Recent work by Carles Boix and Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson has focused on the role of inequality and distributive conflict in transitions to and from democratic rule. We assess these claims through causal process observation, using an original qualitative dataset on democratic transitions and reversions during the “third wave” from 1980 to 2000. We show that distributive conflict, a key causal mechanism in these theories, is present in just over half of all transition cases. Against theoretical expectations, a substantial number of these transitions occur in countries with high levels of inequality. Less than a third of all reversions are driven by distributive conflicts between elites and masses. We suggest a variety of alternative causal pathways to both transitions and reversions.

A re inequality and distributive conflicts a driving force in the transition to democratic rule? Are unequal democracies more likely to revert to authoritarianism? These questions have a long pedigree in the analysis of the transition to democratic rule in Europe (Lipset 1960; Marshall 1963; Moore 1966), and have been raised again in newer comparative historical work on democratization (Collier 1999; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992). More recently, an influential line of theory has attempted to ground the politics of inequality on rationalist assumptions about citizens’ preferences over institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2000; 2001; 2006; Boix 2003; 2008; Przeworski 2009). These distributive conflict approaches conceptualize authoritarian rule as an institutional means through which unequal class or group relations are sustained by limiting the franchise and the ability of social groups to organize. The rise and fall of democratic rule thus reflect deeper conflicts between elites and masses over the distribution of wealth and income.

Despite its logic, there are several theoretical and empirical reasons to question the expectations of these new distributive conflict models. Socioeconomic inequality plays a central role in these models, but has cross-cutting effects. The more unequal a society, the greater the incentives for disadvantaged groups to press for more open and competitive politics. Yet the wider the income disparities in society, the more elites have to fear from the transition to democratic rule and the greater the incentives to repress challenges from below. Given this potential indeterminacy, theoretical models have hinged on a variety of other parameters, such as the cost of repression or the mobility of assets. Even with these refinements, attempts to demonstrate the relationship between inequality and regime type have yielded only mixed results. In cross-section, there is a relationship between income distribution and the level of democracy: Ceteris paribus, more equal societies are more democratic. Yet the causal relationship between inequality and either transitions to democratic rule or reversions from it is much less robust.

We focus on regime change during the “third wave” of democratic transitions from 1980–2000. This period was marked by the spread of democracy to a wide range of developing and postsocialist countries. These included not only middle-income nations in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and East and Southeast Asia but also a substantial number of lower income countries, including in Africa (Bratton and van de Walle 1997). Although democratic transitions outnumber reversions from democratic rule, the period also saw a number of transitions to authoritarian rule.

Not only does this temporal focus on the third wave capture a wide-ranging sample of regime changes but it also overlaps with important changes in international context. During the Cold War era, both right- and left-wing dictators could exploit great power rivalries to win support from external patrons. During the 1980s and 1990s, the decline and ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union created a much more permissive international environment for democratic rule (Boix 2011).

Using an extremely generous definition of “distributive conflict” transitions, we find that between 55% and 58% of the democratic transitions during this period conformed—even very loosely—to the causal mechanisms specified in the distributive conflict models. Thus, even with an expansive definition of distributive conflict, more than 40% did not conform at all. Moreover, a substantial number of the distributive conflict transitions occurred under conditions of high inequality, a result that is at odds with the expectations of the...
theory. Approximately 30% of all transitions occurred in countries that ranked in the top tercile in terms of inequality, and a substantial majority of these transitions resulted from distributive conflict; this finding is robust to alternative measures of inequality. These findings do not necessarily overturn distributive conflict theories, but suggest that they are underspecified with respect to scope conditions and only operate under very particular circumstances.

Given the substantial incidence of nondistributive conflict transitions, we find several alternative causal pathways to democratic rule. External actors were decisive in some cases. In many cases, however, other domestic causal factors induced incumbents to relinquish power in the absence of strong challenges from below. Elite incumbents were sometimes challenged by elite outgroups or defectors from the ruling coalition who saw gains from democratic openings. In other cases, elite incumbents ceded power in the absence of mass pressure because they believed they could control the design of democratic institutions in ways that protected their material interests.

An even smaller percentage of reversions—less than a third—conformed to the elite-mass dynamics postulated in the theory, and once again, we found little relationship between the incidence of these transitions and socioeconomic inequality. However, we did find several alternative causal mechanisms. In several cases, incumbent democratic governments were overthrown not by socioeconomic elites seeking to block redistribution, but by authoritarian populist leaders promising more redistribution. Even more commonly, however, reversions were driven by conflicts that either cut across class lines or arose from purely intra-elite conflicts, particularly conflicts in which factions of the military staged coups against incumbent office holders.

Our analysis is motivated by methodological as well as substantive concerns. In contrast to quantitative tests of the relationship between inequality and regime change, we have constructed a qualitative dataset of within-case causal process observations (Haggard, Kaufman, and Teo 2012). Our approach differs from other such designs in that it examines all discrete country-years that have been coded as transitions or reversions in two prominent datasets: Polity IV and the dichotomous coding scheme developed by Przeworski et al. (2000) and extended by Cheibub, Ghandi, and Vreeland (2010).

Critics of “medium-N” designs have argued that such designs lack both the detail of individual case studies or smaller-N designs and the precision of well-specified larger-N econometric models. Yet we argue that they are particularly useful for evaluating whether the causal mechanisms stipulated in formal models—which typically involve complex sequences of strategic interactions—are in fact present in the cases. The approach is particularly useful for testing theories of relatively rare events, such as democratic transitions and reversions, civil wars, genocides, financial crises, and famines. In cross-national quantitative models of these phenomena, the number of country-years in the panel is large, but the number of cases to be explained is limited, permitting more intensive treatment of the relevant cases and thus more robust inference.

We begin in the first section by reviewing distributive conflict models of regime change, focusing on the contributions by Boix (2003; 2008), Acemoglu and Robinson (2000; 2001; 2006), and Przeworski (2009). The next section discusses methodological issues. The remainder of the article is structured around a consideration of transitions to democracy and reversions to authoritarian rule. Our causal process observations show not only that transitions occur across cases with very different levels of inequality—as the null findings in econometric models already attest—but also that a large number of democratic transitions and reversions occur in the absence of significant redistributive conflict altogether.

The returns from this exercise are both substantive and methodological. First, the findings cast doubt on the prevalence of the core causal mechanisms at work in the underlying model, including the relationship between inequality and particular types of elite and mass behavior. In the conclusion, we raise questions about alternative approaches and suggest several ways in which the theory might be modified: There may be other channels through which inequality can destabilize democratic rule, and there might be other economic and institutional factors that condition the capacity of low-income groups to engage in collective action. Second, our methodological contribution raises important questions about the validity of reduced-form panel designs, including with respect to the coding of regime type itself. More positively, it suggests a fruitful way of combining quantitative and qualitative methods that focuses attention on alternative transition paths rather than the partial-equilibrium treatment effects of favored variables.

**THEORY**

Adam Przeworski (2009, 291) poses the puzzle of democratic transitions in the clearest terms: “Why would people who monopolize political power ever decide to put their interests or values at risk by sharing it with others? Specifically, why would those who hold political rights in the form of suffrage decide to extend these rights to anyone else?” The seminal work of Meltzer and Richard (1981) provides the point of departure for all current distributive conflict models of regime change. The Meltzer-Richard model posits that the distribution of productivity and income is skewed to the right, with most citizens falling at the lower and middle range of the distribution and a smaller tail constituting the rich; the mean income exceeds the median. Where voting rules result in appeals to the median voter, the wider the divergence between the median and mean income, the more is to be gained from redistribution. Put differently, in countries with more skewed income distributions, the poor have more to gain from redistribution and should have more generous tax and transfer programs as a result.

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1 See also Romer (1975) and Roberts (1977).
In the distributive conflict theories of regime change, most notably in the work of Boix (2003) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2000; 2001; 2006), these expectations are modified and expanded to endogenize the very existence of democratic governments. These models differ in ways we explicate later, but both rest on complex causal chains including both structural and game-theoretic components: inequality, distributive conflict, and strategic interactions between incumbents and oppositions over the nature of political institutions. In models of democratic transitions, low-income groups—sometimes in coalition with middle-class forces—mobilize in favor of redistribution and against the authoritarian institutions that sustain inequalities. These theories are vague about how collective action problems are solved, but posit that they can be overcome by changes in information with respect to the solidity of incumbents’ power (Boix) or by increasing returns from mobilization as inequality rises (Acemoglu and Robinson). Faced with the threat of being displaced by force—in effect, through revolution—elites calculate the net cost of repression vs. concession, including institutional ones. At very high levels of inequality, the threats posed by democratization are too high to accept and they choose to repress. Yet at low or medium levels of inequality, redistributive demands can be managed through class compromises over institutions and policy that permit democratic transitions.

Carles Boix’s (2003) Democracy and Redistribution is a significant exemplar of this broad approach. Boix defines a right-wing authoritarian regime as one in which the political exclusion of the poor sustains existing economic inequalities. According to Boix (2003, 37) “a more unequal distribution of wealth increases the redistributive demands of the population... [However] as the potential level of transfers becomes larger, the authoritarian inclinations of the wealthy increase and the probabilities of democratization and democratic stability decline steadily.” The translation of these demands into a change in institutions hinges on the balance of power between the wealthy and the poor. Boix offers an informational model in which regime changes are triggered by exogenous shocks that weaken the elite or reveal its weakness (28–30). A necessary (although not sufficient) mechanism driving regime change is pressure from below: “As the least well off overcome their collective action problems, that is, as they mobilize and organize in unions and political parties, the repression cost incurred by the wealthy rise[s],” forcing elites to make institutional compromises (13).

Boix also emphasizes the role played by capital mobility in mitigating this relationship (see also Freeman and Quinn 2012). High levels of capital mobility enhance the bargaining power of elites. Fixed assets, by contrast, limit the options of the wealthy and make them vulnerable to democratic redistribution and thus more resistant to it. Given the decision of the poor to mobilize, the incentives of upper-class incumbents to repress are a function of the level of inequality and mobility of assets. Transitions are most likely when inequality is low, asset mobility is high, and elites have less to lose from competitive politics. Elites have stronger incentives to repress as inequality increases and when assets are fixed.

Although broadly similar in spirit, Acemoglu and Robinson’s (2006) Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy introduces several innovations. Acemoglu and Robinson concur with Boix that regime type is a function of the balance of power between high- and low-income groups. Although elites monopolize de jure power, masses potentially wield de facto power through their capacity to mobilize against the regime. Like Boix, Acemoglu and Robinson elaborate more complex “three-class” models in which the pressure on elites comes from coalitions of middle- and low-income groups. However, the establishment of mass democracy presupposes the engagement of low-income sectors because of their sheer weight. Because they constitute the majority, masses can sometimes “challenge the system, create significant social unrest and turbulence, or even pose a serious revolutionary threat” (25).

High inequality increases the incentives for authoritarian elites to repress these political demands for redistribution. To this observation, Acemoglu and Robinson add an important point about credible commitments. When elites are confronted by mobilization from below, they can make short-run economic concessions to diffuse the threat. Yet politically and economically excluded groups are aware that elites can renege on these concessions when pressures from below subside. Because there is a cost to subsequently reversing democracy after a transition has occurred, democratic institutions provide a means for elites to credibly commit to a more equal distribution of resources not only in the present but into the future as well.

Acemoglu and Robinson agree with Boix that, although inequality increases the incentive for excluded groups to press for democracy, it also increases elite incentives to repress. High inequality is inauspicious for democracy. However, Acemoglu and Robinson argue that democratization is also unlikely to occur in authoritarian governments with low levels of inequality because the demand for it is also attenuated; despite political restrictions, excluded groups nonetheless share in the distribution of societal income. They conclude that the relationship between inequality and democratic transitions should exhibit an inverted-U pattern, with transitions to democratic rule most likely to occur at intermediate levels of inequality.

It is important to emphasize that the theory is not simply a structural one but operates through strategic interactions between elites and masses: incentives for collective action on the part of the masses and repression or concessions on the part of elites. At middle levels of inequality, grievances are sufficient to motivate the disenfranchised to mobilize, but not threatening enough to invite repression (see also Burkhart 1997; Epstein et al. 2006).

Boix (2003) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) extend their arguments to a consideration of the stability of democratic rule and reversion to autocracy as well. Implicit in the theory is the assumption that high-inequality democracies are rare; for that reason,
inequality and democratic breakdown. Nonetheless Boix postulates a direct linear relation between the degree of inequality and the likelihood of reversion to dictatorship. In high-inequality democracies, redistributive pressures from lower-class groups will be more intense, motivating elites to deploy force against incumbents in order to reimpose authoritarian rule. Although Acemoglu and Robinson posit an inverted-U shaped relation between inequality and democratic transitions, they agree that countries that do manage to democratize at high levels of inequality “do not consolidate because coups are attractive” (38). The costs for elites of mobilizing against democratic rule are less than the losses arising from redistribution under democratic rule.

METHOD: CAUSAL PROCESS OBSERVATIONS

At first glance, these theories appear amenable to relatively straightforward tests. Is the level of inequality associated with transitions to and from democratic rule or not? Yet empirical tests are complicated by the fact that different measures of inequality capture different socioeconomic cleavages and the quality of the data is notoriously poor. We also find that measures of democracy commonly used in panel designs leave much to be desired.

The problems of testing these theories are not limited to the constraints posed by the data: They are also related to the reduced-form nature of most cross-national panel designs. These quantitative models typically omit the intervening causal processes and focus directly on the relationship between some antecedent condition—in this case, levels of inequality—and the outcome variable, regime change in this instance. However, as the literature on process-tracing and causal process observation has pointed out, the empirical question is not only whether antecedent conditions are linked statistically to the outcome but whether they also do so through the stipulated causal mechanisms. In this case, we want to know not only whether inequality is associated with regime change but also whether its effects operate through the particular causal mechanisms postulated in distributive conflict theory.

Our method of causal process observation includes two stages: (1) within-case analysis and coding and (2) aggregation across the population of cases (Haggard, Kaufman, and Teo 2012). Selecting on the dependent variable is a central feature of this approach, which is designed to test a particular theory and thus rests on identification of the causal mechanism leading to regime change. In contrast to the more common practice of purposeful (Gerring 2006; 2007a; 2007b) or random (Fearon and Laitin 2011) selection of cases for more intensive analysis, our approach is to select all transition and reversion cases in the relevant sample period (1980–2000). The cases included in our dataset come from the dichotomous coding of transitions and reversions in Cheibub, Ghandi, and Vreeland (CGV; 2010) and from Polity IV. For the continuous Polity IV metric, we use a cutoff of 6 to indicate a transition, a benchmark used in the dataset itself. We have, however, examined alternative cutoff points of 7 and 8 and find that as the bar is raised, the percentage of distributive conflict transitions in our sample actually declines to 47.9 and 42.1%, respectively, suggesting that the results are in fact robust.

Within-case causal process observation involves the reconstruction of an empirical sequence of actor decisions, ultimately strategic in form, that are postulated by the theory to yield the given outcome. Within-case analysis codes whether and to what extent individual cases conform with the stipulated causal logic. This coding can then be aggregated in a second stage to consider characteristics of the whole population or subsets of it.

In constructing the dataset of causal process observations on regime change, we begin with the stipulated causal mechanisms that run from inequality through regime change but also whether its effects operate through the particular causal mechanisms postulated in distributive conflict theory.

2 The concept of causal process observation (Collier, Brady, and Seawright 2010) grew out of an earlier stream of methodological work on process-tracing initiated by Alexander George (Bennett and George 2005; George and McKeown 1985) and subsequently joined by work on the empirical testing of formal models, including through “analytic narratives” (Bates et. al. 1998). Although Collier, Brady, and Seawright distinguish between causal process observation and process-tracing, we see them as essentially the same. However, we prefer the term “causal process observation” because it underscores the link to the testing of a particular theory; we suggest later the particular way in which this approach can be used to leverage causal inference. A related strand of work is associated with the “mechanism” approach to causation (Falletti and Lynch 2010; Gerring 2007b; 2010; Hedstrom and Vlakoski 2010).

3 We personally researched all cases cited in the dataset and consulted closely with each other on each coding decision and consistency across cases. Country and regional experts also reviewed coding decisions, particularly in ambiguous cases (see Haggard, Kaufman, and Teo 2012).
analysis: the aggregation of the individual causal process observations to permit analysis of the population as a whole or relevant subsets of it. For example, we pay particular attention to high- and low-inequality cases because the theory has particular expectations about how such cases should behave.

