13 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965–1969</td>
<td>0.04 (24)</td>
<td>0.21 (24)</td>
<td>0.31 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970–1974</td>
<td>0.13 (24)</td>
<td>0.13 (24)</td>
<td>0.20 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975–1979</td>
<td>0.04 (27)</td>
<td>0.35 (26)</td>
<td>0.40 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–1984</td>
<td>0.12 (26)</td>
<td>0.14 (22)</td>
<td>0.55 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985–1989</td>
<td>0.04 (23)</td>
<td>0.18 (22)</td>
<td>0.50 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–1994</td>
<td>0.26 (23)</td>
<td>0.42 (19)</td>
<td>0.43 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average mortality rate per 5-year period</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Proportion of the total number of each kind of regime in existence, or that came into existence during the time period, that ended during each five-year time span.

bNumber of regimes in each category during each five-year period.
2.) Of the single-party regimes that either existed in 1946 or were formed after that date, 50% still exist in 1998.

Single-party regimes survive in part because their institutional structures make it relatively easy for them to allow greater participation and popular influence on policy without giving up their dominant role in the political system. Most single-party governments have legalized opposition parties and increased the space for political contestation. Six (in Botswana, Mexico, Taiwan, Tanzania, Angola, and Mozambique) have been certified by outside observers as having held free and fair elections, but in only two does the party seem to be in danger of losing its hegemonic position.

When faced with unexpected problems, military regimes tend to split, personalist regimes to circle the wagons, and single parties to try to coopt their critics. Consequently, violent overthrow is much more likely to end personalist than military or single-party regimes. The modal ending for personalist regimes is a coup, and insurgency, assassination, popular uprising, or invasion are important causes of breakdown in more than half (see Skocpol & Goodwin 1994). Such endings are relatively uncommon for military and single-party regimes. Coups are fairly common in military governments, but they usually do not end the regime. They are primarily a way of changing leadership while maintaining the regime itself.

Economic crises threaten the survival of all forms of government, democratic and authoritarian. Military governments are more vulnerable to economic downturns than are other authoritarianisms because poor economic performance is likely to precipitate or worsen splits in the officer corps. On average, military governments can survive only moderate amounts of economic bad news, whereas single-party governments are remarkably resilient in the face of disastrous economic performance. Among military regimes that fell between 1946 and 1993, per capita income grew on average 0.4% during the year prior to the fall. Such low per capita growth is never good news, but neither is it an economic crisis. Per capita income declined by an average of 0.5% during the year before transitions from personalist rule, suggesting that personalist regimes are somewhat more resilient to economic decline than are military. In single-party regimes that broke down before 1993, in

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6The most recent transitions had to be excluded from these calculations because of data limitations. The year before a transition seems to be the best indicator of relevant economic performance. Growth rates in transition years sometimes decline steeply as a consequence of chaos and violence associated with the transition itself and sometimes rise sharply in response to public euphoria and renewed optimism; both possibilities make them poor indicators of the old regime’s economic performance. Przeworski & Limongi (1997) tested various longer-term and lagged indicators of economic performance on the probability of transition and found that only the preceding year had an effect. Tests of the effect of economic performance on US voting behavior have also shown that citizens have short memories.
striking contrast, per capita income fell by about 4% on average during the year prior to the transition.7

Because military governments are more likely to decide to step down before conditions in the country have reached crisis, military governments are also more likely to negotiate orderly transitions. The modal pattern of transition from military rule is negotiation, sometimes preceded by a bloodless coup against the military faction in power by officers determined to return to the barracks (Huntington 1991). Democracies are created by negotiation. It is very rare for them to emerge directly from popular insurgency, rebellion, or civil war.

Thirty-one percent of transitions from military rule since 1945 have resulted in stable, long-lived democracies, and another 43% in short-lived, unstable, or exclusionary democracies. In contrast, only 16% of the breakdowns of personalist regimes have led to stable democracies. Forty-nine percent of transitions from personalist regimes have resulted in new authoritarianisms. The higher average level of economic development in countries with military regimes accounts for some of this difference, but the effect of type of authoritarianism on regime outcome, though reduced, remains statistically significant when level of economic development is controlled for.

Because negotiation is more likely to play an important role in transitions from military rule than in the typically more rapid and chaotic transitions from personalist rule, it might seem that pacts would be more likely during transitions from military rule. It turns out, however, that explicit pacts of the kind emphasized in studies of the Venezuelan, Colombian, and Spanish transitions (Karl 1986, 1990) are extremely uncommon in comparative perspective, and many successful democratizations have occurred without them. Efforts to form pacts usually fail, and the ones that succeed may be a reflection of underlying political and social conditions conducive to stable democracy rather than an independent cause of later stability.8 Successful pact making seems to require the prior existence of well-organized parties able to make and keep commitments, whose membership encompasses most potential political elites. The ability to keep commitments implies a reasonable degree of party control over the rival factions within each party. Such prior party development is uncommon in countries with little democratic experience.

7 As elsewhere in this essay, regimes maintained in power by direct foreign military threat are excluded from calculations.

8 The study of the effects of pacts has been affected by selection bias. Most observers are only aware of the pacts that have lasted a reasonably long time. Those that failed, such as the Honduran pact, patterned explicitly after the Colombian National Front and expected to guarantee the success of the transition to democracy in 1971, are almost never studied. The Honduran democratic experiment of 1971 was overthrown in 1972.
Although explicit pacts to share power, exclude others from office, and limit the policy space have been uncommon during transitions from all kinds of authoritarian regimes, negotiations and bargaining have played a role in most transitions from military rule. Some outgoing governments have been able to negotiate amnesties for themselves, limitations on future political competition, and changes in democratic political institutions designed to disadvantage leftist or extremist parties. These guarantees seemed very important at the time and may well have hastened the transitions. From the perspective of 1998, however, they seem less important. No democratic government has prosecuted more than a few people for crimes committed during authoritarian regimes, whether an amnesty was agreed to or not, and the majority have prosecuted no one. Korea, one of the countries in which the military was considered the most successful, has carried out more severe punishments of former military rulers than have most countries whose departing rulers were considered weak.

Similarly, efforts to manipulate the future political spectrum have proved both less effective (except in Chile) and less important than expected. Voters in the vast majority of new democracies have opted for centrist political leaders, and center-right parties have done better than expected (Bermeo 1990). Where democracies have survived, initial exclusionary arrangements have been allowed to lapse. During the third wave, threats to private property have arisen not from the left, but from ineffective economic policy, the breakdown of public order, and civil war.

Later transitions have faced different challenges than earlier ones. While military regimes, most but not all conservative, predominated among the early breakdowns, later breakdowns were much more likely to involve left-leaning regimes. In addition, the collapse of the Soviet Union simply changed perceptions; as the appeal of socialist options declined, so did the leftist threat and the apparent need for institutional arrangements to limit leftist influence.

The basic problem facing exiting dictatorships is that the agreements they make during transitions are usually unenforceable once the transition is complete. Much of their bargaining power disappears the minute they leave office. Militaries can enforce compliance with amnesties and other deals, but only if they can make credible threats to respond with violence if the new government reneges. The ability to make such credible threats does not depend on whether an amnesty was signed at the time of the transition; it depends on the condition of the military at the time the threat is needed (Hunter 1997). Former dominant parties and ruling cliques have even less ability to enforce agreements once out of power. Their only real resource is popular support.

The success of exiting dictators’ efforts to lock in preferred policies or limit future political participation also depends on what happens after the transition (Pion-Berlin 1992, Zagorski 1994, Millett 1995, Hunter 1995, Ruhle 1996, Pion-Berlin & Arceneaux 1998). A number of dictators have imposed changes
in traditional political institutions aimed at creating long-term disadvantages for their opponents. Most of these efforts have been short-sighted and unsophisticated, leading either to the kind of strategic voting so elegantly described in O’Donnell’s (1973) analysis of Argentine politics during the 1960s or to other unforeseen consequences. Furthermore, institutions can be changed, and once authoritarians have stepped down, democratic politicians have strong incentives to change any that truly disadvantage large groups of citizens. Authoritarian regimes have successfully locked in policies only where a substantial number of citizens benefits from them. Even in Chile, Pinochet’s multiple reinforcing institutional innovations depend for their survival on about a third of the voters continuing to favor conservative parties.

THE EFFECTS OF EXOGENOUS SHOCKS

Authoritarian governments need some support and a good deal of acquiescence to remain in power. A very cohesive dictatorship willing to use force can survive despite widespread opposition for a limited period but not indefinitely and not if deserted by its own cadres. Authoritarian governments, like others, need to be able to distribute benefits to active supporters and coalition partners, to achieve passable economic performance in order to sustain mass acquiescence, and to maintain adequate coercive capacity to get through the inevitable times when they fail to deliver. The exogenous shocks that undermine authoritarian regimes are those that prevent passable economic performance, impede the distribution of benefits to supporters and allies, and destroy coercive capacity.

As shown in Table 2, the rate of breakdown for authoritarian regimes rises in the context of external shocks. These shocks were both geopolitical and economic. Beginning with the second oil crisis in the late 1970s and worsened by the debt crisis, changes in the international economy made it increasingly difficult for governments to supply passable economic performance. This worldwide economic crisis hit the countries of Africa and Latin America hardest but also reduced consumption in communist Europe and elsewhere. Of the 14 military regimes in power just prior to the second oil crisis, all had fallen by 1988, about a decade later. I do not suggest that the economic crisis caused these breakdowns, but it worsened preexisting splits within the military, greatly increased popular protest against military regimes, and cast doubt on the competence of military governments, even in the eyes of officers. In the face of popular opposition and increasing internal factionalism, a return to the barracks became increasingly attractive to officers in many countries.

All kinds of authoritarian regimes were eventually affected by the economic crisis, as populations plunging into poverty blamed their governments and gradually took the risk of demanding change. As the crisis deepened,
IMF-induced economic reforms forced governments to reduce benefits to traditional supporters. By the late 1980s, regime stalwarts were losing their government jobs and facing wage cuts in many developing countries, trade liberalization was undermining the support of both labor and capital in the import-substitution sector in many economies (much of it previously nurtured by government subsidy), and various economic reforms were cutting profit opportunities out from under rent seekers all over the world. Economic reform reduced benefits to regime supporters at the same time that the crisis itself reduced acquiescence among ordinary citizens.

Personalist regimes began to fall at an increased rate in the early 1990s. As long as economies functioned well enough for personalist leaders to provide supporters with access to opportunities and resources, the supporters remained committed to the regime. During the 1990s, however, “the economic crisis undercut the material foundations of patrimonial rule: With ever fewer resources to distribute, political elites faced a growing problem of how to maintain control of clientelist networks” (Bratton & van de Walle 1997:100). Pressure from donors and lenders forced rulers to reduce precisely the kinds of state spending that had been most politically useful and to change state interventionist policies that had traditionally supplied politically necessary rents. Without these material inducements, allies and supporters deserted their leaders.

The timing of the big increase in the morbidity rate of African personalist regimes in the early 1990s suggests that these breakdowns were caused not by poor economic performance per se (which had begun in most countries at least 10 years earlier) but rather by the combination of external pressures and reforms that have cut benefits to regime cadres. Although few African countries have made full transitions to democracy, many authoritarian regimes have fallen. At this point, one can feel confident that few African personalist regimes of the early 1980s will see the new century, but what is likely to follow them is not clear.

On average, single-party regimes have been remarkably resilient even in the face of long, severe economic crises. A few (in Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan) continued to prosper until very recently, but they are the exceptions. The collapse of the Soviet empire destroyed coercive capacity in Eastern Europe and caused a rapid rise in economic distress throughout the Soviet trading bloc. It is estimated that incomes in Cuba fell by 50% as a result of the withdrawal of Soviet subsidies (Pastor 1994). In response to the end of the threat of Soviet intervention, East European regimes fell like rotten fruit in late summer. However, many single-party regimes outside Soviet invasion dis-

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9Bratton & van de Walle’s (1997) statistical results might seem to challenge this conclusion, but they seek to explain democratization (defined as the occurrence of a founding election), not authoritarian breakdown.
tance, both communist and non-communist, have shown greater robustness in the face of economic crises far worse than those in Eastern Europe—an indication that the regime type has great stamina when not dependent on an external power for enforcement. Eighty-five percent of the autonomous single-party regimes in power at the beginning of the second oil crisis still existed a decade later, and 59% still survive today. The games analyzed above help explain why single-party regimes are more resilient than military ones, and thus why even serious exogenous shocks may not bring them down.