The method of causal process observation has several advantages that can enrich the testing of formal theories through quantitative empirical designs; we see it as a complement to such approaches, not a substitute. In a quantitative model, the effects of either structural variables, such as inequality, or behavioral ones such as protest are estimated across a heterogeneous set of cases, some of which transition as a result of the stipulated causal mechanism and some of which do not. The focus on average treatment effects masks the heterogeneity of transition paths; the variable in question is either significant or not. By contrast, causal process observations do not ask whether the variable in question is significant, but whether the transition path in the cases conforms with the causal process stipulated in the theoretical model.

As we see later, the quantitative work on inequality and regime change is highly inconclusive at best and is even more limited for the third wave transitions. Nonetheless, causal process observations can complement quantitative analysis in two ways that can strengthen causal inference. First, if causal process observations showed that elite-mass conflicts did drive transitions in a significant number of cases, it could reopen null statistical findings. The causal process observations would suggest, for example, the need for better specification of the quantitative model or more appropriate measures of inequality. However, if regime change was not driven by such conflicts in a significant number of cases, the finding could be considered disconfirmatory. More importantly, the finding could be disconfirmatory even if inequality were statistically significant in the quantitative analysis; this would occur if causal process observation showed that the effects of inequality work through causal channels not posited by the game-theoretic models.

In addition to its advantages in more closely testing the actual mechanisms specified in causal models, causal process observations also address a second important problem in standard quantitative panel designs: the mismatch between the temporal framework of a stipulated causal process and the constraints of country-year coding of cases. In cross-national panels, each country-year is coded as a transition or nontransition year; these codings constitute the dependent variable. The causal covariates are similarly either contemporaneous or antecedent with some lag structure. Yet the causal sequence of actor choices associated with transitions and reversions may be more compressed or extended, not constant across cases, and thus not well captured by the artifact of the country-year coding constraint typical of the panel design. As we see later, many cases that are coded as transitions prove to be dubious when a more extended but variable temporal context is taken into account, a point emphasized more generally in the work of Pierson (2004).

In principle, multistage models can be constructed that work from structural causes through intervening behaviors to institutional effects (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 85–87). Some critics of the mechanisms approach have argued that mechanisms may be nothing more than such chains of intervening variables (Beck 2006; 2010; Gerring 2007b; 2010; Hafner-Burton and Ron 2009). Although possible in principle, the continued reliance on reduced-form specification suggests that this problem is in fact not addressed, in part because of the labor intensity of recoding existing datasets to conform more precisely with the theory being tested.

In each of the remaining sections on democratic transitions and reversions, we begin with a review of the quantitative findings on the relationship between inequality and regime change and then present both aggregate and select case study findings from the causal process observations in our dataset. We show that the support for the distributive conflict model of regime change is weak, even under highly generous coding rules. When these rules are tightened, the evidence is weaker still.

**TRANSITIONS TO DEMOCRATIC RULE**

Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) do not present systematic empirical evidence in support of their claims.\(^4\) Much of their book is taken up with a discussion of the underlying intuition of the theory (1–47, 80–87) and the presentation of a family of formal models of democratic and nondemocratic regimes (89–172) and of regime change (173–320). Acemoglu and Robinson do present scatterplots showing a positive relationship between equality and the level of democracy across a global sample of countries (58–61) and provide short case studies of Great Britain, Argentina, South Africa, and Singapore (1–14). Yet these correlations and cases are illustrative at most.

In his analysis of democratic transitions over the very long run (1850–1980), Boix (2003) finds that the distribution of land, proxied by the share of family farms, has an effect on the transition to democratic rule. More unequal societies are both less likely to make a transition to democracy and less stable when they do (90–97). Boix also explores a highly uneven panel of countries for the 1950–90 period (only 587 observations), including developed ones (71–88). Using a Gini index as his measure of inequality, Boix finds some evidence that increases in the level of inequality reduce the likelihood of a democratic transition, but the findings are not altogether robust (see for example, 79: Model 2A).

More recently, other quantitative studies have taken up the challenge raised by Boix (2003) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006), but with mixed results.

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\(^4\) Earlier work (Acemoglu and Robinson 2000; 2001) was motivated by experiences in nineteenth-century Europe and early twentieth-century Latin America. However, in those articles, as well as in the later book, the formal theory is cast in general terms, without specifying scope conditions that might apply to third wave transitions. In the book, moreover, the illustrations from South Africa and Singapore rely on much more recent developments.
Like Boix, Ansell, and Samuels (2010) consider both long-historical and postwar samples (1850–1993, 1955–2004). They find that land concentration makes democratization less likely, but that increases in income inequality make it more likely. They argue that increasing income inequality reflects the emergence of a new capitalist class that challenges landed elites, a dynamic consistent with Boix’s (2003, 47–59) and Acemoglu and Robinson’s (2006, 266–86) extension of their models into three-class variants.

The limited number of other tests in the literature generally fail to find a relationship between inequality and democratic transitions. A cross-sectional design by Dutt and Mitra (2008) finds a relationship between inequality measured by the Gini coefficient and “political instability,” but fails to find a relationship between inequality and transitions to democratic rule. Christian Houle (2009) creates a dataset using an alternative measure of inequality: capital’s share of income in the manufacturing sector. Using the dichotomous coding scheme developed by Przeworski et al. (2000) and Cheibub and Gandhi (2004), Houle shows that inequality bears no systematic relationship to democratic transitions over the 1960–2000 period, but is a significant predictor of reversions to authoritarian rule. In a wide-ranging study of the determinants of democratization, Teorell (2010, 60) also fails to find a relationship between a Gini coefficient and democratic transitions.

Distributive Conflict and Nondistributive Conflict Transitions

In sum, the quantitative work on inequality and regime change is highly inconclusive at best, and even more limited for the third wave transitions. Many of these tests do not empirically model the underlying causal processes stipulated in the most significant formal models. Therefore, to undertake causal process observations, we need to interpret the underlying causal mechanisms at work in the theory. Two mechanisms appear central. First, elites must confront political-cum-distributive pressure from below, or a “clear and present danger” of it. In the absence of such pressures, it is not clear why elites would be motivated to cede power at all, as Przeworski’s trenchant question suggests. Second, there must be some evidence—minimally in the temporal sequence of events—that the repression of these challenges appears too costly and that elites make institutional compromises as a result.

We therefore code “distributive conflict” transitions as ones in which both of the following occurred:

- The mobilization of redistributive grievances on the part of economically disadvantaged groups or representatives of such groups (parties, unions, NGOs) posed a threat to the incumbency of ruling elites.
- And the rising costs of repressing these demands appear to have motivated elites to make political compromises or exit in favor of democratic challengers, typically indicated by a clear temporal sequence (mass mobilization followed by authoritarian withdrawal).

In coding the cases, we were deliberately permissive, writing coding rules that gave the benefit of the doubt to the theory (Haggard, Kaufman, and Teo 2012). Our coding allowed us to consider a variety of distributive conflicts that may not be captured by any single inequality measure, from urban class conflicts to ethnic and regional ones. Yet such conflicts must be fought around distinctive and identifiable inequalities. The economically disadvantaged or the organizations representing them need not be the only ones mobilized in opposition to the existing regime. Although mass mobilization must partly reflect demands for redistribution, it can be motivated by other grievances as well.

An important coding issue is the question of “potential” threats in the absence of actual mobilization. As Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) note in distinguishing between de jure and de facto power, the poor can be considered a potential threat in virtually every case. However, the strategic basis of reforms aimed at preempting potential long-term threats rests on probability estimates and time horizons on the part of elites that differ quite substantially from those that drive elite responses to more immediate challenges. Moreover, we are also wary of the coding challenge: Virtually any case could be coded as one in which there was a “potential” challenge from below, with a corresponding decline in analytic leverage. However, we do take potential threats into account where there has been a recent history of mass mobilization demanding democratic reforms.

We coded all cases in which such threats from below did not occur at all or appeared to play only a marginal causal role as “nondistributive transitions.” Why, in the absence of significant pressure from below, would elites withdraw or make institutional compromises that risk the redistribution of assets and income not only in the present but also into the indefinite future? As others have argued (Huntington 1991; Linz and Stepan 1996; Collier 1999; O’Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986), there are a variety of routes from closed political systems to democracy. We identify three: those driven by international pressures, those involving intra-elite conflicts and defections, and those in which incumbent authoritarian elites withdraw in the belief that they can control the post-transition democratic order in ways that limit democracy’s redistributive impact.

International factors played a decisive role in a number of third wave transitions (Boix 2011; Whitehead 1996). In a handful of cases—including Grenada (1984), Panama (1989), and Haiti (1994)—outside intervention took a military form. Yet particularly in the wake of the end of the Cold War, aid donors—both multilateral and bilateral—became less tolerant of undemocratic regimes that appeared guilty of economic mismanagement and outright corruption. Threats or withdrawal of aid played an important role in transitions in a group of low-income African countries in particular.
Even if we set aside the role of international pressures, threats from below are by no means the only domestic pressures that can cause elites to acquiesce to democratizing institutional changes. A common cause of transition in the nondistributive conflict cases is intra-elite rivalries. These rivalries may stem from competition among the political, military, and economic elites that constitute the authoritarian coalition—for example, when factions within the regime seek to displace incumbents—or from elite challenges from outside the regime altogether (Slater and Smith 2012). In a number of cases, we found that concessions to elites rather than mass challenges appear as important as distributive conflicts pitting rich against poor.

Even when elites remain relatively unified, they may still acquiesce to—or even lead—democratic reform if they believe they can retain leverage over the political process while reducing the costs of repression. Incumbent elites can do this in several ways, including through the design of political institutions that give them effective vetoes or through the organization of political parties that exploit other cleavages to dampen distributive conflicts. Dominant parties provide incumbent political elites particular organizational advantages that can be reemployed in a more competitive context.

Note that each of the alternative domestic causal mechanisms we have sketched—intra-elite conflict or defection and authoritarian elites ceding office because of confidence in their post-transition chances—may in fact be related precisely to the weakness of immediate threats from below. Where such threats are limited, elites are more likely to control the transition. Societies in which the poor are not mobilized through programmatic parties, unions, or other organizations may be especially prone to vote buying, patronage, and other forms of clientelistic control that would guarantee elite control of politics, even in nominally democratic settings (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2006).

Inequality and the Incidence of Distributive Conflict Transitions

Table 1 shows the distributive and nondistributive transitions, using the definition of transitions in the CGV dataset; in the text, we also report the distribution of these types of cases based on Polity transition coding. The cases are arrayed according to three measures of inequality: Christian Houle’s (2009) measure of capital’s share of income in the manufacturing sector (capshare), a Gini coefficient from the University of Texas Inequality Project’s Estimated Household Income Inequality (EHII) dataset (2008), and the Vanhanen (2003) measure of land inequality. We divide the sample of all developing countries into terciles of high-, medium-, and low-inequality cases and identify the transitions that fall into each tercile.

The table shows that transitions occurred at all levels of inequality, regardless of which measure is used. Twenty-nine percent of transitions occurred in the upper third of countries ranked in terms of land distribution. More problematic, and against theoretical expectations in both Boix (2003) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006), there was a substantial incidence of distributive conflict transitions among the high-inequality cases. When inequality is measured using the Gini, about 75% of high-inequality transitions were distributive conflict transitions; the incidence of such transitions is 60% using the land inequality measure, and 57% using capital’s share of income.

Table 2 offers additional insight into the causal role of distributive conflict. Columns 2 and 3 divide the CGV transitions into distributive and nondistributive types; columns 4 and 5 replicate the exercise for Polity transitions. We also identify the non-overlapping cases. The last column shows the average Polity score from the time of the transition through either the end of the sample period or until an outright reversion to authoritarian rule.

The information contained in Table 2 raises serious questions about the validity of the coding of democratic transitions in these two major datasets and, as a result, casts doubt on the inferences that have been drawn in the quantitative work that employs them. Only 55.4% of the CGV transitions are also Polity cases, and 21 of the 65 CGV transitions had Polity scores of less than 6. Even where the two datasets are in agreement, moreover, our examination of the cases raises questions about the validity of the coding process. Insiders and elites repressed opposition and/or exercised disproportionate control over them in the nominally democratic cases of Croatia, Niger, and Thailand. Transitions in Guatemala (1986) and Honduras (1982) empowered nominally democratic governments that actually intensified repression of social movements that had distributive objectives. Death squads continued to terrorize the opposition in El Salvador after the transition in 1984. In at least four cases—Ghana under Rawlings; Kenya under Moi; Malawi, where an “insider” won the transitional election; and Romania—the military or incumbent elites continued to exercise disproportionate control over the allocation of resources after the transition. In all of these cases, the transitions appear to conform more closely to what Levitsky and Way (2010) call “competitive authoritarianism” than to democracy. Because we seek to engage the quantitative analysis that deploys such data, however, we do not discard or reclassify cases identified as transitions in the two datasets.

What about the theoretical expectations of the role of distributive conflict in democratic transitions? We found that distributive conflict played some causal role in propelling transitions in about 55% of CGV and 58% of Polity transition cases. These are substantial, but by no means overwhelming shares of the cases. In combination with the findings in Table 1, the large percentage of nondistributive transitions suggests strongly that the link between inequality and distributive conflict transitions is conditional at best.

Yet even these findings need to be tempered by the generosity of our coding rules. Although pressure from below did play an unambiguously significant role in a
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Level of Inequality</th>
<th>Distributive</th>
<th>Nondistributive</th>
<th>Distributive</th>
<th>Nondistributive</th>
<th>Distributive</th>
<th>Nondistributive</th>
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**Percentage of distributive and nondistributive conflict cases**

- High: 57.1%
- Medium: 42.9%
- Low: 75.0%
- Very Low: 25.0%
- Highest: 60.0%
- Highest: 40.0%
### TABLE 1. Continued.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level of Inequality</th>
<th>Capital Share of Income in Manufacturing Sector</th>
<th>Gini coefficient (Texas Inequality dataset)</th>
<th>Share of Family Farms (Vanhanen)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distributive</td>
<td>Nondistributive</td>
<td>Distributive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of distributive and nondistributive conflict cases</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of distributive and nondistributive conflict cases</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Transitions: Cheibub, Ghandi, and Vreeland (2010); transition types: Haggard, Kaufman, and Teo (2012); capital share: Houle (2009); Gini: University of Texas Inequality Project (2008); share of family farms: Vanhanen (2003).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Year</th>
<th>CGV Transitions</th>
<th>Polity Transitions</th>
<th>Polity score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>Armenia 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh 1986</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia 1982</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil 1985</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria 1990</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi 1993</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>−1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde 1990</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic 1993</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo 1992</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia 2000</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>−2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus 1983</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia 1989</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Estonia 1991</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji 1999</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana 1993</td>
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<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grenada 1984</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau 2000</td>
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<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti 1990</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti 1994</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras 1982</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras 1989</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary 1990</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia 1999</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenya 1998</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>−2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lesotho 1993</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar 1992</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi 1994</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Mali 1992</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico 1997</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico 2000</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova 1993</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia 1990(CGV), 1992 (Polity)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal 1990</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal 1999</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua 1984</td>
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<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua 1990</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger 1993 (CGV), 1992 (Polity)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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</table>
TABLE 2. Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Year</th>
<th>CGV Transitions</th>
<th>Polity Transitions</th>
<th>Country/Year</th>
<th>CGV Transitions</th>
<th>Polity Transitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niger 2000</td>
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<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>Nigeria 1999</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan 1988</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Panama 1989</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay 1989</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Paraguay 1992</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru 1980</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>The Philippines 1986</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland 1989 (CGV), 1991 (Polity)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>Romania 1996</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia 2000</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome and Principe 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal 2000</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Serbia 2000</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone 1996</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone 1998</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa 1992</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea 1988</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka 1989</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
<td>Sudan 1986</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname 1988</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Suriname 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Not a Polity transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan 1992</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand 1992</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey 1983</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Uganada 1980</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine 1991</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Ukraine 1994</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay 1985</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia 1991</td>
<td>Not a CGV transition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/%</td>
<td>36/55.4%</td>
<td>29/44.6%</td>
<td>33/57.9%</td>
<td>24/42.1%</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In the dataset, we treat any transitions that are coded within a two-year window as the same case (for example, the CGV coding of the Philippines transition occurring in 1986, the Polity coding as 1987). Outside of this two-year window (for example, Paraguay) or where there is an intervening reversion (Sierra Leone), we treat them as separate cases. There are no Polity scores for Grenada, Sao Tome, and Suriname.