CONCLUSION

This essay began by sketching several fairly widely accepted arguments about regime transition. It then considered the evidence supporting and challenging each argument. A few could be confirmed, a few could not.

Strong evidence supports the argument that economic development increases the likelihood of democratic politics. Available evidence also supports the claim that authoritarian regimes are more likely to break down during economic crisis, though some forms of authoritarianism are more susceptible to economic downturns than others.

I found little evidence in a set of 163 regime transitions, however, for the claim that pacts increase the likelihood of democracy. They may have had that effect in a few cases, but we cannot rule out the possibility that the likelihood of both pacts and stable democracy is increased by the existence of well established, coherent parties capable of making credible commitments to abide by pacts.

Although not enough time has passed to be certain, I also found little evidence to support the idea that amnesties and other implicit contracts between outgoing authoritarian rulers and opposition leaders have substantial long-term effects. All outgoing authoritarians face serious future contract-enforcement problems.

The primary original contribution of this study is to propose a theoretical innovation that subsumes a number of apparently contradictory arguments. I began this section with a simple game-theoretic portrayal of the incentives facing officers in military regimes as contrasted with the incentives of cadres in single-party and personalist regimes. If the incentives shown in the games are, on average, accurate, then we can understand why the process of transition from military regimes differs from that of single-party and personalist regimes. Because most officers value the unity and capacity of the military institution more than they value holding office, military regimes cling less tightly to power than do other kinds of authoritarianism and, in fact, often initiate transitions.
This basic insight leads to explanations for many of the differences between early transitions, mostly from military rule, and later transitions, mostly from personalist rule. Most military transitions begin, as O’Donnell & Schmitter (1986) note, with internal disagreements and splits. Most personalist regimes, however, maintain their grip on power as long as possible. As a result, they are more likely to be overthrown by popular uprising or rebellion. Popular protest seems about equally likely to occur at some point during transition from any kind of regime, but it is often the first indicator of impending transition from personalist rule, whereas transitions from military rule are usually well underway before protests swell.

Most military regimes end in negotiation, which accounts for the emphasis on bargaining and the advantages of moderation in the early literature on transitions. Most personalist regimes, however, end in coups, many of them accompanied by widespread violence. If opposition to many personalist regimes had remained moderate, they might have survived until the dictator, or even his grandsons, died of old age. Leaders of personalist regimes also negotiate when under pressure from lenders or faced with widespread public protest, but the proportion who renege on the deals they make has been very high.

Transitions from single-party rule, though the subject of numerous case studies, have not played a major role in the comparative transitions literature because few have occurred besides those that resulted directly from the Soviet collapse. Single-party regimes under pressure from donors and popular opposition are more inclined to negotiation than are personalist regimes. Like officers, single-party cadres can expect life as they know it to continue after liberalization or even regime change. If they cannot avoid regime change, they are better off in a democracy than in some other form of authoritarianism. Previously hegemonic parties have remained important in political life wherever countries have fully democratized, but they have been outlawed and repressed in several that did not. Consequently, they have good reason to negotiate an extrication rather than risking a more violent ouster. Outside the area affected by the Soviet collapse, single-party regimes have tried to negotiate institutional changes that allow the opposition some participation and satisfy international donors and lenders, while not actually giving up control of the government and the resources attached to it. It is too soon to know whether most of these liberalizations will progress to full transitions or stabilize as mostly “free and fair” single-party dominant systems, as regime leaders hope.

Since the great surge from 1989 to 1992, the pace of transitions has slackened. Observers can catch their breaths and take stock of what they have learned. Democratization has compelled scholarly attention for at least the past 20 years but has resisted yielding up its theoretical secrets. Despite the high quality of much of the work cited here, our theoretical understanding remains thin. We have, however, amassed an astonishing amount of “data,” mostly in
the form of case studies. The time may have come to begin finding the patterns that were less obvious earlier. I have focused here on one hitherto obscure pattern that seems to make sense of several apparently contradictory observations from different regions. Other patterns await discovery.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My work on this project has benefitted from conversations with many colleagues over the years. I am especially grateful to David Laitin, Alan Ware, David Collier, and John Zaller for their insight and attention to detail. My thanks also to Dean Scott Waugh of UCLA, who provided the research funds that made the data collection for this project possible, and to my research assistants: Allyson Benton, Johanna Birmir, Kimberly Niles, Cathy Sweet, and John Quinn.


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It is necessary to begin by saying a few words about three minimal conditions that must obtain before there can be any possibility of speaking of democratic consolidation. First, in a modern polity, free and authoritative elections cannot be held, winners cannot exercise the monopoly of legitimate force, and citizens cannot effectively have their rights protected by a rule of law unless a state exists. In some parts of the world, conflicts about the authority and domain of the polis and the identities and loyalties of the demos are so intense that no state exists. No state, no democracy.

Second, democracy cannot be thought of as consolidated until a democratic transition has been brought to completion. A necessary but by no means sufficient condition for the completion of a democratic transition is the holding of free and contested elections (on the basis of broadly inclusive voter eligibility) that meet the seven institutional requirements for elections in a polyarchy that Robert A. Dahl has set forth. Such elections are not sufficient, however, to complete a democratic transition. In many cases (e.g., Chile as of 1996) in which free and contested elections have been held, the government resulting from elections like these lacks the de jure as well as de facto power to determine policy in many significant areas because the executive, legislative, and judicial powers are still decisively constrained by an interlocking set of "reserve domains," military "prerogatives," or "authoritarian enclaves." Third, no regime should be called a democracy unless its rulers govern democratically. If freely elected executives (no matter what the magnitude of their majority) infringe the constitution, violate the rights of individuals and minorities, impinge upon the legitimate functions of the legislature, and thus fail to rule within the bounds of a state of law, their regimes are not democracies.

In sum, when we talk about the consolidation of democracy, we are not dealing with liberalized nondemocratic regimes, or with pseudo-democracies, or with hybrid democracies where some democratic institutions coexist with nondemocratic institutions outside the control of the democratic state. Only democracies can become consolidated democracies.

Let us now turn to examining how, and when, new political systems that meet the three minimal conditions of "stateness," a completed democratic transition, and a government that rules democratically can be considered consolidated democracies. In most cases after a democratic transition is completed, there are still many tasks that need to be accomplished, conditions that must be established, and attitudes and habits that must be cultivated before democracy can be regarded as consolidated. What, then, are the characteristics of a consolidated democracy? Many scholars, in advancing definitions of consolidated democracy, enumerate all the regime characteristics that would improve the overall quality of democracy. We favor, instead, a narrower definition of democratic consolidation, but one that nonetheless combines behavioral, attitudinal, and constitutional dimensions. Essentially, by a "consolidated democracy" we mean a political regime in which democracy as a complex system of institutions, rules, and patterned incentives and disincentives has become, in a phrase,
Behaviorally, democracy becomes the only game in town when no significant political group seriously attempts to overthrow the democratic regime or to promote domestic or international violence in order to secede from the state. When this situation obtains, the behavior of the newly elected government that has emerged from the democratic transition is no longer dominated by the problem of how to avoid democratic breakdown. (Exceptionally, the democratic process can be used to achieve secession, creating separate states that can be democracies.) Attitudinally, democracy becomes the only game in town when, even in the face of severe political and economic crises, the overwhelming majority of the people believe that any further political change must emerge from within the parameters of democratic procedures. Constitutionally, democracy becomes the only game in town when all of the actors in the polity become habituated to the fact that political conflict within the state will be resolved according to established norms, and that violations of these norms are likely to be both ineffective and costly. In short, with consolidation, democracy becomes routinized and deeply internalized in social, institutional, and even psychological life, as well as in political calculations for achieving success.

Our working definition of a consolidated democracy is then as follows: Behaviorally, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a nondemocratic regime or by seceding from the state. Attitudinally, a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion, even in the midst of major economic problems and deep dissatisfaction with incumbents, holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life, and when support for antisystem alternatives is quite small or more-or-less isolated from prodemocratic forces. Constitutionally, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and nongovernmental forces alike become subject to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the bounds of the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.

We must add two important caveats. First, when we say a regime is a consolidated democracy, we do not preclude the possibility that at some future time it could break down. Such a breakdown, however, would be related not to weaknesses or problems specific to the historic process of democratic consolidation, but to a new dynamic in which the democratic regime cannot solve a set of problems, a nondemocratic alternative gains significant supporters, and former democratic regime loyalists begin to behave in a constitutionally disloyal or semiloyal manner.

Our second caveat is that we do not want to imply that there is only one type of consolidated democracy. An exciting new area of research is concerned with precisely this issue—the varieties of consolidated democracies. We also do not want to imply that consolidated democracies could not continue to improve their quality by raising the minimal economic plateau upon which all citizens stand, and by deepening popular participation in the political and social life of the country. Within the category of consolidated democracies there is a continuum from low-quality to high-quality democracies. Improving the quality of consolidated democracies is an urgent political and intellectual task, but our goal in this essay, though related, is a different one. As we are living in a period in which an unprecedented number of countries have completed democratic transitions and are attempting to consolidate democracies, it is politically and conceptually important that we understand the specific tasks of "crafting" democratic consolidation.

Unfortunately, too much of the discussion of the current "wave" of democratization focuses almost solely on elections or on the presumed democratizing potential of market mechanisms. Democratic consolidation, however, requires much more than elections and markets.

Crafting and Conditions

In addition to a functioning state, five other interconnected and mutually reinforcing conditions must be present, or be crafted, in order for a democracy to be consolidated. First, the conditions must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society. Second, there must be a relatively autonomous political society. Third, throughout the territory of the state all major political actors, especially the government and the state apparatus, must be effectively subjected to a rule of law that protects individual freedoms and associational life. Fourth, there must be a state bureaucracy that is usable by the new democratic government. Fifth, there must be an institutionalized economic society. Let us explain what is involved in crafting this interrelated set of conditions.
By "civil society," we refer to that arena of the polity where self-organizing and relatively autonomous groups, movements, and individuals attempt to articulate values, to create associations and solidarities, and to advance their interests. Civil society can include manifold social movements (e.g., women's groups, neighborhood associations, religious groupings, and intellectual organizations), as well as associations from all social strata (such as trade unions, entrepreneurial groups, and professional associations).

By "political society," we mean that arena in which political actors compete for the legitimate right to exercise control over public power and the state apparatus. Civil society by itself can destroy a nondemocratic regime, but democratic consolidation (or even a full democratic transition) must involve political society. Democratic consolidation requires that citizens develop an appreciation for the core institutions of a democratic political society--political parties, legislatures, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, and interparty alliances.

It is important to stress not only the difference between civil society and political society, but also their complementarity, which is not always recognized. One of these two arenas is frequently neglected in favor of the other. Worse, within the democratic community, champions of either civil society or political society all too often adopt a discourse and a set of practices that are implicitly inimical to the normal development of the other.

In the recent struggles against the nondemocratic regimes of Eastern Europe and Latin America, a discourse was constructed that emphasized "civil society versus the state"--a dichotomy that has a long philosophical genealogy. More importantly for our purposes, it was also politically useful to those democratic movements emerging in states where explicitly political organizations were forbidden or extremely weak. In many countries, civil society was rightly considered to be the hero of democratic resistance and transition.

The problem arises at the moment of democratic transition. Democratic leaders of political society quite often argue that civil society, having played its historic role, should be demobilized so as to allow for the development of normal democratic politics. Such an argument is not only bad democratic theory, it is also bad democratic politics. A robust civil society, with the capacity to generate political alternatives and to monitor government and state, can help start transitions, help resist reversals, help push transitions to their completion, and help consolidate and deepen democracy. At all stages of the democratization process, therefore, a lively and independent civil society is invaluable.