Sources: CGV transitions from Cheibub, Ghandi, and Vreeland (2010); Polity transitions from Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers (2010); transition types from Haggard, Kaufman, and Teo (2012).

number of middle-income countries such as Argentina, South Korea, and South Africa, our expansive coding rules also necessitated the classification of cases as distributive conflict where there was considerable ambiguity about its causal weight. The ambiguity in specific cases stemmed from one or more of three factors.

1. First, some distributive conflict transitions occurred in small open economies that were highly vulnerable to pressure from donors or other international actors, and this pressure may have been decisive.

2. The class basis of protest constituted a second source of ambiguity; in many cases, protest was dominated by middle- or even upper-middle-class groups, calling into question the class dynamics of the model even if we allow for cross-class coalitions including the poor.

3. A third source of ambiguity involved judgments about the role played by redistributive grievances in opposition demands; in many instances, it was difficult to separate redistributive demands from grievances that focused on a defense of privileged positions, generalized dissatisfaction with authoritarian incumbents, or nationalist claims.

Table 3 lists the cases in the dataset where international pressures, the class composition of the protestors, or the nature of their redistributive grievances made.
the coding of the case ambiguous. Of particular significance is the coding of several African “distributive conflict” transitions, in which incumbent regimes—in the midst of severe economic recessions—were vulnerable both to intense donor pressure and the protest of relatively well-off public employees and student groups.

Niger provides an example. The pivotal decision in this case was an agreement by the military strongman, General Ali Saibou, to convene a National Conference, which then assumed the role of a transitional government and organized competitive elections. Distributive protests played a role in Saibou’s decision to yield authority. Yet the opposition came primarily from the Nigerien Workers Union, which represented Niger’s 39,000 civil servants, and the Union of Nigerian Scholars, which represented about 6% of the country’s school-aged population (Gervais 1997, 93). Both groups bitterly opposed tough adjustment programs demanded by the International Monetary Fund, but the conflicts did not appear to engage the poor. As Gervais (1997, 105) writes, “the political stakes raised by . . . adjustment policies tended to compromise the benefits of the organized groups of the modern sector as much as the privileges of the traditional political class.” Notwithstanding our generous coding decision, it is ambiguous at best to claim that the transition process mapped directly to the underlying Meltzer-Richard model in which the interests of the poor or even middle classes are pitted against the rich.

Similar questions can be raised about the class composition of protest in other African cases, including Benin, Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, and Mali. Even though all of these cases meet our coding rules because of the presence of mobilization “from below” that affected the transition, protest was primarily limited to civil servants, students, and other sectors of the urban middle class. Moreover, several African cases (Lesotho, Kenya, Malawi, and Niger) were also ambiguous with respect to the role of international pressures.

The nature of the grievances associated with the secession from Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union also warrants special mention. In three such cases—Croatia, Macedonia, and Belarus—the coding was unambiguously nondistributive because mass mobilization on distributive lines was altogether absent or there is strong evidence that the political process of independence occurred as a result of intra-elite processes. Yet in the Baltic cases, as well as in Ukraine, Mongolia, and Armenia, there is ambiguity as to the nature of the claims made by groups engaged in mass mobilization. Several regional specialists whom we consulted in constructing our coding objected that these cases did not fall easily into the distributive conflict category and should be seen as the outcome of cross-class secessionist or nationalist movements and the resulting collapse of multinational empires. In these cases, we believed that the evidence of conflicts within the polity between indigenous populations and the Russians warranted a “distributive conflict” coding, but it is important to acknowledge the pivotal importance of strong nationalist aspirations that cut across class lines.5 If we were to

5 These cases also posed a second coding problem: whether they should be treated as democratic transitions at all given that they

---

**TABLE 3. Ambiguous Cases of Distributive Conflict Transitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Source of Ambiguity</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Source of Ambiguity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Grievance</td>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Grievance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Grievance</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Grievance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Class</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Class/Grievance</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Class/Grievance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Class/Grievance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Class/Grievance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Class/International</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Class/Grievance</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Class/Grievance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Class/Grievance/International</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Class/Grievance/International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Grievance</td>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Class/Grievance</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Class/Grievance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** | **17** | **Percent of total transitions** | **26.2** | **13** | **22.8**
shift all of the ambiguous cases in Table 3 from the distributive to nondistributive categories, the incidence of distributive conflict transitions would fall to only 29.2% of the CGV transitions and to about 31% of the Polity transitions.

Even with the expansive coding of distributive conflict transitions, we found a large share of cases—44.6% using the CGV measure and 42.1% of Polity cases—in which distributive conflict played only a marginal role in the transition process. These cases followed the alternative causal pathways we identified earlier: transitions driven by international pressures or by intra-elite conflicts, and elite-led transitions in which incumbents believed they could control the democratic process to limit its redistributive impact.

We have already noted that, in several of the “ambiguous cases” discussed earlier, popular protest unfolded in the context of severe international pressure. However, in other cases, protest was weak or entirely absent, and outside intervention was unambiguously decisive. Transitions in Grenada (1984) and Panama (1989) hinged almost entirely on U.S. military operations. In Haiti (1994), the military ruler negotiated his exit as an international force of 21,000 troops prepared to land on the island. External political and economic pressures from donors or great power patrons were also decisive in Comoros (1990), Cape Verde (1990), the Central African Republic (1993), and Cyprus (1983).

Intra-elite conflicts appear significant in a number of nondistributive conflict cases. The 1989 transition in Paraguay provides an illustration. The key decision was a palace coup that ousted the aging dictator Alfredo Stroessner and initiated a process of constitutional reform and competitive presidential elections. The coup was led by General Andres Rodriguez, Stroessner’s second in command, and by a faction of the ruling Colorado party that hoped to extend one-party rule by engineering a “nonpersonalist” transition. Mass protest did not pose a serious threat to the regime (Lambert 2000).

In Mexico the ruling PRI was challenged primarily by business elites and an opposition party (PAN) that was outside the regime and its ruling coalition and wanted less rather than more redistribution. Popular protest over alleged fraud in local elections strengthened the bargaining leverage of the PAN in its negotiations with the ruling party, but the political left played only a marginal role in pushing the regime out of power. Among other cases in which elite concessions to other elites appeared significant are the military’s acquiescence in the assumption of power by parliamentary politicians in Pakistan, the Thai military’s accommodation of emerging political-economic elites from the Northern part of the country, and the Kuomintang’s accommodation of native Taiwanese elites.

Finally, in a number of cases incumbent authoritarian elites opened politics under the assumption—justified or mistaken—that they could effectively control the political system to limit its redistributive impact. The Turkish military transferred power to a new civilian government in 1983, but only after crushing violent left and right factions that had been a feature of Turkish politics in the late 1970s. As it gradually reopened the political space in early 1983, the military vetoed most of the new parties that had formed around established politicians and designed institutions that gave it veto power over crucial areas of policy. Although the military elite was surprised by the victory of the one opposition party it had allowed to function, there is no indication that threats of mass mobilization influenced the decision to allow the elections or to permit the results to stand.

We see similar processes of reform in Chile, where outgoing governments built in quite specific mechanisms through which the military would continue to exercise oversight and supporters of the outgoing government would be overrepresented (Haggard and Kaufman 1995). These mechanisms included the establishment of national security councils with a veto role for the military establishment, constitutional and judicial guarantees limiting the authority of incoming governments, and the allocation of Senate seats to be filled by the head of the outgoing regime. In Kenya, Mexico, and Taiwan, incumbents ceded power gradually while competing aggressively and successfully in the newly liberalized environment. Several communist transitions, including Hungary and Mongolia, also fit this pattern.

Two conclusions emerge from our discussion of democratic transitions. First, although certainly some democratic transitions are driven by distributive conflict in ways that conform with the theory, these cases do not appear to be related in any systematic way with the level of inequality, as the lack of quantitative findings already suggests. Second, the assumption that elites do not yield power in the absence of mass pressure from below is called into question by the high incidence of alternative transition paths. Taken together, these conclusions indicate that the theory is, at best, underspecified and needs to delineate more explicitly the conditions in which redistributive conflicts emerge. We return to these issues in the conclusion.

The Collapse of Democratic Rule: Causal Process Observations

Although Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) and Boix (2003) offer diverging predictions about transitions to democracy, they agree that when democracies do emerge at high levels of inequality, they are more likely to revert to authoritarian rule. As Acemoglu and Robinson put it succinctly, “in democracy, the elites are unhappy because of the high degree of redistribution and, in consequence, may undertake coups against the democratic regime” (222). This view comports with an earlier generation of theory on “bureaucratic authoritarian” installations in the Southern Cone (O’Donnell 1973; for critiques: see Collier 1979; Linz and Stepan 1978; Valenzuela 1978); Brazil (1964), Argentina (1966,
and 1976), and Chile and Uruguay (both 1973), with extensions to other regions as well (for example, Im 1987 on Korea).

Unlike the quantitative evidence on transitions, there is somewhat stronger cross-national evidence that inequality is incompatible with democratic stability (e.g., Dutt and Mitra 2008; Reenock, Bernhard, and Sobek 2007). Houle (2009) deploys his innovative measure of capital share to test the relationship and finds that high return to capital relative to labor significantly undermined democratic stability between 1960 and 2000. We replicated his model using the Gini and Vanhanen index of land inequality. Although land shows no effects, the Gini was a significant determinant of democratic breakdowns, both for the entire 1960–2000 period and for the third wave between 1980 and 2000. 

Do these findings hold up when subjected to closer qualitative scrutiny? To what extent do the causal process observations comport with the expectations of distributive conflict theories? As with the transition cases, we considered whether political pressures for redistribution drove regime change, in this case the breakdown of democratic rule. We identified a category called “elite-reaction” reversions that conform with the distributive conflict model. In these cases, elites undermine democracy either by (a) seeking to oust incumbent governments that rely on the political support of lower class or excluded groups and are actively committed to the redistribution of assets and income or by (b) imposing restraints on political competition in order to prevent coalitions with explicitly redistributive aims from taking office. In these cases, distributive conflicts are in evidence and elites are acting against governments, parties, and organized social forces that are actively committed to greater redistribution through the democratic process.

We also identified a second type of distributive conflict reversion in which the incumbent authoritarian government is overthrown by authoritarian populist leaders. These types of reversion do not comport with our expectation that reversions are driven by the right, but they clearly involve redistributive conflict and are given some attention in Boix (2006, 18, 214–19). Whereas in elite-reaction reversions, challengers to democratic rule appeal to elite interests and target the masses for repression, in “populist reversion,” authoritarian challengers appeal to the masses and target the elite.

Finally, “nondistributive” reversions are unambiguous instances of the null hypothesis, but we distinguished two alternative subtypes. In some cases, support for a reversion cuts across class lines: Authoritarian challengers exploit widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of democratic incumbents and invoke broad valence issues, such as economic performance and corruption, that cut across distributive cleavages. In other cases, purely intra-elite conflicts cause reversions. The military—or factions within it—might stage a coup against incumbent office holders, or competing economic elites might mobilize military, militia, or other armed forces against democratic rule. We called these nondistributive conflict cases “cross-class” and “intra-elite” reversions, respectively.

Table 4 reports the incidence of distributive conflict and nondistributive conflict reversions by level of inequality. The distributive conflict column aggregates both elite-reaction and populist reversions; the nondistributive conflict column aggregates both cross-class and intra-elite reversions. Table 5 shows the types of reversion, Polity scores of the deposed regimes, and economic circumstances surrounding the change. Although there is surprisingly little overlap between the ranking of cases on the three measures of inequality, reversions do cluster at the middle and high levels of inequality; relatively few took place at the lowest levels. However, we find only a minority of cases that conform with the distributive conflict model. In the CGV dataset, four cases (Bolivia 1980, Burundi 1996, Fiji 2000, and Turkey 1980) or 21% of the cases are elite-reaction reversions. Three cases (16% of the sample)—Ecuador (2000), Ghana (1981), and Suriname (1980)—are populist reversions. A substantial majority (63%) of the reversions are nondistributive.

In the 20 reversions identified in the Polity measure (not shown here), 8 of the cases—40%—are classified as elite-reaction reversions, and there are 2 populist reversions. Half the cases, however, are classified as nondistributive. Missing data play more of a constraint in allocating the Polity cases across levels of inequality, but they are somewhat less concentrated at higher levels of inequality, and there is no evidence that higher inequality cases are more likely to be distributive. Fourteen Polity reversions fall into the high-inequality tercile on one or more of the three measures of inequality; if each case is counted only once, only five are distributive conflict reversions.

To elaborate the implications of these findings, we focus on the high-inequality cases using the capital share measure; as the distribution of cases across different inequality terciles suggests, very similar results would be obtained by using different income inequality measures. According to distributive conflict models, these cases are most likely to revert as a result of elite reactions to distributive demands from below. Given the low correlation between measures of inequality, alternative measures would show a different set of high-inequality cases. However, as can be seen from Table 4 no measure of inequality generates a distribution of reversions that conforms with theoretical expectations for a clustering of distributive conflict reversions among high-inequality cases; selection of

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6 Results available on request from the authors.

7 Precise coding rules are available in Haggard, Kaufman, and Teo (2012).


10 Ghana (1981) was a populist reversion; Armenia (1995), the Dominican Republic (1994), the Ukraine (1993) and Zambia (1991) were elite-reaction reversions.

11 One case, Sierra Leone, is identified as high inequality on the capshare measure, but was not included by Houle (2009) in the regressions because of a subsequent change in coding of the case.
### TABLE 4. Distributive and Nondistributive Reversions by Level of Inequality, 1980–2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Inequality</th>
<th>Inequality Measures</th>
<th>Distributive (Elite/Populist)</th>
<th>Nondistributive</th>
<th>Distributive (Elite/Populist)</th>
<th>Nondistributive</th>
<th>Distributive (Elite/Populist)</th>
<th>Nondistributive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gini coefficient (Texas Inequality dataset)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share of Family Farms (Vanhanen)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Inequality and Regime Change

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TABLE 5. Distributive and Nondistributive CGV Reversions, Polity Scores, Prior Coups, Per Capita GDP, and GDP Growth, 1980–2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Year</th>
<th>Distributive Reversions</th>
<th>Nondistributive Reversions</th>
<th>Polity Score</th>
<th>Prior Coups</th>
<th>GDP/capita ($)</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia (1980)</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>−4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>−1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi (1996)</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>−8.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros (1995)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo (1997)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>−5.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador (2000)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1295</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (2000)</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2075</td>
<td>−1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatamala (1982)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>−5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1556</td>
<td>−3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger (1996)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria (1983)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>−5.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan (1999)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru (1990)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1657</td>
<td>−5.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone (1997)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>−16.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan (1989)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname (1980)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>2536</td>
<td>−5.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname (1990)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>2049</td>
<td>−0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand (1991)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey (1980)</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2427</td>
<td>−2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda (1985)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>−3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% or average</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>−1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes and sources: E, elite reversion; P, populist reversion. Polity scores are the country’s score the year preceding the reversion (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2010). Prior coups is the number of coups (excluding attempted coups or plots) in the 10 years prior to the reversion (Marshall and Marshall 2010; McGowan 2007). GDP/capita and GDP growth refer to the values of these variables in the year of the reversion (World Bank 2010). Reversion types are from Haggard, Kaufman, and Teo (2012).

cases based on a different inequality indicator would therefore yield similar results.

Distributive Conflict I:
Elite Reactions in Bolivia and Burundi

Bolivia and Burundi are the only high-inequality cases to revert to authoritarian rule through the causal process stipulated by the theory. In Bolivia, a right-wing military faction led by General Luis Garcia Meza deposed acting President Lidia Guierler on July 17, 1980, following the victory of leftist Hernan Siles in an election held earlier that year. The coup occurred in the context of severe, ongoing conflicts between militant miners’ unions and more conservative political and economic forces. More recently, severe distributive conflicts continued to threaten the stability of the new democratic regime and ended only in 1985, when the elected government harshly repressed union opposition and implemented an aggressive structural adjustment program.