But we should also consider how to recognize (and thus help overcome) the false opposition sometimes drawn between civil society and political society. The danger posed for the development of political society by civil society is that normative preferences and styles of organization perfectly appropriate to civil society might be taken to be the desirable—or indeed the only legitimate—style of organization for political society. For example, many civil society leaders view "internal conflict" and "division" within the democratic forces with moral antipathy. "Institutional routinization," "intermediaries," and "compromise" within politics are often spoken of pejoratively. But each of the above terms refers to an indispensable practice of political society in a consolidated democracy. Democratic consolidation requires political parties, one of whose primary tasks is precisely to aggregate and represent differences between democrats. Consolidation requires that habituation to the norms and procedures of democratic conflict-regulation be developed. A high degree of institutional routinization is a key part of such a process. Intermediation between the state and civil society, and the structuring of compromise, are likewise legitimate and necessary tasks of political society. In short, political society--informed, pressured, and periodically renewed by civil society--must somehow achieve a workable agreement on the myriad ways in which democratic power will be crafted and exercised.

The Need for a Rechtsstaat

To achieve a consolidated democracy, the necessary degree of autonomy of civil and political society must be embedded in, and supported by, our third arena, the rule of law. All significant actors—especially the democratic government and the state apparatus—must be held accountable to, and become habituated to, the rule of law. For the types of civil society and political society we have just described, a rule of law animated by a spirit of constitutionalism is an indispensable condition. Constitutionalism, which should not be confused with majoritarianism, entails a relatively strong consensus regarding the constitution, and especially a commitment to "self-binding" procedures of governance that can be altered only by
exceptional majorities. It also requires a clear hierarchy of laws, interpreted by an independent judicial system and supported by a strong legal culture in civil society.

The emergence of a Rechtsstaat—a state of law, or perhaps more accurately a state subject to law—was one of the major accomplishments of nineteenth-century liberalism (long before full democratization) in continental Europe and to some extent in Japan. A Rechtsstaat meant that the government and the state apparatus would be subject to the law, that areas of discretionary power would be defined and increasingly limited, and that citizens could turn to courts to defend themselves against the state and its officials. The modern Rechtsstaat is fundamental in making democratization possible, since without it citizens would not be able to exercise their political rights with full freedom and independence.

A state of law is particularly crucial for the consolidation of democracy. It is the most important continuous and routine way in which the elected government and the state administration are subjected to a network of laws, courts, semiautonomous review and control agencies, and civil-society norms that not only check the state's illegal tendencies but also embed it in an interconnecting web of mechanisms requiring transparency and accountability. Freely elected governments can, but do not necessarily, create such a state of law. The consolidation of democracy, however, requires such a law-bound, constraint-embedded state. Indeed, the more that all the institutions of the state function according to the principle of the state of law, the higher the quality of democracy and the better the society.

Constitutionalism and the rule of law must determine the offices to be filled by election, the procedures to elect those officeholders, and the definition of and limits to their power in order for people to be willing to participate in, and to accept the outcomes of, the democratic game. This may pose a problem if the rules, even if enacted by a majority, are so unfair or poorly crafted and so difficult to change democratically that they are unacceptable to a large number of citizens. For example, an electoral law that gives 80 percent of the seats in parliament to a party that wins less than 50 percent of the vote, or an ideologically loaded constitution that is extremely difficult to amend, is not likely to be conducive to democratic consolidation.

Finally, a democracy in which a single leader enjoys, or thinks he or she enjoys, a "democratic" legitimacy that allows him or her to ignore, dismiss, or alter other institutions—the legislature, the courts, the constitutional limits of power—does not fit our conception of rule of law in a democratic regime. The formal or informal institutionalization of such a system is not likely to result in a consolidated democracy unless such discretion is checked.

Some presidential democracies—with their tendency toward populist, plebiscitarian, "delegative" characteristics, together with a fixed term of office and a "no-reelection" rule that excludes accountability before the electorate—encourage nonconstitutional or anticonstitutional behavior that threatens the rule of law, often democracy itself, and certainly democratic consolidation. A prime minister who develops similar tendencies toward abuse of power is more likely than a president to be checked by other institutions: votes of no confidence by the opposition, or the loss of support by members of his own party. Early elections are a legal vehicle available in parliamentarianism—but unavailable in presidentialism—to help solve crises generated by such abusive leadership.

A Usable Bureaucracy

These three conditions—a lively and independent civil society; a political society with sufficient autonomy and a working consensus about procedures of governance; and constitutionalism and a rule of law—are virtually definitional prerequisites of a consolidated democracy. However, these conditions are much more likely to be satisfied where there are also found a bureaucracy usable by democratic leaders and an institutionalized economic society.

Democracy is a form of governance in which the rights of citizens are guaranteed and protected. To protect the rights of its citizens and to deliver other basic services that citizens demand, a democratic government needs to be able to exercise effectively its claim to a monopoly of the legitimate use of force in its territory. Even if the state had no other functions than these, it would have to tax compulsorily in order to pay for police officers, judges, and basic services. A modern democracy, therefore, needs the effective capacity to command, to regulate, and to extract tax revenues. For this, it needs a functioning state with a bureaucracy considered usable by the new democratic government.
In many territories of the world today--especially in parts of the former Soviet Union--no adequately functioning state exists. Insufficient taxing capacity on the part of the state or a weak normative and bureaucratic "presence" in much of its territory, such that citizens cannot effectively demand that their rights be respected or receive any basic entitlements, is also a great problem in many countries in Latin America, including Brazil. The question of the usability of the state bureaucracy by the new democratic regime also emerges in countries such as Chile, where the outgoing nondemocratic regime was able to give tenure to many key members of the state bureaucracy in politically sensitive areas such as justice and education. Important questions about the usability of the state bureaucracy by new democrats inevitably emerge in cases where the distinction between the communist party and the state had been virtually obliterated (as in much of postcommunist Europe), and the party is now out of power.

### Economic Society

The final supportive condition for a consolidated democracy concerns the economy, an arena that we believe should be called "economic society." We use this phrase to call attention to two claims that we believe are theoretically and empirically sound. First, there has never been, and there cannot be, a consolidated democracy that has a command economy (except perhaps in wartime). Second, there has never been, and almost certainly will never be, a modern consolidated democracy with a pure market economy. Modern consolidated democracies require a set of sociopolitically crafted and accepted norms, institutions, and regulations--what we call "economic society"--that mediate between the state and the market.

No empirical evidence has ever been adduced to indicate that a polity meeting our definition of a consolidated democracy has ever existed with a command economy. Is there a theoretical reason to explain such a universal empirical outcome? We think so. On theoretical grounds, our assumption is that at least a nontrivial degree of market autonomy and of ownership diversity in the economy is necessary to produce the independence and liveliness of civil society that allow it to make its contribution to a democracy. Similarly, if all property is in the hands of the state, along with all decisions about pricing, labor, supply, and distribution, the relative autonomy of political society required for a consolidated democracy could not exist. 7

But why are completely free markets unable to coexist with modern consolidated democracies? Empirically, serious studies of modern polities repeatedly verify the existence of significant degrees of market intervention and state ownership in all consolidated democracies. 8 Theoretically, there are at least three reasons why this should be so. First, notwithstanding certain ideologically extreme but surprisingly prevalent neoliberal claims about the self-sufficiency of the market, pure market economies could neither come into being nor be maintained without a degree of state regulation. Markets require legally enforced contracts, the issuance of money, regulated standards for weights and measures, and the protection of property, both public and private. These requirements dictate a role for the state in the economy. Second, even the best of markets experience "market failures" that must be corrected if the market is to function well. 9 No less an advocate of the "invisible hand" of the market than Adam Smith acknowledged that the state is necessary to perform certain functions. In a crucial but neglected passage in the *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith identified three important tasks of the state:

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First, the duty of protecting the society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies; secondly, the duty of protecting, as far as possible, every member of the society from the injustice or oppression of every other member of it, or the duty of establishing an exact administration of justice; and, thirdly, the duty of erecting and maintaining certain public works and certain public institutions which it can never be for the interest of any individual, or small number of individuals, to erect and maintain; because the profit could never repay the expense to any individual or small number of individuals, though it may frequently do much more than repay it to a great society. 10
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Finally, and most importantly, democracy entails free public contestation concerning governmental priorities and policies. If a democracy never produced policies that generated government-mandated public goods in the areas of education, health, and transportation, and never provided some economic safety net for its citizens and some alleviation of gross economic inequality, democracy would not be sustainable. Theoretically, of course, it would be antidemocratic to take such public policies off the agenda of legitimate public contestation. Thus, even in the extreme hypothetical case of a democracy that began with a pure
market economy, the very working of a modern democracy (and a modern advanced capitalist economy) would lead to the transformation of that pure market economy into a mixed economy, or that set of norms, regulations, policies, and institutions which we call "economic society." 11

Any way we analyze the problem, democratic consolidation requires the institutionalization of a politically regulated market. This requires an economic society, which in turn requires an effective state. Even a goal such as narrowing the scope of public ownership (i.e., privatization) in an orderly and legal way is almost certainly carried out more effectively by a stronger state than by a weaker one. Economic deterioration due to the state's inability to carry out needed regulatory functions greatly compounds the problems of economic reform and democratization. 12

In summary, a modern consolidated democracy can be conceived of as comprising five major interrelated arenas, each of which, to function properly, must have its own primary organizing principle. Rightly understood, democracy is more than a regime; it is an interacting system. No single arena in such a system can function properly without some support from another arena, or often from all of the remaining arenas. For example, civil society in a democracy needs the support of a rule of law that guarantees to people their right of association, and needs the support of a state apparatus that will effectively impose legal sanctions on those who would illegally attempt to deny others that right. Furthermore, each arena in the democratic system has an impact on other arenas. For example, political society manages the governmental bureaucracy and produces the overall regulatory framework that guides and contains economic society. In a consolidated democracy, therefore, there are constant mediations among the five principal arenas, each of which is influenced by the others.

Two Surmountable Obstacles

Two of the most widely cited obstacles to democratic consolidation are the dangers posed by ethnic conflict in multinational states and by disappointed popular hopes for economic improvement in states undergoing simultaneous political and economic reform. These are real problems. Democratic theorists and crafters alike must recognize that there is often more than one "awakened nation" present in the state, and that there can be prolonged economic reversals after democratic transition begins. Nonetheless, we are convinced, on both theoretical and empirical grounds, that democracy can still make significant strides toward consolidation under such conditions. We are furthermore convinced that if democratic theorists conceptualize what such obstacles mean and do not mean, this may lessen the dangers of democratic disenchantment and help to identify obstacle-reducing paths. That is our task in the rest of this essay.

Under what empirical conditions do "nation-states" and "democratization" form complementary logics? Under what conditions do they form conflicting logics? If they form conflicting logics, what types of practices and institutions will make democratic consolidation most, or least, likely?

Many political thinkers and activists assume that Weberian states, nation-states, and democracy cohere as part of the very grammar of modern polities. In a world where France, Germany, Portugal, Greece, and Japan are all Weberian states, nation-states, and democracies, such an assumption may seem justified. Yet in many countries that are not yet consolidated democracies, a nation-state policy often has a different logic than a democratic policy. By a nation-state policy we mean one in which the leaders of the state pursue what Rogers Brubaker calls "nationalizing state policies" aimed at increasing cultural homogeneity. Consciously or unconsciously, the leaders send messages that the state should be "of and for" the nation. In the constitutions they write and in the politics they practice, the dominant nation's language becomes the only official language and occasionally the only acceptable language for state business and for education; the religion of the nation is privileged (even if it is not necessarily made the official religion); and the culture of the dominant nation is privileged in state symbols (such as the flag, national anthem, and even eligibility for some types of military service) and in state-controlled means of socialization (such as radio, television, and textbooks). By contrast, democratic policies in the state-making process are those that emphasize a broad and inclusive citizenship that accords equal individual rights to all.

Under what empirical conditions are the logics of state policies aimed at nation-building congruent with those aimed at crafting democracy? Empirically, conflicts between these different policies are reduced when almost all of the residents of a state identify with one subjective idea of the nation, and when that nation is virtually coextensive with the state. These conditions are met only if there is no significant irredenta outside
the state’s boundaries, if there is only one nation existing (or awakened) in the state, and if there is little cultural diversity within the state. In these circumstances (and, we will argue, virtually only in these circumstances) leaders of the government can simultaneously pursue democratization policies and nation-state policies. This congruence between the polis and the demos facilitates the creation of a democratic nation-state; it also virtually eliminates all problems of “stateness” and should thus be considered a supportive condition for democratic consolidation. Under modern circumstances, however, very few states will begin a possible democratic transition with a high degree of national homogeneity. This lack of homogeneity tends to exacerbate problems of “stateness.”

Democracy is characterized not by subjects but by citizens; thus a democratic transition often puts the question of the relation between polis and demos at the center of politics. From all that has been said thus far, three assertions can be made. First, the greater the extent to which the population of a state is composed of a plurality of national, linguistic, religious, or cultural societies, the more complex politics becomes, since an agreement on the fundamentals of a democracy will be more difficult. Second, while this does not mean that consolidating democracy in multinational or multicultural states is impossible, it does mean that especially careful political crafting of democratic norms, practices, and institutions is required. Third, some methods of dealing with the problems of “stateness” are inherently incompatible with democracy.

Clear thinking on this subject demands that we call into question some facile assumptions. One of the most dangerous ideas for democracy is that “every state should strive to become a nation-state and every nation should become a state.” In fact, it is probably impossible for half of the territories in the world that are not now democratic ever to become both “nation-states” and “consolidated democracies,” as we have defined these terms. One of the reasons for this is that many existing nondemocratic states are multinational, multilingual, and multicultural. To make them “nation-states” by democratic means would be extremely difficult. In structurally embedded multicultural settings, virtually the only democratic way to create a homogeneous nation-state is through voluntary cultural assimilation, voluntary exit, or peaceful creation and voluntary acceptance of new territorial boundaries. These are empirically and democratically difficult measures, and hence are exceedingly rare.

The other possibilities for creating a homogeneous nation-state in such settings involve subtle (or not-so-subtle) sanctions against those not speaking the language, wearing the attire, or practicing the religion of the titular nation. Under modern circumstances—where all significant groups have writers and intellectuals who disseminate national cultures, where communication systems have greatly increased the possibility for migrants to remain continuously connected to their home cultures, and where modern democratic norms accept a degree of multiculturalism—such sanctions, even if not formally antidemocratic, would probably not be conducive to democratic crafting. If the titular nation actually wants a truly homogeneous nation-state, a variant of “ethnic cleansing” is too often a temptation.

Another difficulty in the way of building nation-states that are also democracies derives from the manner in which humanity is spatially distributed across the globe. One building block for nations is language. But as Ernest Gellner observed, there are possibly as many as eight thousand languages (not counting important dialects) currently spoken in the world. Even if we assume that only one out of every ten languages is a base for a “reasonably effective” nationalism, there could be as many as eight hundred viable national communities. But cultural, linguistic, and religious groups are not neatly segmented into eight thousand or eight hundred nationalities, each occupying reasonably well-defined territories. On the contrary, these groups are profoundly intermixed and overlapping.

We are not arguing against democratically crafted “velvet divorces.” We should note, however, that relatively clear cultural boundaries facilitate such territorial separations. Latvia would like to be a nation-state, but in none of its seven most-populous cities is Latvian spoken by a majority of the residents. In Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, barely half the people of this aspiring nation-state speak Estonian. For these and many other countries, no simple territorial division or “velvet divorce” is available.

Democracy and Multinational States

Some analysts were happy when the separate nationalities of the USSR became 15 republics, all based on “titular nationalities,” on the assumption that democratic nation-states might emerge. In fact, many political
leaders in these republics sounded extreme nationalist (rather than democratic) themes in the first elections. One possible formula for diminishing conflict between titular nationalities and "migrants" is what David Laitin calls the "competitive-assimilation game." That is, it becomes in the best interests of some working-class migrants to assimilate in order to enhance the life chances of their children in the new environment. This may happen to Spanish working-class migrants in culturally and economically vibrant Catalonia, but is it likely to occur among Russians in Central Asia? In 1989 in Almaty, the capital of Kazakhstan, Russians constituted 59 percent of the population, and the Kazakhs, the titular nationality, only 22.5 percent. Less than 1 percent of the Russians spoke the titular language. In Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, the comparable percentages were virtually identical. In such contexts, shaped by settler colonialism, it is utterly implausible that a nation-state would emerge voluntarily through a process of competitive assimilation. 18

So how can democracy possibly be achieved in multinational states? We have a strong hypothesis about how not to consolidate democracy in multinational settings. The greater the percentage of people in a given state who either were born there or arrived without perceiving themselves as foreign citizens, and who are subsequently denied citizenship in the state (when their life chances would be hurt by such denial), the more unlikely it is that this state will consolidate democracy. Phrased more positively, our hypothesis is that in a multinational, multicultural setting, the chances of consolidating democracy are increased by state policies that grant inclusive and equal citizenship and give all citizens a common "roof" of state-mandated and state-enforced individual rights.

Such multinational states also have an even greater need than other polities to explore a variety of nonmajoritarian, nonplebiscitarian formulas. For example, if there are strong geographic concentrations of different groups within the state, federalism might be an option worth exploring. The state and the society might also allow a variety of publicly supported communal institutions—such as media and schools in different languages, symbolic recognition of cultural diversity, a variety of legally accepted marriage codes, legal and political tolerance for parties representing different communities, and a whole array of political procedures and devices that Arend Lijphart has described as "consociational democracy." 19 Typically, proportional representation, rather than large single-member districts with first-past-the-post elections, can facilitate representation of geographically dispersed minorities. Some strict adherents to the tradition of political liberalism, with its focus on universalism and individual rights, oppose any form of collective rights. But we believe that in a multinational, multicultural society and state, combining collective rights for nationalities or minorities with individual rights fully protected by the state is the least-confictual solution. 20

Where transitions occur in the context of a nondemocratic, multinational federal system, the crafting of democratic federalism should probably begin with elections at the federal level, so as to generate a legitimate framework for later deliberations on how to decentralize the polity democratically. If the first competitive elections are regional, the elections will tend to favor regional nationalists, and ethnocracies rather than democracies may well emerge. 21 However, the specific ways of structuring political life in multinational settings need to be contextualized in each country. Along these lines, we believe that it is time to reevaluate some past experiments with nonterritorial autonomy such as the kinds of partially self-governing ethnic or religious communities exemplified by the Jewish Kabal of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the millets of the Ottoman Empire, or the "national curias" of the late Hapsburg Empire. These mechanisms will not eliminate conflict in multinational states, but they may moderate conflict and help make both the state and democracy more viable.

We also believe that some conceptual, political, and normative attention should be given to the possibility of "state-nations." We call "state-nations" those multicultural or even multinational states that nonetheless still manage to engender strong identification and loyalty from their diverse citizens. The United States is such a multicultural and increasingly multilingual country; Switzerland is another. Neither is strictly speaking a "nation-state," but we believe both could now be called "state-nations." Under Jawaharlal Nehru, India made significant gains in managing multinational tensions by the skillful and consensual use of numerous consociational practices. Through this process India became, in the 1950s and early 1960s, a democratic "state-nation"; but if Hindu nationalists win power in the 1990s and attempt to turn India (with its 115 million Muslims) into a Hindu nation-state, communal violence would almost certainly increase and Indian democracy would be gravely threatened.

**Multiple Identities**
Let us conclude with a word about "political identities." Many writings on nationalism have focused on "primordial" identities and the need for people to choose between mutually exclusive identities. Our research into political identities, however, has shown two things. First, political identities are not fixed or "primordial" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s sense of "existing at (or from) the very beginning." Rather, they are highly changeable and socially constructed. Second, if nationalist politicians (or social scientists and census-takers with crude dichotomous categories) do not force polarization, many people may prefer to define themselves as having multiple and complementary identities. In fact, along with a common political "roof" of state-protected rights for inclusive and equal citizenship, the human capacity for multiple and complementary identities is one of the key factors that makes democracy in multinational states possible.

Our central proposition is that, if successful democratic consolidation is the goal, would-be crafters of democracy must take into careful consideration the particular mix of nations, cultures, and awakened political identities present in the territory. Some kinds of democracy are possible with one type of *polis*, but virtually impossible if political elites attempt to build another type of *polis*. Political elites in a multinational territory could initiate "nationalizing policies" that might not violate human rights or the Council of Europe's norms for democracy, but would have the effect, in each of the five arenas of the polity, of greatly diminishing the chances of democratic consolidation.

An example of such "nationalizing policies" in each of five arenas would be the following: In the arena of civil society, schooling and mass media could be restricted to the official language. In the arena of political society, nationalizing citizenship laws could lead to a significant overrepresentation of the dominant nationality in elected offices. In the arena of the rule of law, the legal system could subtly privilege a whole range of nationalizing customs, practices, and institutions. In the arena of the state bureaucracy, a rapid changeover to one official language could decrease other nationalities’ participation in, and access to, state services. Finally, in the arena of economic society, the titular nationality, as the presumed "owners" of the nation-state, could be given special or even exclusive rights to land redistribution (or voucher distribution, if there was privatization). In contrast, if the real goal is democratic consolidation, a democratizing strategy would require less majoritarian and more consensual policies in each of the above arenas.

A final point to stress concerns timing. Potentially difficult democratic outcomes may be achievable only if some preemptive policies and decisions are argued for, negotiated, and implemented by political leaders. If the opportunity for such ameliorative policies is lost, the range of available space for maneuver will be narrowed, and a dynamic of societal conflict will likely intensify until democratic consolidation becomes increasingly difficult, and eventually impossible.

**Problems of Simultaneous Reform**

The widely held view that market reform and privatization can legitimate new democracies is based on the dubious assumption that economic improvement can be achieved simultaneously with the installation and legitimation of democratic institutions. We believe that, in countries with imploded command economies, democratic polities can and must be installed and legitimized by a variety of other appeals before the possible benefits of a market economy fully materialize. Many analysts and political advisors dismiss the case for giving priority to state restructuring because they assume that, due to people's demands for material improvements, economic and political gains must not only be pursued but occur simultaneously. Some even argue that simultaneous economic and political reforms are necessary, but that such simultaneity is impossible.

We can call the two opposing perspectives about the relationship between economics and democratization the "tightly coupled" hypothesis and the "loosely coupled" hypothesis. By "loosely coupled," we do not mean that there is no relationship between economic and political perceptions, only that the relationship is not necessarily one-to-one. For at least a medium-range time horizon, people can make independent, and even opposite, assessments about political and economic trends. We further believe that when people’s
assessments about politics are positive, they can provide a valuable cushion for painful economic restructuring. Let us look at the evidence concerning the relationship between economic growth and democratization in the first five years of postcommunist Europe. Certainly, if we look only at relatively hard economic data, none of the 27 countries in postcommunist Europe except Poland experienced positive growth in 1992. Indeed, in 1993 all postcommunist countries were still well below their 1989 industrial-output levels.

If we look at subjective impressions of economic well-being in six East Central European countries, the mean positive rating (on a +100 to -100 scale) among those polled between November 1993 and March 1994 was 60.2 for the communist economic system, but was only 37.3 for the postcommunist economic system—a drop of almost 23 points. The tightly coupled hypothesis would predict that attitudes toward the political system would also drop steeply, even if not by the full 23 points. What does the evidence show? The mean positive ranking of the communist political system was 45.7. Thus a one-to-one correlation between the political and economic evaluations would have yielded a positive evaluation of the political system of 22.6. Yet the mean positive ranking for the postcommunist political system, far from falling, rose to 61.5—-or 38.9 points higher than a "perfectly coupled" hypothesis would have predicted.

How can we explain such incongruence? First of all, human beings are capable of making separate and correct judgments about a basket of economic goods (which may be deteriorating) and a basket of political goods (which may be improving). In fact, in the same survey the respondents judged that, in important areas directly affected by the democratic political system, their life experiences and chances had overwhelmingly improved, even though they also asserted that their own personal household economic situations had worsened.

We do not believe such incongruence can last forever; it does indicate, however, that in a radical transformation like that occurring in East Central Europe, the deterioration of the economy does not necessarily translate into rapid erosion of support for the political system. The perceived legitimacy of the political system has given democratic institutions in East Central Europe an important degree of insulation from the perceived inefficacy of the new economic system. Indeed, most people in East Central Europe in 1994 had a fairly long time horizon and expressed optimism that by 1999 the performance of both the new democracy and the new economic system would improve significantly.