In Burundi, inequality is by no means correctly captured by the capshare or other inequality measures; much more significant are the deep ethnic cleavages that divide the country. A Tutsi minority (about 15% of the population) had long dominated the military, civil service, and the economy. Hutus constituted a large and clearly less well-off majority, producing a highly fraught political environment (Lemarchand 1996). Between 1966 and 1996, the country experienced no fewer than 11 coups and attempted coups (McGowan 2007), with periodic episodes of wider violence. The deposed democrat government was led by moderate Hutu politician Melchior Ndadaye, but was extremely fragile; the coding of the transition to democracy is dubious. Ndadave died in an unsuccessful coup attempt in 1994, and his successor, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was killed in a suspicious plane crash in the same year. After a massacre of more than three hundred Tutsis by radical Hutu rebels in 1996, a military coup by former president Pierre Beyoya restored the Tutsis to power.

Distributive Conflict II:
Populist Reversion in Ghana

Jerry Rawlings’ coup in Ghana constitutes a clear example of a populist reversion, although once in office his military government shifted sharply to the right. In 1981, Rawlings overthrew the feckless constitutional government of Hilla Limann with the backing of militant student organizations, unions, and left social movements. By the time of the coup, the economy had deteriorated badly, and the Limann government faced strikes and confrontations with workers over back pay and a tough austerity program. On seizing power, Rawlings actively solicited the support of these forces by placing representatives of radical left organizations on the
military’s Provisional National Defense Council and creating a raft of populist consultative organizations (Graham 1985; Hutchful 1997). Rawlings’ populism only aggravated Ghana’s economic problems, and the military government ultimately reversed course entirely and vigorously embraced the “Washington consensus.” Yet the initial overthrow of the democratic regime clearly appealed to, and mobilized support from, populist and leftist social forces.

**The Null Cases: Nondistributive Reversions**

The other high-inequality reversions are Peru, Nigeria, Thailand, and Sierra Leone. Some of these involved broad appeals that cut across class lines, whereas others resulted primarily from conflicts within the elite itself. However, in none of the cases were redistributive cleavages between elites and masses central to the reversion, and in several the specific political pressures stipulated by the theory—redistributive democratic governments or social movements—were altogether absent.

**Peru.** Alberto Fujimori’s decision to close congress and rule by decree in April 1992 drew support from a broad cross-section of Peruvian society. Military backing was, of course, essential and was motivated in part by the desire for a free hand to confront the Shining Path, an insurgency that had pretenses of representing disadvantaged peasants in some highland areas of the country. Yet in other important ways, the case does not correspond with the theory. First, the “self-coup” initially met opposition from international and some local business sectors—in short, from economic elites—who were concerned that an outright dictatorship would have adverse economic consequences. Although these sectors eventually warmed to the regime after Fujimori agreed to a facade of constitutionalism, they were by no means drivers or even supporters of the coup.

At the same time, Fujimori enjoyed surprisingly wide support, visible in his overwhelming victory in an early referendum on a new constitution that would cement his hold on power. The unions and the political left did oppose the coup, but their organizations had been decimated by the hyperinflation and economic collapse of the late 1980s, and they themselves enjoyed little popular support. The large majority of the Peruvian poor were attracted by a leader who promised to deal with a strong hand with the economic crisis and the insurgency. One 1992 survey showed that almost 76% of low-income people supported Fujimori’s plan for constitutional reform (Rubio 1992, 7; cited in Weyland 1996, fn 16). While undertaking economic reforms, Fujimori also strengthened his electoral base through the expansion of clientelistic anti-poverty programs (Weyland 1996). In the late 1990s, as the economy once again slowed and corruption scandals surfaced, Fujimori’s popularity waned, and he was eventually forced to withdraw from power. Until that time, however, his government rested on a surprisingly broad cross-class coalition.

**Nigeria.** As in Peru, the 1983 coup in Nigeria occurred in the context of severe economic deterioration and a widespread loss of public confidence in the government. The leader of the coup, Major General Muhamadu Buhari, was—like his predecessors—tied closely to the Muslim north and had held a high position within the deposed government. Yet there are no indications that the takeover was motivated by class or ethnic demands on the state, nor by the significant involvement of civil society. Nor is there evidence that factional rivalries within the military were connected with broader social conflicts that could be modeled in elite-mass terms, whether engaging class, ethnic, or regional interests. The most consequential divisions were within the elites, most notably, the military, clientelistic politicians, and the business class. When oil revenues collapsed, the ruling coalition fragmented under competing claims for patronage. The inability of the hegemonic party to reconcile these conflicting interests, argues Augustine Udo (1985, 337), came to a head in a blatantly corrupt election in 1983 that exposed “unprecedented corruption, intimidation, and flagrant abuse of electoral privilege by all parties.” The coup was a response to these democratic failures.

**Thailand 1991.** The 1991 coup in Thailand was undertaken by a military faction that bridled under both the existing military leadership and the efforts of the elected assembly to exercise greater control over military spending and prerogatives (Baker and Phongpaisich 2002). Elected officials were concerned, among other things, with channeling patronage resources to disadvantaged parts of the country, but they were linked closely to upcountry business interests. Although the distribution of income had deteriorated in Thailand during the economic reforms of the 1980s, left parties remained confined to the fringes of political life, and a long-standing rural insurgency had long since petered out. The coup had the effect of galvanizing mass opposition, including groups explicitly representing the poor, and this opposition subsequently played a role in the transition back to democratic rule. Yet there is no evidence that the coup either responded to popular pressures for redistribution or reflected populist-authoritarian dissatisfaction with democracy’s failure to redress redistributive grievances.

**Weak Democracy Syndrome**

We do not seek to elaborate an alternative theory of democratic instability during the third wave, but our analysis suggests a “weak democracy” syndrome that comports with a growing body of literature on democratic vulnerability (Diamond 2008; Levitsky and Way 2010). Before turning to this issue, however, we should underscore that at least some of the reversions may be artifacts of coding rules governing these two influential datasets. Table 5 shows that 8 of the 19 cases coded as reversions in the CGV dataset did not rise above the standard Polity cutoff score of 6 in the year preceding their collapse (Bolivia, Burundi, Comoros, Congo,
Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Thailand, and Uganda). Another six cases (Fiji, Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, and Sudan) barely make that threshold with scores of either 6 or 7. The average Polity score for all of the CGV reversion countries in the year preceding the collapse of democratic rule is only 4.5. “Reversions” are occurring against democracies that are marginally democratic at best.

Yet the weakness of the distributive conflict theory of regime change is not simply an artifact of the coding rules; the causal mechanisms stipulated in the theory do not appear to operate either. Electoral competition in Thailand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Honduras, Ecuador, Ghana, and Guatemala was dominated by patronage parties with close ties to economic elites or the military establishment. In none of these cases do we see a significant presence of parties, interest groups, or social movements representing the interests of the poor that could serve as the basis for distributive conflict that would in turn trigger elite intervention.

Rather, conflicts within the political elite—between insiders and outsiders—was more likely to pose a challenge to democratic rule, with the military playing a pivotal role. In the 11 cases in which distributive conflicts were implicated in the collapse of democratic rule, the military could plausibly be seen as an agent of either elites (elite-reaction reversions) or excluded social forces (populist reversions). However, in many of the other cases, the military entered politics largely on its own behalf. Such intervention was more likely to occur where prior military intervention had established a precedent. Cross-national quantitative work on both Latin America and Africa finds that the likelihood of a military coup is strongly affected by the previous history of coups (Collier and Hoeffler 2005; Lehoucq and Perez-Linan 2009). The data presented in Table 5 are consistent with these findings. Thirteen of 19 reversions came in countries that had already experienced at least one prior coup, and in 7 of these cases, the military was a repeat offender.

The data in Table 4 also highlight the poverty and poor economic performance of the countries experiencing reversion. As Londregan and Poole (1990) and Przeworski et al. (2000) have shown convincingly, the probability that democratic governments will survive is strongly affected by the level of development. Average GDP per capita for the reversion cases at the time of the collapse of democratic rule was only $980, way below the thresholds for consolidated democracies. Among the non-African cases, only Thailand, Ecuador, and Peru are middle-income countries.

The relationship between short-run economic performance and reversions has also been explored in some detail (Gasiorowski 1995; Haggard and Kaufman 1995; Kricheli and Livne 2011; Teorell 2010). Przeworski et al. (2000) show that the odds of democratic survival decrease substantially after three consecutive years of negative economic growth. On average, the economies of the reversion countries declined by 1.6% in the year of the reversion, and a number were in the midst of full-blown economic crises (Table 5). Both low per capita income and slow growth provided openings for challengers to act with the acquiescence or even support from disaffected publics.

In sum, a close examination of the causal mechanisms driving reversal during the third wave suggests a more deep-seated syndrome in which distributive conflict plays a surprisingly minor role. Structural constraints such as low per capita income and weak institutions combined with short-run crises seem to be major factors in the breakdown of these weak democracies.

**CONCLUSION**

Viewed over the long run, the emergence of democracy in the advanced industrial states resulted in part from fundamental changes in class structures. Demands on the state from new social classes—first the emergent bourgeoisie and then the urban working class—played a role in the gradual extension of the franchise. These stylized facts played an important role in the new distributive conflict models of regime change.

Yet these models do not appear to travel well to the very different international, political, and socioeconomic conditions that prevailed during the third wave of democratization. Standard panel designs have found at best limited evidence for the inequality-transition logic of the distributive conflict models, and the causal process observations reported here show that it does not appear to operate even in cases in which it should. Although more refined measures of inequality may ultimately capture ethnic or regional inequalities that we are underestimating, our causal process observations are designed to capture at least the overt political manifestations of a wide array of different distributive cleavages. It therefore seems likely that the problems lie with theory as well as measurement.

How should we respond to such findings? Distributive conflict theories may simply be weaker than their proponents suggest, and we later highlight several alternative approaches to regime change. However, the core insight of distributive conflict theories is intuitively appealing, and we are inclined to look for avenues for refinement. One avenue would be to consider whether inequality influences the stability of democratic rule through channels other than those postulated by the distributive conflict theorists. High inequality may be a determinant of the “weak democracy” syndrome, for example by contributing to low growth and poverty (Persson and Tabellini 1994), which are in turn related to political instability and weak, ineffective states (Londregan and Poole 1990). This causal path may well help explain an important class of low-income cases, as we argued in the conclusion to our discussion of reversions; we return to this group of countries later.

Yet the collective protest of citizens against elites is a core causal mechanism in distributive conflict theories, and such an approach would abandon that insight altogether. The incentives and capacity to mobilize such protest are central to the theory, yet are either assumed to be a function of levels of inequality or ignored.
altogether. The free-rider problem highlighted by Olson decades ago (1965) problematizes the assumption that shared interests in redistribution will enable large groups to overcome barriers to collective action. The question of how to solve this problem has become the cornerstone of the literature not only on regime change but also on revolution, collective violence, and contentious politics.

In the absence of a capacity to overcome barriers to collective action, transitions both to and from democratic rule are more likely to reflect narrow, intra-elite conflicts. Although such conflicts certainly have a distributive component—and indeed a highly conflictual one—it is harder to root them in the class-conflict logic of the underlying Meltzer-Richard model. Although we found a surprising number of distributive conflict transitions in the high-inequality cases, the concentration of income and assets in such settings may also empower elites to shape the course of regime change; the effects of transitions on the distribution of income could as well be regressive as progressive.

We suspect that distributive conflict theories may ultimately prove to be conditional in form; that is, they are dependent on incentives and capacities for collective action that are not in fact given by the level of inequality. What are these additional factors that might enable subaltern groups to overcome barriers to collective action? We identify at least three lines of research, each of which is potentially complementary to the political economy approaches discussed in this article but may also represent competing approaches to regime change.

It may not be necessary to reach beyond a political-economy framework to clarify conditions in which distributive conflict becomes more likely to affect regime change. One such condition is economic development. At various points, both Boix (2003) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) suggest that capacities for collective action are likely to be greater in relatively developed countries where industrialization and urbanization provide a social basis for organization. Our case studies also suggest a contrast between middle-income countries with substantial concentrations of industrial labor and poorer countries where low-income groups are concentrated in the agricultural and urban informal sectors and face greater barriers to collective action. In relatively industrialized countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Poland, South Africa, and South Korea, distributive conflict transitions involved or were even led by workers’ movements with a relatively long history of political mobilization and collective action (Collier 1999; Drake 1998). Conversely, in a number of the poorer African transitions we examined, political parties and civil society groups representing the poor were often too weak to check the predatory tendencies of state elites and of other more privileged social forces; as a result regime change was better understood in terms of intra-elite processes (Bratton and van de Walle 1997). Both transitions and reversion in these cases often came at best in response to generalized protest against poor economic conditions waged by relatively better-off urban forces, many with close ties to the state apparatus.

Institutional approaches represent another point of departure for explaining collective action. Prior experience with democracy or institutionalized opportunities for collective action in semi-authoritarian regimes may be important for understanding how collective challenges are subsequently mobilized. In Latin America, corporatist unions, which had initially been financed and sponsored by the state (Collier and Collier 1991; Schmitter 1974), subsequently formed a core component of protests against authoritarian incumbents in Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina, as did a number of labor-based political parties with close links to the state.

At a more general level, differences in authoritarian institutions might shape both the actors and cleavages that lead to the establishment or reversal of democracy. Collier (1999) has shown this empirically with earlier democratic transitions in Europe and Latin America, and an exploring literature on varieties of authoritarian rule raises the possibility for the postwar period as well (Geddes 1999; Levitsky and Way 2010; Magalon and Kricheli 2010). The effects of the organizational spaces provided by such regimes on collective demands for democracy remain a subject of ongoing research. For instance, controlled competition under semi-competitive regimes might provide opportunities for mobilization that subsequently spill over into challenges to the regime itself. Yet it is also possible that controlled opening may yield advantages for incumbents by establishing organized channels for recruitment of supporters, opportunities for control, and the revelation of politically useful information, such as the identity and strength of the opposition.

Finally, the social movement and “contentious politics” literature provides the starkest alternative to political-economy approaches. Work in this area emphasizes the significance of political opportunities, resources, and cultural framing, typically casting the approach in opposition both to strictly rationalist explanations for collective action and theories that stress underlying structural conditions such as inequality (see McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2003). As noted earlier, much of the analysis of nationalist and ethnic movements in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union focuses on the factors emphasized in the contentious politics literature. Kubik (1994), for example, provides an important account of how the Solidarity movement mobilized around a protest discourse that emerged in the wake of Pope John Paul II’s return to Poland in 1979. More broadly, Beissinger’s (2002) seminal work on anti-regime protest in the Soviet Union emphasizes nationalism and ethnic identities, rather than socioeconomic grievances, as the principal spur to protest against Soviet authority. As we argued in our discussion of the coding, such protest can be viewed as a reaction against other forms of inequality. Yet it can also be viewed as an alternative to the structural and rationalist foundations of distributive conflict approaches.

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12 See Green and Shapiro (1994) for a general critique of rational choice theory and its inability to deal persuasively with collective action problems.
The relationship between these analyses of the sources of collective action and distributive conflict theories is not straightforward. Economic development, political institutions, and even the dynamics of contentious politics may simply mediate the effects of inequality emphasized in the distributive conflict approaches. However, given the agnostic nature of our findings, they might also prove to be contending explanations that move away from an emphasis on underlying inequalities altogether. An important line of research is to exploit opportunities to distinguish between competing theories that may appear observationally equivalent.

A final theoretical note concerns an important conditioning factor in our own analysis, which is limited to the third wave era. As noted in the introduction, this period encompasses important international systemic changes, and a number of our cases had a significant international dimension. The winding down of the Cold War eliminated opportunities for authoritarian rulers to secure support from great power patrons and thus altered the resources and calculus of domestic political actors, including disadvantaged groups. With more permissive international conditions, democracy could spread to countries with vastly different class structures and degrees of inequality.

Boix (2011) has recently explored the mediating effects of the international order and finds that economic development is more likely to drive democratization when the international order is dominated by a democratic hegemon rather than by rivalries between democratic and authoritarian powers. Against this argument, our examination of democratization during this period emphasizes the spread of democracy—at least temporarily—to poorer countries as well, partly as a consequence of pressure and encouragement from international donors. However, we also found that it was precisely in the poorer countries where transitions facilitated by positive international conditions were most likely to be reversed, suggesting that the longer run structural forces outlined earlier are likely at work.