Thus the evidence in East Central Europe is strongly in favor of the argument that deferred gratification and confidence in the future are possible even when there is an acknowledged lag in economic improvement. Simultaneity of rapid political and economic results is indeed extremely difficult, but fortunately the citizens of East Central Europe did not perceive it as necessary.

**Democracy and the Quality of Life**

While we believe that it is a good thing for democracies to be consolidated, we should make it clear that consolidation does not necessarily entail either a high-quality democracy or a high-quality society. Democratic institutions—however important—are only one set of public institutions affecting citizens’ lives. The courts, the central bank, the police, the armed forces, certain independent regulatory agencies, public-service agencies, and public hospitals are not governed democratically, and their officials are not elected by the citizens. Even in established democracies, not all of these institutions are controlled by elected officials, although many are overseen by them. These institutions operate, however, in a legal framework created by elected bodies and thereby derive their authority from them.

In view of all this, the quality of public life is in great measure a reflection not simply of the democratic or nondemocratic character of the regime, but of the quality of those other institutions.

Policy decisions by democratic governments and legislators certainly affect the quality of life, particularly in the long run, but no democracy can assure the presence of reputable bankers, entrepreneurs with initiative, physicians devoted to their patients, competent professors, creative scholars and artists, or even honest judges. The overall quality of a society is only in small part a function of democracy (or, for that matter, a function of nondemocratic regimes). Yet all of those dimensions of society affect the satisfaction of its citizens, including their satisfaction with the government and even with democracy itself. The feeling that democracy is to blame for all sorts of other problems is likely to be particularly acute in
societies in which the distinctive contributions of democracy to the quality of life are not well understood and perhaps not highly valued. The more that democrats suggest that the achievement of democratic politics will bring the attainment of all those other goods, the greater will be the eventual disenchantment.

There are problems specific to the functioning of the state, and particularly to democratic institutions and political processes, that allow us to speak of the quality of democracy separately from the quality of society. Our assumption is that the quality of democracy can contribute positively or negatively to the quality of society, but that the two should not be confused. We as scholars should, in our research, explore both dimensions of the overall quality of life.

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This article is drawn from their forthcoming book, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, which will be published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1996. An earlier version of this article was presented in August 1995 at an international conference in Taipei, Taiwan, on "Consolidating Third Wave Democracies: Trends and Challenges." The conference was co-sponsored by the Institute for National Policy Research of Taipei and the International Forum for Democratic Studies in Washington, D.C.

Notes

This essay is largely drawn from excerpts from our forthcoming book, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-communist Europe (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press). Interested readers can find more detailed documentation, analysis, and references there. We thank the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York for help in our research.


2. We document the incomplete status of the Chilean democratic transition in chapter 13 of our book. For military prerogatives, see Alfred Stepan, Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 68-127. For the electoralist fallacy in Central America, see Terry Lynn Karl, "The Hybrid Regimes of Central America," Journal of Democracy 6 (July 1995): 72-86. Dahl in his Polyarchy has an eighth institutional guarantee, which does not address elections as such, but rather the requirement that "[institutions] for making government policies [should] depend on votes and other expressions of preference," (p. 3). This addresses our concern about reserve domains.

3. Some readers have accused our work—and other studies of democratic transition and consolidation—of being teleological. If this means advocating a single end-state democracy, we decidedly do not share such a view. If, however, teleological means (as the Oxford English Dictionary says) "a view that developments are due to the purpose or design that is served by them," our analysis is in part teleological, for we do not believe that structural factors per se lead to democracy and its consolidation. Social actors (and in some measure particular leaders) must also act purposefully to achieve a change of regime leading to some form of governing that can be considered democratic. The design of democracy that these actors pursue may be different from the one resulting from their actions, but without action whose intent is to create "a" democracy (rather than the particular institutionalized form that results), a transition to and consolidation of democracy are difficult to conceive. The processes that we are studying do, therefore, involve a "teleological" element that does not exclude important structural factors (or many unpredictable events). In addition, there is not a single motive but a variety of motives for pursuing democracy (as we define it) as a goal.


5. In essence, this means that the literature on democratic breakdown, such as that found in Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University
Press, 1978), would be much more directly relevant to analyzing such a phenomenon than this essay or related books on democratic transition and consolidation. This is not a criticism of the transition literature; rather, our point is that the democratic-transition and democratic-breakdown literatures need to be integrated into the overall literature on modern democratic theory. From the perspective of such an integrated theory, the "breakdown of a consolidated democracy" is not an oxymoron.


12. In postcommunist Europe, the Czech Republic and Hungary are well on the way to becoming institutionalized economic societies. In sharp contrast, in Ukraine and Russia the writ of the state does not extend far enough for us to speak of an economic society. The consequences of the lack of an economic society are manifest everywhere. For example, Russia, with a population 15 times larger than Hungary's and with vastly more raw materials, only received 3.6 billion dollars of direct foreign investment in 1992-93, whereas Hungary received 9 billion dollars of direct foreign investment in the same two years.


14. See, for example, the outstanding monograph by Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), which analyzes in extensive detail the wide repertoire of nation-state mandated policies in the schools, the civil service, and the military that were systematically designed to repress and eliminate multilingualism and multiculturalism and to create a nation-state. From today's perspective, similar endeavors of modern states appear far from admirable and represent a cost that many of us would not like to pay. However, it is not just a question of how we evaluate such efforts of state-based nation-building, but of how feasible these efforts are in the contemporary context.


16. This conjecture is developed by Gellner in *Nations*, 44-45.


21. We develop this point in greater detail in our "Political Identities and Electoral Sequences: Spain, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia," *Daedalus* 121 (Spring 1992): 123-39; and in our *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* in the chapters on Spain, on "stateness" in the USSR, and on Russian speakers' changing identities in Estonia and Latvia.

22. In our *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, we show how in Catalonia in 1982, when respondents were given the opportunity to self-locate their identities on a questionnaire offering the following five possibilities--"Spanish," "more Spanish than Catalan," "equally Spanish and Catalan," "more Catalan than Spanish," or "Catalan"--the most-chosen category, among respondents with both parents born in Catalonia, as well as among respondents with neither parent born in Catalonia, was the multiple and complementary category "equally Spanish and Catalan." We also show how identities in Catalonia were becoming more polarized and conflict-ridden before democratic devolution.


24. The voters might, due to negative economic performance, vote incumbents out of office, but the overall economic policies of their successors might well continue to be roughly the same. Poland in 1993-95, and Hungary in 1994-95 come to mind.

25. See our *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*.


27. Rose and Haerfer, "New Democracies," questions 26, 35, 36, 39, 40, and 42.

Democratization and Economic Globalization

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Key Words
democratic transition, trade liberalization and openness, capital account and financial liberalization, Stolper-Samuelson theorem, skill premium

Abstract

We address two questions that are central to the literature on the emergence of democracy and economic globalization. First, does democratization foster higher levels of trade and capital account openness? Second, do trade and capital account openness increase the likelihood of democratization? We review the literature in international political economy and comparative politics that has theoretically and empirically addressed these questions. We then conduct some empirical tests in a sample of developing countries to briefly evaluate the empirical relationship between democracy and economic globalization. Our analysis reveals that evidence for the claim that democracy fosters trade and capital account liberalization is robust but that empirical support for the predicted positive effect of economic openness on democracy among developing countries is weak. More theoretical work is needed to clarify the link between democracy and economic liberalization, and to this end we provide possible topics for future research.
INTRODUCTION

The past 30 years have been a period of intense global change. Many aspects of international relations have experienced rapid transformation, but two central trends stand out. The first is the “third wave of democratization,” which started slowly in the late 1970s with the transitions in Spain and Portugal, extended further to many Latin American countries in the 1980s, and then gathered momentum in the 1990s, engulfing Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and parts of Africa and Asia. Democracy has thus become a global trend, and countries all over the world have become more democratic.

The second central trend has been characterized by the increasingly intense interchange of people, goods, information, and money across national borders. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as economic globalization, and a number of commentators have christened the contemporary period as “the era of economic globalization” (Friedman 1999). Although “economic globalization” is used to describe phenomena as diverse as trade and financial liberalization, immigration flows, cultural globalization, and the revolution in information technology, scholars often focus on two aspects of globalization: the adoption of free trade policies, namely trade liberalization, and the move toward greater financial openness, i.e., capital account liberalization.

The academic literature that attempts to explicate the causes and consequences of economic globalization is vast; so is the literature on democratization and democracy. In our review, we have chosen to focus on studies that examine the macro-level relationship between democratization and economic liberalization in the developing countries in the past few decades. More specifically, we address the following question, which is central to the literature on democracy and economic globalization: Is there an endogenous relationship between democracy and trade as well as capital account openness?

Studies in international political economy have largely focused on the causal effect of democracy on trade openness and capital account liberalization rather than vice versa. These studies suggest theoretically and find empirically that political liberalization and democracy have a positive effect on trade and capital account openness (Brune et al. 2001, Dutt & Mitra 2002, Eichengreen & Leblang 2007, Garrett 2000, Milner & Kubota 2005, O’Rourke & Taylor 2006, Stokes 2001, Weyland 2002, Quinn 2003). In recent years, however, more scholars have started analyzing the causal impact of economic globalization, namely trade and/or capital account openness, on democracy (Acemoglu & Robinson 2006, Adsera & Boix 2002, Boix 2003, Boix & Garicano 2001, Eichengreen & Leblang 2007, Rudra 2005). Some scholars argue and show statistically that more trade openness increases not only the likelihood of democracy but also the level of democracy in the developed and developing world (Eichengreen & Leblang 2007, Lopez-Cordoba & Meissner 2005). Similarly, a few studies hypothesize and demonstrate empirically that financial openness also has a positive influence on democracy (Eichengreen & Leblang 2007). Other scholars are, however, skeptical of the claim that trade and capital account openness has a positive impact on democracy (Bussmann 2002, Decker & Lim 2007, Li & Reuveny 2003, Rigobon & Rodrik 2004, Tavares 2007).

In this review, we address the following questions:

- What do we learn from the literature about the effect of democratic transitions on international economic, i.e., trade and capital account, liberalization? Does democratization have a positive effect on trade liberalization and thus trade openness? Does democratization have a positive impact on capital account liberalization?

- Is there empirical evidence for an endogenous relationship, i.e., mutual causality, between democracy and economic liberalization? Does economic liberalization positively influence democratic
transitions and the level of democracy in general?

- Why does democratization affect trade and financial liberalization in developing countries? Why and how does the process of democratization lead to trade and financial openness?

We answer these questions by systematically reviewing the literature on the relationship between democracy and economic globalization in two main parts. First, we discuss the theoretical and empirical literature that explores the causal impact of democracy on trade openness. We then examine studies that analyze whether and why trade openness may negatively or positively influence the likelihood of democracy in developing countries. While reviewing the literature on democracy and trade openness, we conduct some simple empirical exercises to evaluate the relationship between democracy and trade openness in a sample of 130 developing countries observed between 1975 and 2002. We focus mainly on the developing countries because they are the ones that have democratized recently and have made the greatest changes to their economic policies. Second, we critically review the literature that addresses the effect of democracy on capital account liberalization. This is followed by a concise analysis of some studies that suggest more capital account openness raises the likelihood and level of democracy. We also conduct some basic empirical tests to assess the relationship between democracy and capital account openness in our sample of 130 developing countries from 1975 to 2002.

The literature and our empirical analysis reveal that democracy positively influences trade and capital account openness but that neither trade nor financial openness influences the level of democracy. However, a careful review of the relevant literature reveals that theoretical analyses of the potential causal impact of democracy on trade and especially capital account openness are underdeveloped. Indeed, research on democracy and trade openness, we believe, will progress substantially only if scholars develop detailed causal theories that provide a comprehensive understanding of how the political dynamics of democracy in developing countries influences trade liberalization. Causal theories predicting that trade and financial openness foster democracy are still in need of careful and systematic statistical testing. In the absence of such tests, scholars will struggle to understand the complex relationship between democracy and economic globalization.

DEMOCRATIZATION AND TRADE OPENNESS

The Literature

Several economists and political scientists have recently documented the remarkable surge in trade openness across developing countries since the late 1970s (Anderson 2003, Goldberg & Pavcnik 2004, Harrison & Hanson 1999, Milner & Kubota 2005, Wood 1997). Preceding and concurrent with the move to free trade in the developing world, there has been a global movement toward democracy. The economists Papaioannou & Siourounis (2004, p. 8) define full democratization as a circumstance “where both the Polity and the Freedom House indicators have reached an almost perfect score,” and they ascribe partial democratization to “countries that have abandoned autocratic rule, but in which civil rights protection has not reached Western world levels.” Based on these definitions, they find that of a total of 59 episodes of full democratization and 24 episodes of partial democratization between 1975 and 2002, 95% have occurred in the developing world. Further, Milner & Kubota (2005, p. 158) state, “In 1975, there were approximately thirty democracies in the world; by 1992 there were about eighty-nine, which was roughly half the total number of independent countries in the world. By 2002, this figure had risen to more than 120 countries.”

The global wave of democratization and trade liberalization since the 1970s inevitably raises the two substantively important questions mentioned above: Do democratization...
and (thus) higher levels of democracy foster trade openness? Does trade openness engender democratic transitions? Studies have addressed both questions.

The literature on the impact of political regimes, including democracy, on trade openness has evolved gradually. Early studies on the link between political regimes and trade openness hypothesized that autocracies rather than emerging democracies in the developing world are more likely to implement economic and trade reform policies. Haggard (1990), for instance, suggests that an autocratic government might pursue trade liberalization in an effort to maximize long-term tax returns. Furthermore, autocratic governments may be more insulated from lobbying by domestic groups that favor trade protection (Haggard 1990, Haggard & Kaufman 1995). Geddes (1995) and Remmer (1998), however, question the presumption that authoritarian governments have an inherent advantage with respect to implementing trade reform, thus implying that democratizing states are capable of implementing reform policies, including trade liberalization. Przeworski (1991) provides a more nuanced argument about the link between democratization and economic reforms such as trade liberalization. He suggests that democratizing states are likely to pursue economic and trade reform policies in the short run but may abandon such reforms over time once voters start incurring the costs of globalization.

The studies mentioned above are among the first to theorize how political regimes, including emerging democracies in the developing world, influence economic reforms and trade openness. Yet these studies did not carefully test the impact of democratization and the level of democracy on trade openness across developing countries. Rather, it is primarily scholars of Latin American politics who systematically theorized and tested the effect of democratic transitions on economic and trade liberalization policies in developing Latin American countries.

For example, Stokes (2001) has recently argued that if trade reforms benefit large sections of society in a developing country—this includes almost all countries in Latin America—then democratization will propel more trade openness. This is because if leaders resist trade liberalization when the electorate anticipates benefits from more openness, then they will be subject to electoral punishment in new democracies. Thus, politicians in new Latin American democracies may have incentives to adopt policies that promote trade openness. Likewise, in the context of Latin America, Weyland (2002, p. 60) suggests that democratization weakens the interest groups that favor protectionism:

[D]emocratization reduces the political clout of the vested interests that benefited the most from the old development model, such as protectionist business sectors and the military. At the same time, it enhances the role of the electorate, including the large mass of poor people who received meagre benefits under the old development model.

It follows that democratic transitions are likely to enhance the prospects for more trade openness (Weyland 2002). Stokes (2001) and Weyland (2002) systematically test their claim across countries in Latin America through a combination of statistical methods and case studies. They find fairly robust empirical support in several Latin American countries, including Argentina, Peru, Mexico, and Venezuela.

Although insightful, the analyses of Stokes (2001) and Weyland (2002) are primarily restricted to key developing countries in Latin America. However, several researchers have done systematic theoretical and large-N empirical work on the effect of both democratization and the level of democracy on trade openness. Studies initially posited that democracy can have contradictory effects on trade openness and liberalization. This is emphasized by Garrett (2000, p. 973):

On the one hand, democracy makes leaders more accountable to their citizens, promoting trade liberalization to the extent that
this is good for society as a whole. On the other hand, democracy also empowers distributional coalitions with intense interests, making higher levels of protectionism more likely.

In contrast, economists such as Dutt & Mitra (2002) argue that democratization may be compatible with trade liberalization in nations in which a majority of voters would stand to gain demonstrably via higher wages, but that this is contingent on local endowments of labor and other factors of production relative to trading partners. They find strong statistical support for their claim in a sample of >100 countries in the latter three decades of the twentieth century. In his theoretical study of trade politics in industrialized countries in the nineteenth century, Verdier (1998) suggests that democratic leaders were less likely to use trade barriers as a tool to create economic rent; thus, he argues that democracy had a positive impact on trade openness across the industrialized world in the nineteenth century. O’Rourke & Taylor (2006) suggest that democratization and higher levels of democracy have a positive effect on trade openness conditional on factor endowments, specifically the capital-labor ratio, in developed and developing countries. Their central prediction is statistically supported in panel data from 35 countries between 1870 and 1914. Eichen- green & Leblang (2007) also hypothesize that democracy promotes trade openness. They find robust statistical support for their claim in a large sample of developed and developing countries from 1870 to 2000.

Milner & Kubota (2005) study supports the view that democratization has a positive influence on trade openness. They argue that because democratization expands the “selec- torate” in a polity, it empowers whole groups in society that were formerly excluded from the political process. In developing countries, this implies that democratization enfranchises particularly low-skilled and unskilled labor in the rural and urban informal sectors, who, according to the Stolper-Samuelson theorem, favor trade openness because they are the abun- dant factor that gains from trade. Put differently, since democratization increases the political voice of the abundant factor—low-skilled and unskilled labor—in developing countries, governments in new developing democracies have incentives to pay attention to the preferences of labor by lowering trade barriers. Milner & Kubota (2005) report robust statistical support for their main prediction in a sample of several developing countries from 1970 to 1999.

Thus, most studies report that democratization or higher levels of democracy has a statistically positive effect on trade openness. However, with the exception of Milner & Kubota’s (2005) study, they infer this effect from estimating empirical models in large samples that include both developed and developing countries. Does an increase in the level of democracy have a positive effect on trade openness in a sample limited to developing countries? To provide a preliminary empirical answer to this question and check the direction of the causal link between democracy and trade, we first analyze the effect that the lagged level of democracy has on trade openness in a sample of 130 developing countries observed between 1975 and 2002. Thirty-three of these countries are in Africa, 39 in Asia, 25 in Latin America, and 33 in other regions. For the empirical exercise, we normalize the Polity measure of democracy to a 0–1 scale for every country in our sample to aid interpretation of the results, and we operationalize trade openness as the sum of exports and imports as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).

To assess the effect of democracy on trade openness, we estimate a system Generalized Methods of Moment (system-GMM) model—developed by Blundell & Bond (1998)—with robust standard errors corrected for finite samples using Windmeijer’s (2005) correction procedure. The system-GMM model involves estimation of a single system that combines a regression in first-differences and a regression in levels. The instruments for the regression in first-differences are lagged levels (dated \( t-2 \)) of the endogenous explanatory variables, and the instruments for the regression in levels are
the lagged differences of the endogenous explanatory variables. Blundell & Bond (1998) show that estimating the two equations (levels and differences) in a single system reduces the potential bias and imprecision associated with just the first-differenced GMM estimator. Apart from correcting for potential endogeneity problems, the GMM technique allows us to account for unobserved time-invariant country-specific fixed effects (Blundell & Bond 1998). Following the literature, we control for standard variables in the specification that are known to influence trade openness: log of GDP per capita, log of population, log of total GDP at purchasing power parity, a dummy for participation in the GATT/WTO, and capital-labor ratio. Data for trade openness and the control variables listed above are drawn from Milner & Kubota (2005), Government Financial Statistics (International Monetary Fund 2006), and World Development Indicators (World Bank 2006).

Figure 1 contains the scatter-plot from the levels regression of the system-GMM model described above. It reveals that a higher level of democracy indeed has a substantially positive effect on trade openness in our sample of 130 developing countries between 1975 and 2002. Though useful, this result is preliminary because we have not examined here the link between democracy and measures of trade protection—often missing for many developing countries—such as ad valorem tariffs or the effective rate of protection. Instead, as mentioned above, we focused on trade openness because even though this variable is an indirect and sometimes “noisy” measure of actual trade barriers (see Rodrik 2000), it is widely available for the large number of developing countries in our sample.

Although the results discussed above are somewhat basic, they corroborate research by Milner & Kubota (2005), for example, which shows that the emergence of democracy positively influences trade openness in developing countries. Although our crude empirical analysis matches Milner & Kubota’s (2005) finding, it must be noted here that the theoretical story presented by these two authors (discussed above) critically rests on the Stolper-Samuelson theorem, which posits that low-skilled/unskilled workers are likely to prefer greater trade openness in developing countries and less trade openness in developed countries. This is because low-skilled labor is the abundant factor in the developing world and the scarce factor in the developed world. Is the Stolper-Samuelson theorem, which Milner & Kubota (2005) employ to construct their theory, empirically valid?

Survey data in developed and developing countries suggest that low-skilled/unskilled workers are indeed more likely to prefer higher (lower) levels of trade openness in developing (developed) countries (Mayda & Rodrik 2005, Scheve & Slaughter 2001). Such evidence provides some empirical confirmation for the Stolper-Samuelson theorem used by Milner & Kubota (2005). However, recent survey-level evidence from developing countries in Latin America [Baker (2003), p. 449; 2005, pp. 935–36] reveals the opposite: The poor, including low-skilled and unskilled labor, in developing and thus skill-scarce countries tend to be more protectionist, whereas skilled workers in developing countries favor more trade openness.
These mixed results are intriguing, and the trade policy preferences of low-skilled/unskilled workers across developing countries deserve further research. That said, Baker’s (2003) finding that it is not low-skilled but rather skilled workers who favor more trade liberalization in some developing countries is perhaps not surprising. This is because economists have shown that after trade reforms are initiated, wages of skilled labor in developing countries grow much more rapidly than the income of low-skilled and unskilled labor (Acemoglu 2003, Wood 1995). Trade reforms thus engender a “skill premium.” It may be difficult to pin down theoretically how democratization influences the skill premium and consequently trade reforms in developing countries. However, research on the emergence of skill premiums in developing countries suggests that it may be an oversimplification to treat labor in homogeneous and assume \textit{prima facie}, as Milner & Kubota (2005) do, that workers as a group prefer trade openness.

Scholars have made substantial progress toward understanding how democratization and higher levels of democracy affect trade openness. Yet research in this area raises numerous questions. First, Stokes (2001) and Weyland’s (2002) theoretical argument is based on the assumption that voters in newly democratic developing countries experience some certainty \textit{ex ante} that they will benefit from trade reform and more trade openness. This is questionable since economists have documented that unskilled workers, the rural and the urban poor in developing countries, often lack information about the benefits they may accrue from trade liberalization (Harrison & Hanson 1999). It also ignores Fernandez & Rodrik’s (1993) seminal paper, which shows how citizens’ \textit{ex ante} uncertainty about the \textit{ex post} benefits of economic (including trade) reform can delay or even block reforms across developing countries, including democratizing nations in the developing world.

Second, as discussed above, large-N work by scholars often hypothesizes that democracy has a positive effect on trade openness in the developing world either because of relative factor endowments in developing nations or because democratization politically empowers the abundant factor—low-skilled labor, workers who prefer free trade—in developing countries. Though useful, the causal stories currently provided by scholars do not theoretically explore how the process of democratic transition affects political dynamics between major social groups and the governing elite in a way that changes the elite’s incentives to adopt trade reforms. In particular, how does democratization, compared to autocracy, affect political dynamics between key social classes and the governing elite? What are the consequences of these dynamics for trade reform?

These issues, in turn, raise the following questions about the political dynamics of democratization and trade reforms and thus trade openness in the developing world: Does the skilled middle class or low-skilled and unskilled labor favor greater trade openness in developing democracies? How do ruling elites in a democratizing country rationally respond to the demands of emerging socioeconomic groups such as the skilled middle class, low-skilled labor, and the unskilled poor when setting trade policy? Does democratization help to sensitize ruling elites to the distributive consequences of trade openness, and if so, how do concerns about the distributive costs and benefits of trade reform affect trade policy decisions by governments in new democracies? These questions indicate how much more research needs to be done to construct a nuanced theory of the link between democratization or higher levels of democracy and trade openness. We detail below several additional areas of research that scholars should pursue in order to develop a deeper understanding of how the dynamics of democratization and democracy influence trade openness.