Distributive conflict models have formalized and thus given a sharper edge to class-conflict models of political change that have long been a part of the social science canon. They have done so in part by etching more sharply the causal mechanisms that drive regime change. Yet in doing so, it is incumbent on these theories to provide compelling empirical tests of their claims, not only with respect to the relationship between inequality and regime change but with respect to the postulated causal processes as well. Although an earlier generation of case study scholarship on democratic transitions faced significant selection problems, large-N cross-national designs have their own disabilities related to measurement error and reduced-form designs that do not actually test for stipulated causal mechanisms.

The tradeoffs between small- and large-N designs are real. Yet medium-N designs based on causal process observations provide an additional means of squaring the methodological circle, particularly where the phenomena being explained are relatively rare—such as regime change, revolution, financial crisis, war, or famine—and thus amenable to intensive qualitative scrutiny. Such an approach combines within-case analysis that is sensitive to context and sequence with tests of the underlying theories and causal mechanisms that are often only implicit in larger-N designs. However, this approach rests on a willingness to open up existing datasets and recode them in line with theoretical expectations to maximize inferential leverage.

REFERENCES


Inequality and Regime Change: The Role of Distributive Conflict

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In a recent article in the American Political Science Review, we attempted to test what we call “distributive conflict” models of regime change using a qualitative data set of transitions to and from democracy from 1980 through 2000.1 These models, pioneered by Carles Boix (2003) and Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2006)2 rest on complex causal chains including both structural and game-theoretic components: inequality, strategic interactions between incumbents and oppositions over the nature of political institutions, and the ever-present threat of repression from above and violence from below.


Rethinking Inequality and Democratization: How Inequality Divides Elites and Underpins Regime Change

Ben Ansell, Oxford University
David Samuels, University of Minnesota

Despite the implications of Przeworski et al.,1 the search for factors that might drive “endogenous” democratization is alive and well. However, scholarship on the political consequences of economic change has shifted from the hypothesized impact of economic growth to the question of the political consequences of different patterns of equal or unequal growth. We owe this ‘redistributivist’ turn - which draws attention to a purported tension between democracy and property - to the influence of Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson and Carles Boix.2 These studies vary in how they formalize the

Articles

RMDs

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Redistributive models of democracy (RMD), to use Haggard and Kaufman’s expression, have been criticized on several counts: (1) their empirical performance is weak; (2) they make unconditional predictions about the relationship between structural variables (inequality, asset specificity, organizational and information parameters) and political transitions; and (3) the parameters of the models are either too narrow and stylized or simply wrong – particularly (a) the assumption of rational, self-interested actors motivated by material interests, (b) the definition of ‘classes’, (c) the sequence of the political decision process, and (d) the tax setting model. After examining these critiques briefly here, I conclude that, broadly speaking, the idea of democracy as an equilibrium (given by the material payoffs of relevant social and economic actors) is: (1) relatively robust and (2) the best point of departure (or, in Lakatos’ terms, a core) from which to progressively build a satisfactory theory of political transitions.

Empirical Performance of the Theory

Several important empirical tests on RMD find that the association between economic inequality, asset specificity and political transitions either does not exist, is highly unstable or is restricted to democratic breakdowns. Houle (2009) concludes that inequality makes democratic breakdowns more likely but does not affect democratic transitions after 1960. Ansell and Samuels (2010) find that land inequality explains democratic transitions since the mid-19th century but that income inequality has the opposite effect. Haggard and Kaufman (2012) claim that almost half of all political transitions since 1980 are unrelated to distributive conflict.

As I have insisted elsewhere,¹ the examination of the covariates of political transitions has to be systematic to the point of including all the


Democracy, Public Policy and Inequality

Daron Acemoglu, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Suresh Naidu, Columbia University
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James A. Robinson, Harvard University

The relationship between inequality and democracy has been theorized since at least Aristotle, but in the last decade it has been subject to intense theoretical and empirical investigation. The first formal models of democratic transitions by Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2001) suggested that there would be an inverse U-shaped relationship between inequality and democratization. Autocracies that were too equal would not democratize because there would not be enough social conflict to create an effective demand for changes in political institutions. Autocracies that were too unequal would not democratize either because democratization would be very costly for non-democratic elites who would attempt to stay in power via repression. These models also predicted that democratization itself ought to reduce inequality as the newly enfranchised would vote for redistribution and more active government policy.

These theoretical results were obviously conditional on key modeling decisions. For one, political conflict was conceived of as rich/elite versus poor/citizen with autocracy being associated with rule by the elite and democratization being associated with a transfer of power from rich to poor with a resulting change in policy from pro-elite to pro-poor. Though this set-up has a parsimonious appeal, the comparative statics are conditional on some very simple models of both types of political regime. For example, Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) showed that once one relaxed the simple poor versus rich nature of political conflict in their original models as well as the restriction of policy instruments, the nature of the comparative statics with respect to inequality in the basic model changed.² Put simply, if the groups in conflict were not

INEQUALITY, DEMOCRATIZATION, AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

Christian Houle, Michigan State University

Does inequality affect democracy? Recently a large literature has argued that inequality influences both the likelihood of transition to and away from democracy, often through similar mechanisms. In this note, I argue that it is necessary to clearly distinguish between the effects of inequality on democratization and on democratic consolidation. As demonstrated by Przeworski et al., regarding economic development, for example, some factors may have very different implications for these two transition processes.

Building on my previous work, I argue that inequality harms the consolidation of democracies but does not affect the likelihood of transition to democracy itself. In other words, unequal countries are not more or less likely to transition to democracy, but once they democratize they are less likely to remain democratic. I extend my previous analysis in three ways. First, my previous analysis used a single measure of inequality: the capital shares of the value added in production. In this note, I show that my results are robust to the use of Gini indexes. Second, I tackle the issue of endogeneity between inequality and democracy by using a novel instrumental variable strategy.

Third, the capital shares dataset I used in my previous article ended in 2000 and about seventy countries were excluded from the analysis because of the lack of inequality data. Other recent empirical studies typically have an even larger proportion of missing observations. I use the extended version of the capital shares dataset I introduced in Houle. It covers 183 countries between 1960 and 2008, and contains more


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Obituary for Juan Linz, continued

(continued from page 1)

love and miss him terribly.

Obituary for Juan J. Linz

On Tuesday October 1, 2013, Juan José Linz Storch de Gracia died at the age of 86. Professor Linz was undoubtedly one of the finest political sociologists in the world. Legendary for the encyclopedic breadth of his knowledge, his ideas and writings deeply influenced debates surrounding a vast array of the century’s most important political problems.

Linz’s empirical and theoretical contributions to scholarly research and literature were legion. He contributed with path-breaking work on regime types, the dynamics of democratic breakdowns, transitions to democracy, democratic institutional design, presidentialism versus parliamentarism, parties and party systems, political and business elites, federalism, nationalism, and fascism. His most recent works were on inequality and political paralysis in the United States, and on “state nations” in countries like India where the effort to impose a “nation state” would be in tension with an inclusionary democracy and internal peace.

Linz’s undying passion for such diverse but intertwined subjects was largely a product of his traumatic experience growing up in interwar Europe. Born in the Weimar Republic to a Spanish mother and German father, Linz would witness first-hand over the course of his childhood and adolescence a sequence of tragic social and political events: first in Germany, the economic crisis of the Weimar Republic, its subsequent breakdown, and the rise to power and domination of the Nazis; then, after moving with his mother to Spain in the Spring of 1936, the breakdown of the country’s Second Republic and its bloody Civil War. Linz’s work would be consistently concerned to understand and therefore help avoid repeating such collective tragedies. His work on democratic breakdowns especially so, motivated as it was by a sentiment well expressed by Meinecke, the great German historian whose reaction to Hitler’s appointment as chancellor was one that Linz was particularly fond of quoting – namely, “This was not necessary.”

Linz came to New York in 1950 to pursue a doctoral degree in Sociology at Columbia University, an institution with which he would remain affiliated for nearly two decades until 1969, when he moved to Yale where he would stay for the rest of his life. Upon his arrival at Columbia, he soon gained a reputation for his extraordinary erudition and unparalleled command of comparative European history as well as social and political thought. Having already been mentored in Spain by Javier Conde, he took classes and worked very closely at Columbia with Robert K. Merton, Paul

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We argued that both theoretical and methodological progress could be made by undertaking detailed process tracing of the components of these models. We examined not only the reduced-form relationship between inequality and regime change—on which there has been surprisingly little supportive evidence for the theory (Acemoglu et. al., this symposium)—but also the postulated mechanisms through which inequality translated into pressures for authoritarian or democratic elites to yield power.

We distinguished in particular between distributive conflict and non-distributive conflict transitions. In the former, pressures from below appeared to directly influence decisions by elites to make democratic concessions. In the latter, pressures from below did not play a decisive role; transitions resulted from incumbent initiatives, intra-elite conflicts, and/or external pressures.

In this note, we revisit the theoretical issue of how inequality generates regime change, and the role of distributive conflict in particular. We summarize new results based on an updated version of our dataset that includes all democratic transitions through 2008. The results strengthen our earlier finding that a large share of transitions occur in the absence of significant pressure from below, suggesting that distributive conflict models are at best subject to unspecified scope limitations, including the capacity of subordinated groups to overcome barriers to collective action.

We conclude with some preliminary findings on how the nature of the transition to democratic rule may affect the prospects for consolidation. We find that the democracies that emerge from distributive conflict transitions appear more robust than those that occur through a non-distributive route.

**Distributive Conflict Models**

The work of both Boix (2003) and Acemoglu and Robinson (A&R, 2006) builds on the seminal Meltzer-Richard (MR) model (1981). MR provide a formal model of redistribution under democratic rule, and thus a baseline for how the distribution of income would change as a result of a transition from authoritarian to democratic governance. Boix (p. 37) captures the general spirit of these models: “a more unequal distribution of wealth increases the redistributive demands of the population…. [However] as the potential level of transfers becomes larger, the authoritarian inclinations of the wealthy increase and the probabilities of democratization and democratic stability decline steadily.”

How this strategic interaction between elites and masses plays out depends on the level of inequality, the capacity to repress and other parameters such as capital mobility. Nonetheless, the challenge to the authoritarian status quo emanates from what Acemoglu and Robinson call de facto as opposed to de jure political power: the ability of lower class groups to challenge elite incumbents through mass mobilization, strikes, demonstrations, riots and other physical threats to elite security.

While the basic insight of these distributive conflict models is intuitive, the details are not. This can be seen in differences in the treatment of inequality, the central causal factor in these models. A&R agree with Boix that high inequality increases the incentives for authoritarian elites to repress political demands for redistribution. They also note—contrary to Boix—that at low levels of inequality there is little demand for democratization. Boix thus sees the prospects for democratic transitions to be inversely correlated with inequality. A&R by contrast conclude that the relationship between inequality and democratic transitions should exhibit an inverted-U pattern, with transitions to democratic rule most likely to occur at intermediate levels of inequality.

A&R add another layer of complexity by considering credible commitment problems; these issues are directly germane to the controversial question of how these models treat collective action. In addition to the possibility of repressing outright, A&R note that elites can maintain power by making short-run economic concessions to defuse threats from below. Yet politically and economically excluded groups are aware that elites can reign on these concessions when pressures from below subside. Lower class groups are thus likely to press their advantage during windows when collective action problems are temporarily resolved.

These credible commitment problems can generate a counterintuitive result. It might seem that transitions would be more likely when lower class groups are well-organized. Yet A&R argue that this is not necessarily the case “because with a frequent revolutionary threat, future redistribution becomes credible.” As an historical example, they cite the fact that Germany—the country with the most developed socialist movement—created novel welfare institutions without extending the franchise while political elites in Britain and France

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were forced to extend the franchise as a result of pressures from below. We are hard pressed, however, to think of contemporary examples in which a high capacity for collective action on the part of the poor was responsible for stable, redistributive authoritarian rule. The primary focus of Economic Origins is on situations in which sporadic—if unexplained—collective action drives regime change. The basic game on which all others build distinguishes between a low threat situation in which there are high costs for citizens to solve collective action problems and a high threat situation in which “citizens are able to solve the collective action problem relatively costlessly and/or elites are not well organized in their defense…” (p. 145). To what extent do contemporary transitions comport with this distinction between “high threat” and “low threat” environments?

Some simple tests Despite their differences, these distributive conflict theories share two important assumptions that are amenable to empirical observation. First, although there are disagreements about the political dynamics of low and intermediate levels of inequality, there is agreement that democratic transitions are unlikely at high levels of inequality. Second—and more important for our purposes—it is assumed that democracy is likely to occur when lower class groups are able to overcome barriers to collective action—even if only temporarily—and mobilize “de facto power” in favor of democracy. The assumptions about collective action receive only limited attention in the two books (Boix, this symposium); in fact, A&R explicitly assume the problem away by treating “citizens” as a unitary actor in the formal models. And the role of mass mobilization is almost entirely ignored in the econometric literature, which focuses more directly on the effects of inequality and other structural variables. But if distributive conflict models are correct, we would expect to see democratic transitions preceded by mass mobilization that threatens authoritarian incumbents and forces them to withdraw.

The qualitative data set that provided the empirical base for the APSR paper looks directly at this causal mechanism. Our data set assessed the role of distributive conflict in all transitions indicated in the Polity IV (n=57) and Cheibub, Ghandi and Vreeland (hereafter CGV; n=65) datasets between 1980 and 2000. We drew a simple dichotomous distinction between distributive and non-distributive conflict transitions. We coded “distributive conflict” transitions as ones in which both of the following occurred:

• The mobilization of redistributive grievances on the part of economically disadvantaged groups or representatives of such groups (parties, unions, NGOs) posed a threat—a “clear and present danger”—to the incumbency of ruling elites, and

• The rising costs of repressing these demands appear to have motivated elites to make political compromises or exit in favor of democratic challengers. The presence of this causal mechanisms was indicated at a minimum by a clear temporal sequence—mass mobilization followed by authoritarian withdrawal—but where possible we drew on other evidence as well, including elite statements.

Non-distributive transitions, by contrast, were ones in which these elements were missing. Elite withdrawal was motivated by international pressures, intra elite conflicts, or what we call “pre-emptive” motives, in which elites initiated regime change in the belief that they could remain in office or effectively veto their democratic successors.

In coding the cases, we were deliberately permissive, writing coding rules that gave the benefit of the doubt to the theory. Unlike the extant inequality data, our coding allowed us to consider a variety of distributive conflicts that may not be captured by any single inequality measure, from urban class conflicts to ethnic, regional and sectoral ones. The economically disadvantaged or the organizations representing them need not be the only ones mobilized in opposition to the existing regime. Although mass mobilization must partly reflect demands for redistribution, it can be motivated by other grievances as well. Yet mobilization must arise around distinctive and identifiable inequalities at least to some extent.

Even with a very permissive coding, we found a large share of cases (44.6 percent of the CVG transitions and 42.1 percent of the Polity cases) in which distributive conflict played only a marginal role. Using three separate measures of inequality (capital’s share of income in the manufacturing sector, a Gini coefficient from the Estimated Household Income Inequality Data Set and the Vanhanen measure of land inequality) we also found that between 29 and 34 percent of all transitions occurred in countries ranked in the upper tercile of these measures; a high share of transitions were taking place in high-inequality settings. Moreover,

5. Haggard and Kaufman, “Inequality and Regime Change”.
7. Christian Houle, “Inequality and Democracy: Why Inequality Harms Consolidation but Does Not Affect Democratization,” World Politics 61(October 2009): 589-622; University of Texas Inequality

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5. Haggard and Kaufman, “Inequality and Regime Change”.
7. Christian Houle, “Inequality and Democracy: Why Inequality Harms Consolidation but Does Not Affect Democratization,” World Politics 61(October 2009): 589-622; University of Texas Inequality
a high proportion of these were distributive conflict transitions. Using the Gini as the measure of inequality, about 75 percent of the high-inequality transitions were characterized by distributive conflict; the incidence of such high-inequality transitions was 60 percent using the land inequality measure and 57 percent using capital’s share of manufacturing income. We drew two conclusions: that inequality did not appear to have the stipulated effect on the likelihood of transitions; and that distributive conflict was not a uniform driver of democratization. At best, the effect of inequality worked under scope conditions that were not clearly specified in the theory.