At this stage, however, we assess the potential for reverse causality between democratic transitions and trade reforms. Do higher levels of trade openness that result from trade liberalization increase the likelihood of democratization? The theoretical literature on the potential impact of trade openness on democratization is rich. Lipset (1959) suggested long ago that
trade can spark development and create a larger middle class, which in turn might foster the emergence of democracy. More recently, Acemoglu & Robinson (2006) argue that greater trade openness can increase income inequality, and this shift in the distribution of income itself tends to be negatively associated with the likelihood of democracy.

In contrast to Acemoglu & Robinson (2006), Boix (2003) and Boix & Garicano (2001) suggest that the effect of trade openness on democracy is contingent on the distribution of factors within a particular economy. When skilled workers are the abundant factor, trade openness increases income inequality within society by driving up the wages of skilled workers and deflating the wages of already poorer low-skilled or unskilled workers. Growing income inequality in turn discourages democratization. Adsera & Boix (2002) argue that greater trade openness actually endangers democratic institutions in emerging democracies. They emphasize that in countries in which democratic institutions are less well established, interest groups that benefit from more trade openness might try to void democratic institutions and impose openness through a dictatorship.

Thus, in stark contrast to the optimism expressed by Lipset (1959), the more recent studies argue that trade openness that results from liberalization of trade policies may actually reduce the prospects for democracy. Some studies find empirical support for the claim that more trade openness lowers the likelihood of democracy (Li & Reuveny 2001, Boix 2003). Several studies find that trade openness does not have a significant effect on either the likelihood of democracy or the level of democracy (Bussman 2002, Decker & Lim 2007, Rigobon & Rodrik 2004, Tavares 2007). However, Eichengreen & Leblang (2007) and Lopez-Cordoba & Meissner (2005) report that trade openness positively influences democratization.

Given the mixed evidence, we conduct a basic empirical exercise to check whether the lagged level of trade openness affects the normalized 0–1 Polity measure of democracy in our sample of 130 developing countries between 1975 and 2002. We estimate the empirical model—where democracy is the dependent variable and trade openness is the independent variable—by employing the system-GMM model. In the specification, we control for other variables that typically influence the prospects for and level of democracy: log of GDP per capita; GDP growth rate; rate of turnover of chief executives; an index of religious fractionalization; percentages of Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims in the population; a dummy for former colonies; number of democratic breakdowns suffered by each country; and total number of democracies in the world.

The scatter-plot in Figure 2, derived from the levels regression of the system-GMM model, indicates that the statistical effect of trade openness on democracy in our sample is weak. The preliminary result illustrated in this figure confirms the findings of numerous studies mentioned above that cast some doubt on the idea that increasing trade openness influences democracy, especially in the developing world. That said, it would be inappropriate to infer that trade openness does not influence democracy. More sophisticated empirical work needs to be done to carefully evaluate the effect of trade openness on democracy in developing countries. For instance, instead of focusing

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**Figure 2**

Effect of trade openness on democracy. The x-axis denotes trade openness. The y-axis is the normalized 0–1 Polity democracy measure. Circles indicate observations from developing countries in Africa. Squares represent observations from developing countries in Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.
only on the impact of trade openness, scholars need to test the effect of direct and comprehensive measures of trade barriers, such as the effective rate of protection, on democracy to assess whether trade protection influences the prospects for and level of democracy.

Nevertheless, compared with the robust statistical results showing that democratization has a strong positive effect on trade openness, large empirical evidence for the positive or negative impact of trade openness on democracy is relatively weak. This weakness raises numerous questions in this issue area that need to be explored further. First, Acemoglu & Robinson’s (2006) theoretical story is built on the crucial assumption that increased levels of trade openness engenders more income inequality. Although economists such as Barro (2000) and Easterly (2007) have found statistically that more trade openness indeed leads to more income inequality, other empirical studies have disputed the idea that trade openness causes or exacerbates income inequality (Dollar & Kraay 2004, Lee & Vivarelli 2006a). If it is indeed true that the causal impact of trade openness on income inequality is tenuous, then it may not be valid to argue—as Acemoglu & Robinson (2006) do—that trade openness decreases the likelihood of democratization because it engenders income inequality.

Second, we do not know of any empirical work that has attempted to carefully test the more specific link between trade openness, income inequality and the likelihood of democracy. This is unfortunate because Acemoglu & Robinson’s (2006) theoretical claim can only be carefully evaluated if researchers empirically test the links between trade openness, income inequality, and democracy. Such testing would face difficult—perhaps intractable—problems of endogeneity. We, however, believe that it is important to conduct the empirical task in more detail.

**Future Research Agenda**

Apart from the need to unpack the empirical relationships between democracy, income inequality, and trade openness, we see four other critical issues in the study of democracy and trade openness that require theoretical and empirical research. First, political scientists often use a binary measure of trade liberalization—originally developed by Sachs & Warner (1995) and then extended by Wacziarg & Wallack (2004)—or continuous measures of tariff barriers, including average statutory tariff rates and import duties, to test theories on the political economy of trade reform (Eichengreen & Leblang 2007, Milner & Kubota 2005). Both kinds of measures are restrictive, since they fail to capture substantial sectoral and industry-based variation in tariff barriers across space and time in developing countries since 1980. This is unfortunate because new empirical research by economists indicates that the decline in tariffs on skill-intensive goods in developing countries, including developing democracies, has been quite dramatic compared with the changes in tariff barriers on low-skilled or agricultural goods (Goldberg & Pavcnik 2004; Wood 1995, 1997). Additionally, if the assumptions of the Stolper-Samuelson theorem hold for developing countries, then democratization in developing countries may cause an increase in tariffs on skill-intensive goods but a decline in trade barriers for low-skilled or agricultural goods. The intriguing relationship between the emergence of democracy and the variation in sectoral or industry-level tariffs suggests that researchers should develop a measure of trade liberalization that accounts for temporal variation in sectoral and industry tariffs across developing countries rather than relying solely on dichotomous or other standard average tariff measures.

Second, future political science research on the emergence of democracy and trade reforms may benefit from more attention to the socioeconomic impact of trade reforms. This is because ruling elites in new democracies may consider the distributive consequences of reducing trade barriers on society before opting to implement trade liberalization measures. This claim is not new; Przeworski (1991) attempted to explicitly theorize how ex ante uncertainty...
about the social and political consequences of economic reform may influence the decision of new democratic elites to choose economic liberalization. Thus, a critical task for researchers is to build a comprehensive dynamic theory of the influence of democratic transitions on trade liberalization that analyzes how rational expectations about the socioeconomic impact of trade reforms held by leaders of new democracies affect their decisions about trade policy reform.

Third, Kono (2006) and Mansfield & Busch (1995) suggest that established democracies tend to use nontariff barriers (NTBs) rather than tariffs for protectionist purposes. Kono (2006) argues and demonstrates empirically that democracy induces politicians in the developed world to pursue “optimal obfuscation” by replacing transparent trade barriers with more complex, less transparent ones, primarily quality NTBs such as technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures. His argument is undoubtedly insightful. But it raises two questions that require further research. First, are democracies more willing to reveal information about their NTBs than autocracies are? If so, then one can potentially claim that researchers such as Kono (2006) observe higher NTBs in democracies for that reason, and not because democratic leaders employ NTBs as a tool for optimal obfuscation. Second, if democracies can use NTBs to obfuscate their true levels of trade protection, then what prevents autocrats from also using NTBs to hide their true trade barriers? A comprehensive theory of regime type and NTBs should also address this question. Importantly, however, studies of trade barriers that only include tariffs must be concerned with how NTBs are being deployed when considering overall levels of trade openness. Few studies of democracy and trade openness, for instance, concern themselves with both tariffs and NTBs.

The fourth critical issue for future research is how different political institutions in new democracies affect trade policy. Students of international political economy have analyzed how other institutional factors within democratic systems, such as electoral institutions, divided government, intersectoral labor specificity, and geographic concentration of certain industries in advanced industrial democracies, affect trade protection in the form of tariffs or NTBs (Busch & Reinhardt 2000, 2005; Gowa 1988; Hiscox 2002; Mansfield & Busch 1995; McGillivray 2004; Nielson 2003; Pahre 2007; Rogowski 1987). Is it plausible that electoral institutions, intersectoral labor specificity, and geographic concentration of certain industries, for example, may affect trade barriers in democracies across the developing world? Although some scholars have attempted to answer this question (Mukherjee et al. 2009), further theoretical and empirical exploration is certainly needed.

DEMOCRATIZATION AND FINANCIAL LIBERALIZATION

The Literature

In contrast to the burgeoning literature on the emergence of democratic institutions and trade liberalization, systematic scholarship on the impact of democratization and democracy in general on capital account liberalization is sparse. The relative lack of research on democratic transitions and financial openness could stem from the perception that capital account liberalization is not as politically salient as trade liberalization. Brooks & Kurtz (2007, pp. 11–12) state, “The high salience and relative tenacity of preferences surrounding the issue of trade opening are less apparent with capital account liberalization. Accordingly, studies of the politics of financial liberalization have largely focused on elite level negotiations…rather than mass-level politics.”

Notwithstanding Brooks & Kurtz’ (2007) claim, a few studies have examined both theoretically and empirically the effect that democracy has on capital account liberalization. For example, Brune et al. (2001, p. 9) argue that democratic transition may encourage citizens in the developing world to support economic openness and “liberalization—associating political and economic freedom as two halves of
the same acorn. This would imply that democracies are more likely to have open capital accounts.”

Using a similar argument, Eichengreen & Leblang (2007) also hypothesize that the introduction of democracy in developing countries generates political support for more financial openness; this consequently has a positive influence on capital account liberalization. Note, however, the contrast between this claim and some earlier comparative politics research suggesting that the absence of political constraints allowed autocrats to adopt capital account reforms (Haggard & Maxfield 1993).

Unlike Brune et al. (2001) and Eichengreen & Leblang (2007), Frieden (1991) does not explicitly focus on the impact of democracy on financial liberalization. But his theoretical arguments have important implications for the debate about democracy and capital account openness. Frieden emphasizes that capital account liberalization has distinct distributional consequences for different sections of society, which engenders the formation of political coalitions on the issue of capital account openness. Building on the Stolper-Samuelson theorem, he argues that capital account liberalization tends to benefit owners of mobile capital and diversified assets because it increases investment opportunities for these interest groups. Consequently, owners of mobile capital and diversified assets, which include domestic financial intermediaries and multinational corporations, apply political pressure on the government—in democracies—to remove restrictions on the country’s capital account. In other words, Frieden (1991) suggests that interest group pressure helps to promote capital account liberalization in the context of democratic political institutions.

Scholars of international political economy claim democratization and higher levels of democracy encourage capital account openness. Does empirical evidence support this hypothesis? Furthermore, what do the available data on financial liberalization—specifically capital account openness—in developing countries reveal? Has capital account liberalization increased or decreased across developing countries in recent decades, and has it followed the pattern of democratization that has swept the globe? To answer these questions, we briefly examined data on the extent of capital account liberalization (i.e., financial) that has occurred across developing countries in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

More specifically, following existing studies (e.g., Eichengreen & Leblang 2007), we used Chinn & Ito’s (2005) updated measure of capital account liberalization in 130 developing countries between 1975 and 2002. Forty-six of these countries are in Africa, 23 in Asia, 25 in Latin America, and 36 in other regions. The Chinn & Ito (2005) measure is a continuous composite index that is scaled from −2.5 to +2.5; to aid interpretation of our results we rescaled it as a 0–5 scale. The Chinn & Ito measure captures on an annual basis the degree of liberalization of each country’s financial policies, including, for example, removal of restrictions on current and capital account transactions, the presence of multiple exchange rates, and removal of controls on credit operations. In addition to Chinn & Ito’s measure, scholars have also used Quinn’s (2003) measure, scholars have also used Quinn (2003) and Brune & Guisinger’s (2007) measure of capital account openness for empirical tests in this issue area.

When we use the Chinn & Ito (0–5) measure of capital account liberalization, we find that financial openness across 130 developing countries more than doubled from an average of 1.6 in 1975 to 3.9 in 2002. The rapid surge in the degree of financial openness has fostered foreign portfolio and direct capital flows into developing countries, which have risen from $12 billion annually in 1975 to >$400 billion in 2000 (International Monetary Fund 2006).