We have subsequently extended the Haggard, Kaufman, and Teo data set through 2008, adding 14 cases to the CGV transitions (n=79) and 16 cases to the Polity ones (n=73). The results remain essentially the same; if anything, they are even less favorable to the distributive conflict approach. Between 34 and 45 percent of all transitions were in the most unequal countries—again measured by the top terciles—and of these, between 37.5 and 55.6 percent were distributive conflict transitions. The percentage of distributive conflict transitions among the CGV coding fell from 54.4 to 53.2 percent; Polity transitions conforming to the distributive conflict model fell from 57.9 to only 49.3 percent. Boix (this symposium) argues that valid tests of the model must include the full historical record to capture the initial divergence associated with democratization in the advanced industrial states. However, this approach makes strong assumptions about the ability to control for incredible panel heterogeneity. For the Third Wave of recent democratization—when there was in fact substantial divergence in political developments across cases—a large share of transitions simply do not reflect the causal mechanisms stipulated in the theory, either with respect to the role of inequality or distributive conflict.

**Extensions**

Despite these findings, the distributive conflict approach reopens the debate about the causes and consequences of different transition paths. Do these paths arise from different causal roots? And more importantly, does the distinction between distributive and non-distributive conflict transitions have any enduring effect on the nature of democratic rule? We report some preliminary findings here.

To explore the first question, we ran separate rare event logit estimates with country-clustered robust standard errors and cubic time polynomials on the likelihood of each type of transition. Given space limitations the regressions are not presented here but are available from the authors on request.

As noted, we are particularly interested in the capacity of mass groups to overcome barriers to collective action. One factor—industrialization—has long been viewed as a foundation for mobilization along class lines. In the regressions, we use the size of the manufacturing sector to proxy for this potential. Of course, the role played in collective action by non-economic factors such as ethnicity or religion also require examination. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that manufacturing—a basis for worker coordination and organization—does have a consistently significant impact on distributive transitions and an insignificant or even a negative role in non-distributive ones.

We also find that the type of authoritarian regime appears to have a differential effect on the likelihood of distributive and non-distributive transitions. Challenges from below are less likely under authoritarian regimes with multiparty legislatures—perhaps because of their capacity to coopt opposition—and more likely under military regimes that did not typically provide such channels of representation. On the other hand, the distinction between military and multiparty regimes was not consequential in non-distributive transitions, which were driven primarily by elite actors who were either tolerated by incumbent rulers or parts of the ruling circle itself.

The likelihood of non-distributive transitions was, however, affected by economic and international factors proxied in the regressions. Low or negative growth consistently predicted non-distributive as well as distributive transitions, presumably by intensifying elite struggles over rents or diminishing their capacity to manipulate electoral support. Non-distributive transitions (but not distributive ones) were affected as well by the incidence of neighboring democracies, an indication of the relative importance of diffusion effects and other forms of external pressure.

Again, inequality had no effect on either type of transition.

**The Effects of Transition Paths**

The implicit question raised by the discussion in the preceding section is whether “non-distributive” transitions—dominated by external influences and intra-elite politics—are less likely to result in full democracies than ones driven at least in part by pressures from below. Distributive
Both distributive and non-distributive conflict transitions may pose dangers of destabilizing polarization for newly established democratic governments, but it is also reasonable to assume that such governments would be more responsive to a mobilized citizenry. Governments emerging from non-distributive transitions face no equivalent pressures or restraints on the abuse of power.

The fixed-effects regressions below address this issue by examining the way distributive and non-distributive CGV transitions, defined more narrowly on the basis of transitional elections, affect subsequent Polity scores, which provide a broader measure of differences in political form that includes political rights and government accountability. Both distributive and non-distributive CGV transitions have a significant impact on the Polity score, but the coefficients for distributive transitions are almost twice as large as those for non-distributive ones (4.93 versus 2.71 in model 4).

A distributive transition increases a country’s Polity score by almost 5 points relative to a “non-transition” year; a non-distributive transition by only about 2.7 points. These results are robust to the inclusion of a variety of control variables, including: GDP, growth, trade openness, ethnolinguistic fractionalization and prior rule by a military dictatorship. In future work, we will consider the longer-run path of democratic consolidation in the two types of transitions, but preliminary inspection of the cases suggests that non-distributive conflict transitions are followed by democracies that are not only weaker but more prone to reversal.

**Conclusion**

The work of Boix and A&R has opened up new avenues of research about how conflicts over redistribution affect authoritarian and democratic rule. Yet inequality does not appear to be associated with regime change in a straightforward way, as Acemoglu et al. note in this symposium. Core theoretical assumptions about the causal importance of distributive demands from below appear to pertain only in a subset of cases. Distributive and non-distributive transitions are driven by distinct political and economic dynamics, including differences in the potential for mass groups to overcome barriers to collective action. We also find preliminary evidence that distributive conflict transitions generate more robust democracies, at least in the short run. These results suggest the importance of revisiting the logic and consequences of different transition paths.

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interplay between economic structure and political outcomes and in their empirical approaches to testing hypotheses, but they begin from the same simple theoretical premise: the emergence of democracy is a function of the incumbent autocratic elite’s relative fear of redistribution to (and by) the poor – and the higher the inequality, the greater the fear.

This syllogism between democracy and redistribution has become conventional wisdom. It is intuitive, has deep philosophical roots, and has long been invoked on the political left and right (albeit for different reasons – to evoke hope versus instill fear). Moreover, the argument gained widespread academic credence with Meltzer and Richard’s seminal median-voter model. This model assumes that under democracy the tax system will be progressive: All citizens pay the same proportion of their income, but benefits are universal and uniform, so that everyone receives the same amount in subsidy. This means that the rich pay more than they receive while the opposite is true for the poor. Consequently, those with below-mean incomes favor redistribution, while those above the mean oppose it. Because the income distribution is always right-skewed, the median voter has below-mean income and hence desires redistribution, and this desire intensifies as the gap between mean and median income widens. The implication is straightforward: higher inequality implies greater redistributive pressures.

This same logic underpins redistributivist theories of regime change. As such, the question of “who matters” in these approaches boils down to the conflict between the rich and the relatively poor median voter, who – under majority rule – sets the tax rate. The elite wants to maintain the autocratic status quo, under which taxes are zero, while the poor prefer democracy, which entails some redistribution. The higher the inequality, the more the autocratic elite have incentives to dig in their heels, just as the poor have stronger incentives to rebel. Democracy is thus least likely when inequality is high, when the wealthy have less to fear from redistribution to the poor. (Boix and Ansell & Richard differ regarding the poor’s relative incentives to push for democracy under low inequality.)

We suggest that the redistributivist approach to regime change is theoretically misleading and misses the mark empirically. In our 2010 article, we argued that this approach relies on a set of questionable assumptions – about the nature of inequality, about the relevant actors in democratization, and about those actors’ political preferences – and also finds little empirical support in cross-national analysis.

In our view democracy is not a function of the monolithic elite’s fear of the poor, it is about the emergence of splits between incumbent and rising economic elites, with the latter fearing the expropriative power of the state far more than they fear the redistributive threat from the poor.

Our argument offers a novel explanation of the political consequences of inequality. While redistributivist arguments conceive of inequality as the ratio of incomes between rich and poor, we differentiate between the political consequences of land and income inequality. We concur that land inequality retards democratization, signifying the political power of landed elites, who seek to maintain the political and economic status quo. However, counterintuitively, we suggest that income inequality – counterintuitively for the conventional wisdom – promotes democratization.

The conventional view is misleading because scholars have never properly connected social-class structures to different Gini coefficients. Redistributivist arguments assume that a relatively low Gini implies that the median voter is a member of the (relatively large) “middle” class, sociologically speaking, and likewise assume that a high Gini indicates that the middle class is relatively small, and that the median voter is poor.

In fact, this is backwards. Consider the example we provided in our 2010 paper: which country – China in 1880 or the UK in 1867 – is more likely to democratize? Everyone knows the answer to this question, but what remains less well-known is that China’s Gini at that time was .24, while the UK’s was .51. In the 19th century, the UK had a large and growing “middle” class, while China did not. These are not outliers: In poor and economically stagnant societies, a low Gini does not imply a large middle class. It means that nearly everyone is equally poor – and that the median voter is a member of the impoverished masses. In contrast, relatively poor but growing societies typically see higher Ginis not because the “1%” exploits the “99%,” but because economic development brings about greater inter-group income differentials. With very few exceptions, in sociological terms high Gini coefficients in a developing country indicate a relatively large middle class, even if the majority of a country’s population remains poor, as in Victorian-era Britain.

This last point is crucial: A low Gini means that the impoverished masses comprise well over a majority of the population – 98% in 1880 China, e.g. Yet even in wealthy examples such as 19th-century Britain, the (sociological) “middle” classes (bourgeoisie and white-collar workers) are not to be found in the (mathematical) “middle” of the income distribution but in the top decile, or at most the top quintile. The working classes comprise at most the next 30% (usually much less), while incumbent autocratic


elites are (again, at most) in the top 1–2%. The default situation in a developing autocracy over the last 200 years is that the impoverished rural masses comprise more than a majority of the population. It is worth noting that since Moore, scholars have debated whether the working class should also be included as a relevant actor in the study of regime change, in addition to the bourgeoisie. No qualitative scholar has ever suggested that those below the organized working class on the income distribution represent a credible threat to elite interests.

Given this, and given that in the real world the median voter is almost always a member of the poor underclass, redistributivist arguments tend to exaggerate the political relevance of the median voter. In developing autocracies, it is safer to assume that the poor majority - Marx’s famous “potatoes in a sack” - is politically inert, rather than a potential threat to those who control the coercive power of the state.

Gaining proper understanding of how different class structures correspond to different Gini coefficients returns us to the question of “who matters” for regime change, and why income inequality is positively related to democratization. Our approach flips the redistributivist theoretical approach on its head in terms of who matters and why. If the median voter is poor and the poor are politically inert, then the poor cannot represent a potential threat to autocratic elites in a hypothetical future democracy. Instead, a more theoretically fruitful approach begins with the idea that the principal threat to incumbent autocratic elites comes from other relatively wealthy citizens - disenfranchised, newly-emerging economic groups who fear expropriation of their wealth and property by the incumbent autocratic elite, and who thus have powerful incentives to organize and mobilize in defense of their interests and wealth.

This dynamic - of elite competition, rather than conflict between rich and poor - is quite common historically. What causes elite competition to emerge? Redistributivist approaches suggest that inequality results from dividing the gains from growth in a single-sector economy. We suggest that income inequality results from the distribution of resources both within and between two different sectors of a growing economy - a stagnant agricultural sector and a growing industrial sector, for example. This allows us to explain why different types of inequality have distinct political consequences.

As Simon Kuznets famously explained decades ago, income inequality tends to increase with the onset of industrialization, because both urban labor and especially urban bourgeois groups benefit. Our two-sector model of endogenous political change derives from classic ‘dual sector’ models of economic growth, in which new economic groups appropriate most of the gains from industrialization. These models help understand why rising income inequality does not mean that an existing elite is simply growing richer at everyone else’s expense, but instead signals the emergence of new, rival economic groups.

Why do rising elites press for democratization? Our argument extends the logic of North and Weingast and other neo-institutionalist theories of the state to the study of regime change. The key political “threat” in these accounts is not that the poor will expropriate the rich but that the incumbent elite - through their control of the state - will expropriate everyone else. This view echoes Locke’s themes from Enlightenment liberalism about the symbiotic relationship between democracy and property, and suggests that liberalization of an autocratic regime occurs when new outsider groups emerge who demand political power commensurate with their growing economic influence. This imbalance of power is a recipe for contestation over the nature of the political regime.

Our approach to understanding elite interests implies that the Meltzer-Richard model offers a misleading and limited notion of what the state ‘does.’ Acemoglu and Robinson, for example, emphasize that autocratic elites cannot credibly commit to redistribute income because when threats by the masses to revolt die down the elite have incentives to revert to zero redistribution. Yet all redistributivist analyses constrain elites to follow the Meltzer-Richard model of redistribution - a flat tax and a uniform subsidy applied to all citizens, although there is little reason to believe that elites should be so constrained, either theoretically or historically. What is to stop autocratic elites from taxing others but not themselves, or from spending money on ‘club goods’ rather than universal benefits, for example?

The redistributivist approach precludes a predatory state that expropriates income from rising elites and the masses - and yet
the threat to life, liberty and property is central to the nature of autocratic regimes.

In short, once we understand that in a developing autocracy high Ginis indicate the presence of sizable rising middle (and working) classes, we can better understand the relationship between economic growth, income inequality, and regime change. Democracy is not about redistribution - it is about taxation without representation, a conflict between rival economic elites for control over the expropriative and coercive authority of the State. The most propitious 'structural' conditions for democracy in a developing society are when land inequality is low but income inequality is high. Democracy is less likely to emerge when both land and income inequality are low, even less likely when both are high, and least likely when land inequality is high and income inequality is low. As these conditions change, the relative power of rural and urban interests change.

The empirical analyses in our 2010 paper, and several additional tests in our forthcoming book, confirm our predictions. We find no evidence that income inequality retards democratization, either in a dataset covering 1820 to 1992 or in a different dataset from 1950 to 2004. We also find no evidence for the inverted-U relationship between inequality and democratization that Acemoglu and Robinson suggest. Instead, we find a strong positive correlation between income inequality and democratization, even as land inequality exhibits the expected negative effect. Our findings suggest that the study of regime change and "endogenous democratization" would profit from a more nuanced understanding of both inequality and the socioeconomic structure of competing elites.

In our forthcoming book we also explore our theory’s indirect implications. Redistributivist approaches presume that the combination of inequality and democracy should produce higher levels of redistributive spending. By contrast, our approach implies that a triumphant rising economic elite would not redistribute to the poor. After democratization this new elite might increase taxes on the old elite to help pay for public spending, but only on club goods - services that primarily benefit their own economic class. If we are correct that high income inequality reflects the power of this rising elite, then the combination of inequality and democracy should be correlated with lower universalistic redistributive spending to the poor than in a democracy with low income inequality. Figure 1, taken from our book manuscript, demonstrates this pattern vividly. Building on work by Lindert, we collected original data on redistributive spending for 62 countries between 1880 and 1930. Figure 1 shows the effect of democratization (using the Boix-Rosato index) on redistributive spending (measured as a change in % of GDP at 10-year intervals) at various levels of inequality. Clearly, spending only increases after a regime change when income inequality is low – and redistributive spending actually declines at high levels of income inequality. These findings are precisely the opposite of what redistributivist theories would predict.

Our approach also generates predictions about citizens’ preferences for redistribution and democracy under autocracy. The redistributivist approach predicts that the rich want low redistribution, worry more about redistribution when inequality is high, and tend to oppose democracy, largely because of its redistributive implications. We agree that richer citizens support low redistribution to the poor. However, given our findings about the relationship between inequality and public spending
under democracy, our argument implies that wealthier citizens will be relatively less concerned about redistribution to the poor where income inequality is high, because inequality proxies for the presence of a politically and economically stronger middle class, who prefer to shift public spending towards itself and away from the poor.

Our model makes a similar prediction about preferences for democracy. Under autocracy, we expect relatively wealthier citizens - save for the relatively few members of the incumbent elite - to strongly prefer democratization, since members of this group face greater risks of losses from expropriation under autocracy, relative to the poor. Table 1, again drawn from our book manuscript, confirms this expectation. We analyzed 31 samples of individuals across 23 autocracies covered by the World Values Survey, which asks people about their preferences over democracy and redistribution. Table 1 explores how citizens answer a question about whether a democracy would be a good way to govern the country. We are interested in the combined effects of income and attitudes about redistribution to the poor. Redistributivist approaches expect high income / anti-redistribution individuals to be least supportive of democracy, yet we find precisely the reverse. As per our elite-competition model, richer citizens - indeed those who least favor redistribution to the poor - actually most strongly support democratization.

Inequality does not signify that autocratic elites fear the downtrodden masses. It instead signals the growth of new economic actors – rising elites who demand political power commensurate with their wealth. We suggest that our argument - which focuses on fear of the expropriative threat of those who control the state versus fear of the redistributive threat from the poor - offers a better approach to the comparative study of regime change and its contemporary effort to understand the complicated interplay between growth, inequality, and the politics of democratization across time and space.

Ben Ansell is professor of comparative democratic institutions and international relations and professorial fellow at Low Income Medium Income High Income

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anti-Redistribution</th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Medium Income</th>
<th>High Income</th>
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<td>0.52</td>
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<td>0.48</td>
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Taken together, our empirical findings about 1) the conditions that foster regime change; 2) the relationship between inequality, regime type and public spending; and 3) the preferences of citizens under autocracy all present a serious theoretical and empirical challenge to redistributivist models.
cases since the emergence of contemporary democracy in the 19th century to generate credible results. Most of the significant (at least until the late 20th century) and lasting political change occurred during the democratization wave that started with the liberal revolutions of 1848 and concluded right after World War One. Using post-1960 data (while adding country fixed effects) only risks misestimating the true effects of economic and social change on political development since there was little within-country variance from 1960 well into the early 1990s. Empirical analyses of democratization are similar to empirical growth theory in one important regard: employing postwar data sets may move beyond the take-off stage) but it is not adequate to determine the sources of initial divergence across countries.

Finding the appropriate data to test the effects of inequality is difficult because systematic income inequality data start late in time. An alternative is to employ two correlates of income and wealth inequality: the distribution of agricultural property (the area of family farms as a percentage of the total area of holdings) and the extension of skilled or educated workers. Both variables track economic inequality relatively well. For the period after 1950, the correlation coefficient between the Gini index of economic inequality (excluding socialist economies) and the percentage of family farms is 0.66. For countries with a per capita income below $2,000 the correlation coefficient is 0.75. The coefficient of correlation of the index of education and the Gini index is 0.59. To test the impact of inequality, we should not compute different types of (redistributive versus non-redistributive) transitions (cf. Haggard and Kaufman 2012) without looking at the overall underlying distribution of cases (where transitions may or may not occur). Hence, Table 1 reports the probability of democratic transitions and democratic breakdowns for different levels (estimated as actual transitions over total country-years in each category) after 1850. Higher levels of human capital equality are associated with a higher probability of transitioning to democracy (except for the highest values) and a lower likelihood of democratic breakdowns. Land equality only has a democratic stabilization effect.

Table 1: Economic Inequality and Unconditional Political Transitions

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<tr>
<th>Index of knowledge distribution</th>
<th>Annual probability of Transition to democracy</th>
<th>Democratic breakdown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-0.2</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>8.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2-0.4</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>5.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4-0.6</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.6-0.8</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.8-1</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 examines the correlates of democratic transitions and democratic stability using a data set that spans from 1850 to 2000. Models are estimated via standard pooled OLS regression and have the following structure:

\[
D_{it} = \alpha + \beta_{10} D_{it-10} + \beta_{1} t + \beta_{2} C_{i,t-1} + \delta_{i} + \eta_{it}
\]

where \(D_{it}\) is either the continuous Polity IV index (normalized between 0 and 1) or the Boix-Miller-Rosato dichotomous index of democracy, \(\delta_{i}\) corresponds to the different economic inequality measures, \(C\) are a stack of control variables, \(\eta_{it}\) is a country specific effect, \(\delta_{i}\) is a period-specific constant, and \(\epsilon_{it}\) is an error term. In Columns 1 and 3, which examine the covariates of transitions to democracy, the value of the dependent variable is the maximum value of democracy at either time \(t\) or time \(t-1\): this effectively restricts the analysis to those cases in which there has been an increase in democracy. In Column 2 and 4, which estimate the impact of inequality on transitions away from democracy, the value of the dependent variable is the minimum value of democracy at either time \(t\) or time \(t-1\): this limits the analysis to those cases in which there has been a decline in the level of democracy. The standard estimations of political transitions employ nonlinear models to determine the effects of income. However, I here use linear models because nonlinear models do not generate consistent estimators in the presence of fixed effects.

The indices of family farms, human capital and non-agrarian employment have been normalized from 0 to 1. All models include the log of per capita income, which is systematically introduced on all democratization models. Controlling for per capita income allows us to estimate the non-income or development effect of
our inequality measures. The model adds four variables measuring the international system: an annual one coding the international system as anti-democratic, neutral or pro-democratic;\(^4\) a dummy specifying whether the country was an ally of the USA or not; an interaction between alliance with the USA and Cold war; and a dummy specifying whether the country is under the control of the Soviet Union or not.

Notice, in the first place, that the coefficient of per capita income remains positive but it declines in size and loses statistical significance in all models. This implies that per capita income, as employed in the modernization literature in postwar samples, behaves mostly as a proxy for other more fundamental factors. Generally speaking, the level of inequality matters for democratization. However, it is worth noting that the causes of democratic transitions and of democratic breakdowns are partly different. Democratic transitions are more likely to occur in countries with higher levels of human capital (Columns 1 and 3). Given that the dependent variable ranges from 0 to 1, the effect is very substantive. In turn, democratic breakdowns are mostly conditioned by the distribution of assets in the agrarian world. A higher proportion of family farms reduces the probability that a democratic country will revert to authoritarian rule. (A positive coefficient means that an authoritarian regime is less likely to take place.) In other words, in an agrarian economy the probability of a democratic breakdown falls to 0 as one moves from concentrated land ownership (as in countries such as Russia before the Stolypin reforms and the Soviet Revolution, Spain for most of the 20th century, and most Latin American nations) to the highly fragmented property systems (as in countries such as Norway, the United States, and Canada, where family farms represented three-to four-fifths of all land) at the turn of the 20th century.

International factors matter to explain democratic transitions. The dummy variable “Soviet occupation” is statistically significant and it is associated with a reduction of 0.32 points in the movement toward more democratic institutions. An alliance with the USA boosts democratic transitions but only after the end of the Cold War. The international system seems to affect the stability of democracies too: a more pro-democratic environment reduces the occurrence of democratic breakdowns. These finding may explain why models that estimate the effect of inequality in the postwar period only get mixed results.

### Rationality and Material Interests

RMD assume (1) rational, (2) self-interested actors mostly motivated by (3) material payoffs. Questioning the assumption of rationality (defined as instrumentally-driven action to achieve certain goals) has been quite common since, at least, the work of Green and Shapiro (1994). Other than going back to detailed historical narratives, the alternative they suggest to replace the rationality assumption is unclear. In my opinion, a fruitful way ahead may consist of applying the satisficing rules of behavior that Bendor et al. (2011) use to model elections.

Most of the critiques to RMD are directed to the decision to define the payoffs of the game in economic terms. Material payoffs play a key role in a wide range of situations –

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\(^4\) See Carles Boix, “Political Order and Inequality,” Unpublished manuscript, 2013, for a discussion of this classification. The international system had an “anti-democratic” effect on domestic politics till 1848, from 1933 to 1942 and from 1948 to 1990. It was “neutral” between 1849 and 1918 and from 1943 to 1947. It was pro-democratic otherwise.
as attested, for example, by a large literature on economic voting and on the class basis of political alignments. Still, they are not the exclusive cause of political action. Ethnic identity, religious preferences, political status, etc. also matter. What is central to RMD and to the “democracy as equilibrium” literature is the impact of heterogeneous preferences and capabilities on the ways in which individuals decide to govern themselves. Again, this means that non-economic heterogeneity is equally susceptible to be brought into democratization theory.

Political Actors

Critiques of RMD complain that social classes are treated as ‘objective’ phenomena rather than outcomes of social and political mobilization. In other words, RMD disregard both the literature on collection action and a rich historiographical tradition on the formation of the working class. I find this critique partly misplaced. In Boix (2003, pp. 27-30, 44-46) I indicate explicitly that both the level of organization and the extent of class (or, more precisely, group) consciousness matter – and that, because they affect the costs of each side, they affect the probabilities of different regime outcomes. It is, however, true that I treat those factors as exogenous variables. No model can endogenize everything.

Political Process

RMD are also depicted as painting a very narrow account of social conflict “as a function of a small but monolithic elite’s fear of the impoverished multitude” (Ansell and Samuels 2010, p. 1544) and of political transitions as events where “elites must confront political-cum-distributive pressure from below” to the point that if “the repression of these challenges appears too costly (…) the elites make institutional compromises as a result” (Haggard and Kaufman 2012, p. 497). This rather reductive interpretation of RMD is mistaken.

The model in Boix (2003) departs from Przeworski’s seminal treatment of democracy as an equilibrium extending it in two ways: it applies the idea of “equilibrium” to all political regimes and it links the actors’ payoffs to specific material conditions. To examine its implications, the model contains a game sequence with different paths and outcomes (e.g., once the ruling group widens the franchise, the unenfranchised group accepts the reform).

Nonetheless, the fundamental value of the model is its comparative statistic in terms of the robustness of each outcome (e.g., that democracy and low inequality are compatible under most conditions) and much less about the particular mechanisms through which transitions take place. Transitions from authoritarian rule can occur as a result of military defeat (Argentina 1983), the death of a dictator (Spain 1975), a peaceful revolution (Portugal 1975), a “mismanaged” referendum (Chile 1989) or the collapse of the occupying power (the Baltic countries in 1991). Whether democracy emerges and survives has to be set in the context of the broad economic and organizational parameters of the model. Thus, Haggard and Kaufman (2012) is extremely informative as a study of transitional paths and is very valuable as a call to develop models that integrate the process of transition itself. But their work is less convincing as a critique of the theoretical core of RMD.

The depiction of RMD as a clash between the “elite” and the “masses” is also reductive in a second sense. The economy in Boix (2003) is thought of as a distribution of individuals (heterogeneous in incomes) grouped into a set of discrete (normally two) representative types for the sake of simplicity. The distribution of income, which may vary from complete equality to extreme inequality, is then related to a political equilibrium. Hence, expressions such as “under conditions of equality elites have little to fear from democratization” (Ansell and Samuels 2010, p. 1547) do not make much sense: under conditions of equality, there are no (economic) elites properly speaking.

Moreover, in Boix (2003) the initial model characterizes society as having two groups. But it contains a section with three actors, defined by different levels of income and by different levels of asset specificity, and predictions about partial democracy (collinear to income or based on cross-class alliances). Limited democracy takes place when the middle class (or the industrial bourgeoisie, once we defined wealthier strata by their type of asset) grows richer. In turn, universal suffrage takes place as the lower strata get closer to the middle strata (pp. 47-57). In that sense, the models in Ansell and Samuels (2010) and Boix (2003) are extremely similar. Ansell and Samuels’ results on the growing probability of partial democracy as the process of industrialization takes off go in the same direction.

This similarity implies that, as Haggard and Kaufman (2012) acknowledge, class-based and sector-based models are not incompatible with each other. Instead, sector-based models (or what Ansell and Samuels define as “intra-elite” conflict) are an extension of the general model of democracy as equilibrium. Sectoral (intra-elite) conflict will take place when wealthy sectors are differentiated by income and type of assets (non-fixed versus fixed) and when non-wealthy strata are not mobilized. If the latter are mobilized, political conflict may be cross-class (a sector of the wealthy and all or part of the non-wealthy allied against the other,


8. A minor point is that income inequality is in part based on land rents and therefore does not capture well the inequality generated by capital returns and labor wages. Hence, Ansell and Samuels should have used fixed vs. non-fixed assets inequality.
mainly depending on asset specificity) or class-based (as in the initial two-class model).

**Underlying Tax Model**

The choice of the median voter tax model developed by Romer (1975) and Meltzer and Richards (1981) has been rather controversial. The model is much more flexible that some concede: one can amend it in multiple ways to introduce public goods spending, non-distortionary taxes, individuals having different beliefs about the effects of taxes, etc. The fact that the model is empirically wrong – in terms of predicting that taxes would be higher in unequal societies – is what justifies RMD. RMD endogenize the tax rate to the distribution of income and predict that taxes will not be high in unequal societies because net payers will block them.

Ansell and Samuels (2010) point out that RMD assume tax rates will never be lower than 0. This assumption can be relaxed. In their formal exploration of the democratization of 19th-century Britain, Justman and Gradstein (1999) allow the rich to tax the poor (when the latter are disenfranchised). This may make the model too simplistic in the following sense: both assets and income become wholly determined by the power ratio (between classes). As Justman and Gradstein (p. 111) write, “preindustrial levels of inequality reflect an equilibrium in which total economic resources are stagnant and power is concentrated in the hands of an elite minority who use it to maximize their political rents.” Political liberalization then shifts the distribution of income. (What they do not endogenize, however, is the power ratio itself.) An alternative to this linear relationship between political power and income is to consider a model where the distribution of income is the joint product of economic technologies and political institutions. This is what I attempt to do in Boix (2013).

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11. Boix, “Political Order and Inequality.”
rich versus poor, but for example based on ethnic, religious or regional cleavages, it was not necessarily true that increasing inequality, in the sense of a higher Gini coefficient, would exacerbate conflict between groups. It might just result in increased redistribution within groups. More generally, though there is now convincing econometric evidence for the importance of the central mechanisms of Acemoglu and Robinson’s early work,2 still, as emphasized by Haggard and Kaufman (2012), there may be different mechanisms that lead to democratization and these can have different comparative statics from those presented in Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2001). For instance, in Lizzeri and Persico (2004) democratization can occur because political competition with a limited franchise leads to clientelistic outcomes that are inefficient for at least a sub-set of the elite.3 Extending voting rights can induce more efficient non-clientelistic competition over public goods that is favored by these elites. Depending on the decision structure within elites, democratization can occur for very different reasons than those developed by Acemoglu and Robinson.4

These theoretical extensions of the basic model suggested that it was unlikely that the simple comparative statics of inequality suggested by the early work would be found in the data. Moreover, even if one found these in a convincing way one would have to deal with complicated issues of identification. For example, autocracies which were unequal no doubt differ in many other ways from autocracies which are equal, and to test causal hypotheses about the impact of inequality on regime transition it is necessary to control in some way for these omitted variables. It is also necessary to control properly for common trends influencing the variables to avoid the problem of ‘spurious regression’. Since democracy tends to move in waves and many other variables such as GDP per-capita are correlated across countries, this is a potent issue here. Since this early work a great deal of research has gone into investigating empirically the factors that lead to democratization and democratic consolidation. In largely unpublished work which accompanied Acemoglu et al. (2008, 2009),5 the authors found no robust evidence that inequality influences either democratizations or democratic consolidation. The innovation of this empirical work is that it adopted for the first time standard panel data econometric techniques to control for omitted variables with country fixed effects and common trends with time effects. The importance of the fixed effects methodology is that it focuses on the ‘within variation’ and asks, in this context: as a country becomes more or less unequal, does that induce changes in the extent to which it is democratic? By focusing on this variation one mitigates the biases than come from examining the cross-sectional (between) variation that is mired in unobservable differences between countries. The importance of the inclusion of time effects is that they control for common trends among the variables mitigating the danger of spurious regression. The empirical work of Acemoglu et al. showed that some of the most famous empirical results in the literature, such as the correlation between income per-capita and democratic consolidation, were not robust to controlling for omitted variables. This paper went even further than fixed effects models by providing a full identification strategy using instrumental variables, an exercise that confirmed the basic fixed effects findings. This project also revealed that there was no robust relationship between inequality and either the creation or consolidation of democracy. Other studies have since found different things, but to do so they have deviated from the econometric approach of Acemoglu et al in significant ways. For example, Espite et al. (2006) presented evidence that was consistent with the inverted-U shape hypothesis of Acemoglu and Robinson (2001). Houle (2009) found that while inequality has no impact on democratization, higher inequality reduces the probability that a democracy will stay democratic. Yet neither paper made any attempt to control for omitted variable bias, for example using country fixed effects. Therefore, it is quite likely that these findings are driven by omitted variables and thus do not represent causal relationships between inequality and regime transition. Freeman and Quinn (2012) moved beyond studies of the average effect of inequality on regime transitions investigating whether or not there are heterogeneous effects of inequality that depend on the extent of globalization.6 They do claim to find robust effects of inequality on the change in the polity score, the sign of which is


conditional on measures of globalization. Yet, their preferred specification does not include time effects to account for common trending factors, an omission which Acemoglu et. al. (2009) showed is highly significant in this context, given that democracy tends to trend at the world level. Their paper also uses software to interpolate missing inequality data, a procedure that tends to artificially lower the standard errors of their estimations, which also pushes them towards finding significant effects. The omission of time effects is a common feature of papers that claim to find significant effects of measures on inequality on measures of democracy.7

We believe therefore that the basic though unfortunately largely unpublished findings of the Acemoglu, et. al. (2008, 2009) project, that there is no robust causal relationship between inequality and regime transition, remain substantially unaltered.