The dramatic increase in capital account openness across the developing world since 1980 strikingly parallels the equally dramatic emergence of new democracies in developing countries during the same time. As mentioned, there have been as many as 83 episodes of democratization, primarily in the developing world, since 1975 (Papaioannou & Siourounis 2004). The fact that democratization and
capital account liberalization have occurred almost simultaneously raises two key questions: Does democratization (and therefore higher levels of democracy) promote capital account liberalization in developing countries? Does capital account liberalization increase the likelihood of democratic transitions?

Statistical tests typically find a positive relationship between democracy and capital account openness. Quinn (2003, p. 201), for example, reports that the "correlation of democracy with capital account openness varied by time: it was zero to moderately negative in 1890–1919 and 1949–1959, but moderately to strongly positive in 1920–1938 and 1960–1999." Brune et al. (2001) also report that democracy positively influenced capital account liberalization across a large sample of developed and developing countries during the latter part of the twentieth century. Eichengreen & Leblang (2007) find statistically that democratization has a positive and significant impact on several different measures of capital account liberalization since 1870 in a sample of developed and developing countries. In short, studies performed in fairly comprehensive pooled samples that include both developed and developing countries largely report robust evidence that democracy promotes capital account liberalization.

Does democracy have a positive effect on capital account liberalization in a sample that only includes developing countries? To briefly answer this question empirically, we estimate a system-GMM model to assess the effect of the 0–1 normalized Polity score of democracy on Chinn & Ito's (2005) capital account liberalization measure in our sample of 130 developing countries (1975–2002). Following extant studies, we control for variables that are known to influence capital account liberalization: log of GDP per capita, log of population, log of inflation, log of GDP at PPP, a dummy for participation in International Monetary Fund programs, current account deficit, and trade openness. Figure 3 illustrates the scatter-plot from the levels regression of the system-GMM model mentioned above. This figure reveals that the effect of democracy on Chinn & Ito's capital account liberalization measure across developing countries in our sample is positive and strong.

Put together, then, statistical tests—which include our simple empirical analysis—show that democratization and higher levels of democracy clearly have a positive impact on capital account liberalization in developing countries since the mid-1970s. But despite this robust empirical evidence, theoretical work on democratization and capital account liberalization (described above) is seriously underdeveloped.

For example, Brune et al. (2001) assume, rather than explain, that democratic transition necessarily encourages citizens to support capital account liberalization. They ignore the fact that capital account openness may be costly to certain social groups, providing them with incentives to block rather than support capital account liberalization. Furthermore, although Frieden’s (1991) study was published almost two decades ago, we do not know of any work that theoretically or empirically examines how the political dynamics of democratization affects the behavior of financial interest groups, and consequently the prospects for capital account openness, in developing countries. This

**Figure 3**

Effect of democracy on Chinn & Ito capital account openness measure. CAO denotes Chinn & Ito’s (2005) measure rescaled from 0 to 5. The x-axis is the normalized 0–1 Polity democracy measure. Circles indicate observations from developing countries in Africa. Squares represent observations from developing countries in Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.
is unfortunate, considering that interest groups in developing democracies, which may include domestic financial intermediaries for example, may be crucial in supporting or resisting more capital account openness. Later in this section we discuss other areas in which further research is needed to clarify the causal link between democracy and capital account liberalization.

At this stage, however, we assess the potential for reverse causality between democracy and financial openness. Do higher levels of capital account openness increase the likelihood of democratization? Although theoretical work has considered the effect of trade openness on democratization, we do not know of any study that theoretically addresses whether an increase in capital account openness leads to democratic transition. This is not surprising, given that the vast literature on the determinants of democratic transition pays almost no attention to financial openness. However, Eichengreen & Leblang (2007) suggest that more financial openness may generate domestic political support for democracy in autocratic states and that this, in turn, may improve the prospects for democratization. They do not explain why financial openness will lead the public to support democracy, but they find some statistical support for the expected positive influence of capital account liberalization on democracy.

Based on few case studies of financial crises in Southeast Asia during the 1990s, some scholars suggest that capital account openness increases the likelihood of currency crises in autocratic states in the developing world. Currency crashes, in turn, engender domestic rebellion against dictators, which could lead to the demise of autocratic states and to the birth of new democratic regimes (Breslin 2002). This causal argument and Eichengreen & Leblang's (2007) finding are interesting, but they raise some concerns.

First, it is not clear why currency crises or other financial crises will destabilize only autocratic regimes in the developing world. After all, currency crises caused by open capital accounts may also endanger fragile democracies in the developing world. Second, recent empirical research by economists has shown statistically that capital account liberalization decreases the likelihood of currency crises, in particular, in developing countries (Glick et al. 2006). This empirical finding makes it difficult to logically and empirically substantiate the argument that capital account liberalization promotes democratization by causing currency crises in autocratic states across the developing world.

Third, we mentioned above that Eichengreen & Leblang (2007) find empirically that capital account openness positively and significantly influences democracy in a sample that includes both developed and developing countries since 1870. Does capital account openness have a statistically significant positive effect on democracy in a sample restricted to developing countries in the latter three decades of the twentieth century? We attempt to empirically address this question by checking whether the lagged level of Chinn & Ito's (2005) capital account liberalization measure affects the 0–1 normalized level of the Polity measure of democracy in our sample of 130 developing countries (1975–2002). We estimate a system-GMM model where the normalized Polity democracy score is the dependent variable and the Chinn & Ito capital account liberalization measure is the independent variable. We control for other variables that influence democracy; these variables were listed in the previous section.

The scatter-plot in Figure 4, derived from the levels regression of the system-GMM model, shows that the statistical effect of Chinn & Ito's capital account liberalization measure on democracy in our sample is quite weak. We certainly would not infer from this simple illustration of preliminary results that capital account openness does not influence democracy in developing countries. Clearly, much more thorough empirical research is needed to gauge the precise impact of capital account liberalization on democratization and/or the level of democracy in developing countries. Note, however, that our result differs from that of Eichengreen & Leblang (2007), who find that capital account openness positively influences...
effect of Chinn & Ito capital account openness measure on democracy. On the x-axis, CAO denotes Chinn & Ito’s (2005) measure of capital account openness rescaled from 0 to 5. The y-axis is the normalized 0–1 Polity democracy measure. Circles indicate observations from developing countries in Africa. Squares represent observations from developing countries in Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.

democracy. There are two reasons for this difference. First, in contrast to our focus on developing countries in the last three decades of the twentieth century, Eichengreen & Leblang (2007) employ a much larger sample that includes advanced industrial democracies and developing countries observed from 1870 to 2004. Second, Eichengreen & Leblang (2007) estimate the effect of capital account openness on a dichotomous measure of democracy, which is not done here. We have so far focused exclusively on the literature that examines the link between democracy and capital account liberalization. In addition, political scientists have identified theoretically and tested four alternative factors that may drive capital account liberalization: international diffusion, government partisanship, the beliefs of political leaders, and interest groups (Alesina et al. 1994, Andrews 1994, Brooks & Kurtz 2007, Brune & Guisinger 2007, Cerny 1994, Frieden 1991, Goodman & Pauly 1993, Grilli & Milesi-Ferretti 1995, Helleiner 1994, Leblang 1997, Li & Smith 2002, Quinn & Toyoda 2007, Simmons & Elkins 2004). We do not discuss this literature because this review primarily focuses on the link between democracy and capital account openness. Instead, we briefly discuss below several areas for future research that may help to enrich the scholarly literature on the potential impact of democracy on capital account liberalization across the developing world.

Future Research Agenda

As mentioned, the drawbacks in research on capital account openness and the relative scarcity of comprehensive theoretical work on democratization and capital account liberalization raise several questions that deserve further research. These are similar to the questions we raised about trade and democracy in the previous section. We need to better understand the distributive consequences of international financial market liberalization. Which domestic groups or social classes gain or lose from capital account liberalization in democratizing countries in the developing world, and why? Specifically, does the skilled middle class or low-skilled or unskilled labor favor greater capital market openness in developing democracies? How do ruling elites in a democratizing country rationally respond to the demands of emerging socioeconomic groups, such as the skilled middle class, low-skilled labor, and unskilled poor, when setting financial market policy? Does democratization help to sensitize ruling elites to the distributive consequences of capital market reform, and if so, how do concerns about the distributive costs and benefits of capital market reform affect decisions by governments in new democracies? Compared with autocratic leaders, do democratic leaders have different political imperatives that make them more likely to take into account pressures for liberalization? Is the substantive impact of democratization on capital account liberalization homogeneous across developing countries around the globe? Finally, is it appropriate to deduce a common parsimonious theoretical framework that can explain how democratic transitions affect trade and capital account openness, or should scholars study the impact of democratization on trade and capital account liberalization as distinct phenomena?
The literature on capital account liberalization may also progress if researchers address whether the politics of democratization interacts with other exogenous factors to influence financial globalization. For example, do leaders in new democracies respond to the competitive pressures unleashed by international diffusion by further liberalizing their capital accounts? Or do they resist capital account liberalization despite the diffusion of capital account reforms across the developing world? Does government partisanship matter for capital account liberalization in emerging democracies across the developing world? Finally, do interest groups push for more (or less) capital account openness in developing democracies? And how do politicians in democratizing states respond to interest group pressure when deciding to liberalize the capital account? We need to better understand the behavior of both governments and domestic groups in order to comprehend the complex relationship between economic globalization and democratization.

CONCLUSION

The rapid proliferation of democratic regimes across developing countries in the past 30 years has produced a lively debate concerning their relationship to economic globalization. Recent research in political science has been particularly driven by two key questions on the politics of globalization: Does democratization cause trade and capital account liberalization? Do greater trade and financial openness increase the probability of democratization in developing countries?

The most significant advance made in this issue area in the past decade is empirical. Political scientists have extensively analyzed whether the emergence of democratic institutions promotes trade and capital account openness. They have also tested whether trade and financial liberalization foster democratization. This literature has thus contributed to a larger set of questions about the impact of democracy on global capitalism and vice versa. We also conducted some simple empirical tests to check not only if democratization statistically influences trade and capital account reforms, but also if economic liberalization affects democratic transitions.

Broadly, the literature and results from the empirical analysis conducted here suggest that democracy may help foster economic globalization but that globalization itself does not promote democracy. Political scientists have demonstrated via extensive empirical tests that democratic transitions and higher levels of democracy positively influence trade and financial openness. Most scholars, however, find that trade and financial openness do not statistically influence democracy or democratic transitions. The empirical results we report here reconfirm these findings. Specifically, we show that democratic transitions and higher levels of democracy have similar positive effects on trade and capital account openness, but that the reverse does not hold.

Despite impressive empirical progress, scholars have yet to develop a comprehensive understanding of the link between democratization and trade and capital account reforms. As emphasized repeatedly in this article, theoretical work on the causal effect that democratization may have had on trade and capital account liberalization is preliminary and lags far behind the empirical work. Empirical tests that lack solid theoretical foundations tell us something about correlation but not causality per se between democratic transitions and economic liberalization. Scholars need to develop comprehensive causal theories to explain why, how, and when democratization fosters economic liberalization in developing countries.

It is plausible that similar causal dynamics may account for the positive impact that democratic transitions have on both trade and capital account openness. Whether this is the case requires further exploration. It is also plausible that the effect of democratization and consolidated democratic institutions on trade and financial openness may not be homogeneous among developing countries. That is, the impact of democratic transitions on trade and capital account openness may vary across
developing countries from different regions. This possibility also requires theoretical and empirical exploration. Indeed, the central lesson that we learn from this review is that a vast amount of empirical and theoretical research is needed to unpack the connections between democratization and economic globalization.

**SUMMARY POINTS**

1. Democratization has a positive effect on trade and capital account liberalization.
2. Neither trade nor capital account liberalization statistically affects democratization.
3. Trade reforms engender a skill premium in democracies across the developing world.
4. Distributional consequences of trade and financial liberalization are costly and politically salient.
5. More detailed theoretical research on the causal impact of democratization on trade and capital account liberalization is required.

**DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

The authors are not aware of any affiliations, memberships, funding, or financial holdings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review.

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