This analysis still leaves open one interesting empirical question latent in Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2001) and indeed in Meltzer and Richard (1981). Does democratization tend to reduce inequality? A seminal paper by Rodrik (1999) claimed that it did and that the share of wages in national income was systematically higher in democracies. But a prior question would be: does democratization have in reality the type of impact on public policy that it does in these models? One much cited paper, by Gil, Mulligan and Sala-i-Martin (2004) claimed in fact that there was no significant relationship between measures of democracy, such as the Polity score, and public policy variables such as the size of government tax revenues relative to GDP, or the amount of social spending relative to GDP. Yet their paper used averaged data to examine the pure cross-sectional relationships in the data. This setup creates severe concerns both about measurement error (from the averaging) and omitted variable bias. In particular, their procedure meant that they could not examine the more interesting ‘within variation’ through examining whether or not when a country democratized, or the reverse, public policies moved in specific directions.

In Acemoglu et al. (2013) we examine the impact of democratization on public policies and inequality using the most appealing econometric model - a cross-national panel data with country fixed effects and time effects. Our study uses a theoretical framework that recognizes that the simple predictions of Meltzer and Richard (1981) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2001), that democratization decreases inequality may be influenced by mechanisms this research did not consider. This happens for some of the same reasons we discussed above when we argued that the impact of inequality on democratization is likely more complex than the initial models allowed for, but in addition we make several specific arguments.

1. Captured Democracy. Even though democracy clearly changes the distribution of de jure power in society (as argued, for instance, in Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006), policy outcomes and inequality depend on the de facto distribution of power. Acemoglu and Robinson (2008) argue that, under certain circumstances, those who see their de jure power eroded by democratization may sufficiently increase their investments in de facto power (e.g., via control of local law enforcement, mobilization of non-state armed actors, violence, lobbying, and other means of capturing the party system) in order to continue to control the political process. If so, we would not see an impact of democratization on public policy, redistribution and inequality.

2. Directors Law. Consistent with Stigler’s ‘Director’s Law’ (1970), democracy may transfer political power to the middle class rather than the poor. If so, redistribution may increase and inequality may be curtailed only if the middle class is in favor of such redistribution. For example, Aidt et al.(2009) showed that local franchise expansion in 19th century Britain from elites to the middle class often reduced expenditure on local public goods since the middle class bore the brunt of property taxes that financed them. In their model an expansion of voting rights from the elite, by reducing public good provision and taxes on the middle class, can increase inequality.9

3. Inequality-Increasing Market Opportunities. Autocracy may exclude a large fraction of the population from productive occupations (e.g., skilled occupations) and entrepreneurship (including lucrative contracts), as Apartheid South Africa or the former Soviet Union did both internally and in Eastern Europe after 1945. To the extent that there is significant heterogeneity within this population, the freedom to take part in economic activities on a more level playing field with the previous elite may actually increase inequality within the excluded or repressed group and the entire society. It may also lead changes in public policy


to diverge from those predicted by the simple models of democratization. In the paper we develop a new consistent definition of democratization based on Freedom House and Polity indices, building on the work by Papaioannou and Siourounis (2008). One of the problems of the raw indices is the significant measurement error, which creates spurious movements in democracy when none exists in reality. We attempt to minimize the influence of such measurement error by using the information from both the Freedom House and Polity datasets and focusing only on democratization (and reversals) that are not fully reversed within a year. This leads to a 0-1 measure of democracy for 170 countries annually from 1960 to 2010. We also pay special attention to modeling the dynamics of our outcomes of interest, taxes as a percentage of GDP and various measures of inequality.

Our empirical investigation uncovers a number of interesting patterns. First, we find a robust and quantitatively large effect of democracy on tax revenues as a percentage of GDP. The long-run effect of democracy, in our preferred specification, is about a 5% point increase in tax revenues as a fraction of GDP. These patterns are robust to a variety of different estimates and controls for immediate determinants of democracy such as social unrest, war, and the stock of education, yet there may still exist unobserved determinants of changes in democracy that also affect policy and redistribution. To get a feel for these results, Figure 1 plots the change in the raw Freedom House score between 1975 and 2000 (since this is clearer than our 0-1 measure of democracy) against the change in tax revenues as a percentage of GDP on the vertical axis. This figure is useful since it represents a simple way of looking at the ‘within variation’ (at least in the absence of any covariates). The figure shows that there is a clearly visible positive slope indicating the estimated relationship consistent with the hypothesis that as countries become democratic, they expand their tax revenues. Figure 2 presents an ‘event-study’ picture which shows the dynamics of taxation around democracy. Here we take the last democratization event of each country and average them. This figure is conditional on the lagged dependent variable, country fixed effects and time effect. It shows the dynamics of tax revenues as a percentage of GDP around the democratization, which we normalize so that its pre-democracy average is zero. This clearly shows that there is a sustained positive increase in tax revenues after a democratization whose magnitude

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increases over time (eventually reaching 5%). By 15 years after a democratization the standard error bands exclude zero. Second, however, and contrary to Rodrik (1999), we find no robust effect of democracy on any measure of inequality. Even though some selected specifications do show a small, marginally significant effect, these are not robust. This may reflect the poorer quality of inequality data. But we also suspect it may be related to the more complex theoretical relationships between democracy and inequality pointed out above. The absence of a relationship between the changes in democracy (Freedom House) and the change in the Gini coefficient 1975-2000 is evident from Figure 3. Figure 4 is an analogous event-study figure. It shows that after a democratization there does seem to be a fall in inequality but it is not statistically distinguishable from zero.

Revisiting Rodrik’s findings we show that while his results do still hold with our measure of democracy (significant at the 7% level), they are driven by several important things. First of all, the fact that he averaged the data, and second, that he used an old version of the World Bank data on wages. If instead of averaging the data we use every five years, the standard approach with a dynamic panel, his main finding disappears. It also disappears even with his own specification when we use the more complete and updated version of the data on wages (which he did not have available at the time he wrote). Third, we find an effect of democracy on secondary schooling investments and the extent of structural transformation (e.g., an impact on the non-agricultural share of employment and the non-agricultural share of output). How could it be that democracy leads to higher taxes and more education and possibly structural change but has no impact on inequality? This is an issue that requires a great deal more research than in Acemoglu et al. (2013), but all three of the above mechanisms could be at play. The fact that policy clearly changes after democratization seems less consistent with ideas about captured democracy, though it could be that while elites cannot stop taxation, they can manipulate how it is spent. The findings do seem more consistent with Director’s Law and Stigler’s claim that democracy...
favors the middle class and therefore does not generate the type of pro-poor or pro-median voter policies hypothesized by the early theoretical work. It could also be the case that inequality increasing market opportunities are at work with taxation and redistribution taking place but their effect on inequality being swamped.

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than 7,000 observations. This accounts for nearly all countries during the period under study, and the dataset is (basically) complete. Once I use different measures of inequality, account for endogeneity and impute missing observations my hypothesis is supported empirically: inequality reduces the likelihood that democracy endures but is unrelated to the likelihood of democratization itself.

THEORY
In this note, I will focus on two theories about how inequality – more precisely, interclass inequality – affects regime changes. Both rest on a redistributive approach, meaning that the effect of inequality is driven by its effect on preferences over redistribution among different social classes. First, Boix, among others, argues that inequality harms both democratization and consolidation. The intuition is that when inequality increases, the ruling elite is less likely to concede democracy, because it fears redistribution under democracy. Similarly, the elite is more likely to stage coups in unequal democracies, because it wants to prevent redistribution.

Second, Acemoglu and Robinson agree that inequality harms consolidation but argue that inequality relates to democratization through an inverted U-shaped relationship. In equal democracies, the population does not demand democracy because it has little to gain in terms of redistribution. At intermediate levels of inequality, however, the population has incentives to demand democracy. At the same time, the ruling elites are unwilling to use repression, because redistribution is relatively cheap; and so they democratize. But when inequality is high, the elites opt for repression, because the cost of redistribution is too high.

I argue that inequality harms consolidation but has no effect on democratization. There are at least three reasons why inequality is unlikely to have a substantial effect on democratization through the mechanisms described by previous redistributive theories. First, these mechanisms rest on the assumption that democratization follows a single path, in which democracy is initially demanded by the population but eventually conceded by the ruling elite, i.e. it is driven from below. However, in reality, democratization is often driven from above, for example through intra-elite competition. There is thus a large group of transitions for which these theories do not apply.

Second, even for transitions from below, their predictions are unlikely to hold. Contrary to what most scholars have claimed, inequality actually has two opposite, potentially offsetting, effects on democratization. On the one hand, inequality makes democracy more costly for the elites by increasing redistribution. On the other hand, inequality increases the demand for regime change from the population by increasing potential gains from redistribution or expropriation. The overall effect is thus ambiguous. Acemoglu and Robinson do account for both effects. However, their findings depend on specific assumptions about the discontinuity of the effect of inequality on the cost of maintaining an autocracy.3

Third, the population faces a collective action problem when mobilizing to replace an autocracy by a democracy, since democracy is a public good. Existing theories expect inequality to affect democratization by determining the likelihood of the population rising against the regime. But, if the masses are unable to mobilize, the elites have no incentive to respond to changes in inequality by adopting democracy. Even if inequality were to affect the likelihood of democratization, its effect should be weak. I thus expect inequality to bear little relationship to the probability of democratization.

Do arguments linking inequality to consolidation suffer from the same problems as those linking inequality to democratization? No. Transitions away from democracy differ in at least two fundamental ways from transitions to democracy. First, they involve different groups of actors. While democratizations may be initiated by the elite or the masses, democratic breakdowns are almost always caused by the elite or the military, not the masses.

Second, and most importantly, transitions to and away from democracies involve different processes. On the one hand, democratization from below is an interactive process between the elite and the masses, in which the former responds to the demands of the latter. On the other hand, democratic breakdown is a unilateral process, in which one group (usually the elite or the military) directly seizes power without necessarily having the approval of other groups. In the words of Acemoglu and Robinson, “the move from democracy to dictatorship is almost never consensual.”4

The asymmetry between the two transition processes has key implications for the relationship between inequality and consolidation. First of all, since most democratic breakdowns follow a single path in which the military/elite unilaterally seize power, theories trying to explain them – contrary to those concerned with democratization – can be applied to almost all cases.


4. Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins*, 225. The masses can be involved during transitions away from democracy, notably by responding negatively (or positively) to coups. However, their consentment is not necessary for a democratic breakdown to occur.
In addition, whereas inequality has two opposite effects on democratization, it only has a negative effect on consolidation. The two effects of inequality on democratization are caused by the fact that democracy is demanded by the population but, in the end, conceded by the elite. By contrast, democratic breakdowns result from the direct seizure of power by the elite. Because the agreement of the masses is not required, the effect of inequality on its willingness to concede dictatorship has little impact. Inequality mainly affects democratic breakdowns by increasing the cost of redistribution to the elite. Therefore, one should expect that when inequality increases the elite are more likely to wage coups against democracies.

Finally, collective action problems do not significantly reduce the capacity of the elite to mobilize, since the elite form a much smaller group than the population. Moreover, installing a new authoritarian regime provides specific benefits to those that take part in the coup. Contrary to transitions to democracy, transitions away from democracy do not pose a severe collective action problem for the group initiating the process. Therefore, I expect inequality to have a strong negative effect on the survival of democracies.

The second measure of inequality used is the income Gini coefficients of the Estimation of the Household Inequality and Inequity (EHII) constructed by the University of Texas Inequality Project (UTIP). The dataset includes more than 3,500 observations on 147 countries between 1963 and 2002. I use the same control variables as in my previous work: GDP per capita, growth, an oil exporter dummy variable, the proportion of the population that is Muslim, Protestant or Catholic, ethnic and religious fractionalization, the number of past transitions, a dummy variable for countries that did not exist prior to 1946, a dummy for former British colonies, and the proportion of countries worldwide that are democracies.

**EMPIRICAL RESULTS**

I test the relationship between inequality and democracy using dynamic probit models. These models estimate the probability of countries with a certain regime (in the current period) transitioning to a new regime in the next period. One advantage with this estimation technique is that it enables us to distinguish between the effect of inequality on democratization and on consolidation. Column 1 of Table 1 tests the hypothesis of a negative monotonic relationship, advanced notably by Boix, using capital shares. It shows that higher capital shares are actually associated with larger probability of democratization, though the relationship is not statistically significant.

Table 1: Dynamic Probit Estimations of the Effect of Inequality on the Probability of Transitions to and away from Democracy
Table 1: Dynamic Probit Estimations of the Effect of Inequality on the Probability of Transitions to and away from Democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Transition to Democracy</th>
<th>Transition to Autocracy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap. Shares</td>
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<td>-.062</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cap. Shares sq.</td>
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<td>(.0004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gini</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gini sq.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP pc</td>
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<td>.015</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
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<td>-.01</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.004)****</td>
<td>(.004)****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>-.5</td>
<td>-.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.25)****</td>
<td>(.242)****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.002</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.002)</td>
<td>(.002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>.0006</td>
<td>.0005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.003)</td>
<td>(.004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>.002</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic fract.</td>
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<td>(.002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious fract.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(.003)</td>
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<tr>
<td># Past Break.</td>
<td>.277</td>
<td>.276</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.053)****</td>
<td>(.054)****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Country</td>
<td>-.151</td>
<td>-.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.136)</td>
<td>(.138)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former British</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>-.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.132)</td>
<td>(.131)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
both are statistically insignificant. A Wald test demonstrates that the two coefficients also fail to reach joint significance. Columns 3 and 4 redo models 1 and 2 but with the Gini coefficients instead of capital shares. Results are unchanged.

One potential problem with the analysis presented thus far is that it does not account for endogeneity, particularly reverse causation. In fact, in inequality theories of democratization, inequality affects regime transition precisely because it affects the incentives of different social classes to control redistributive policies, and thus change the inequality level. Moreover, country-specific factors could affect both the likelihood of regime change and inequality; hence creating omitted variable bias.

Column 5 reproduces model 1 but using an instrumental variable approach. It uses the level of inequality of neighboring countries as an instrument for the domestic level of inequality. As I argued in Houle, inequality tends to be clustered across neighbors, notably because they share factor endowments. Basic tests show that the inequality level of neighbors is indeed a strong instrument for domestic inequality levels (F-statistic of 17.84). Since Houle uses the inequality level of neighbors to impute missing values, I only use the non-imputed capital shares in the estimation reported in column 5 (and column 8).

It is possible that inequality in neighboring states affect the regimes of neighbors, which in turn influences the domestic political regime. If that were the case, the instruments would not be exogenous. Therefore, in order to account for this potential mechanism I control for the proportion of neighbors that are democratic instead of controlling for the proportion of democracies worldwide as in the previous regressions. Results, reported in column 5, are unchanged.

Column 6 estimates the effect of inequality on the likelihood that a democracy breaks down and transitions to autocracy. Positive coefficients signify that the associated independent variables increase the probability of backsliding to dictatorship. As expected, inequality increases the likelihood that a democracy breaks down and the relationship is statistically significant at the five percent level.

As shown in model 7, these results are unchanged when inequality is instead measured with Gini indexes. Column 8 uses the same instrumental variable strategy as in model 5. Once again, results suggest that inequality harms the consolidation of democracy.

CONCLUSION
This note has argued that inequality does not affect democratization but harms consolidation of democracies. These results suggest that the factors that affect the establishment of democracies may be very different from those that affect their consolidation. In fact, the empirical analysis presented above finds that many factors other than inequality also seem to affect these two transition processes differently. Of course, this idea is not completely new. Already, O’Donnell and Schmitter, among others, argued that “political and social processes are neither symmetric nor reversible. What brings down a democracy is not the inverse of those factors that bring down an authoritarian regime.” However, such insights have yet to be fully integrated in the empirical and theoretical literatures on regime changes.

Christian Houle is assistant professor of political science at Michigan State University.

9. See Houle, “Does Inequality Harm,” regarding column 5. The results are unchanged when imputed capital shares are also included. Regressions using instrumental variables are run separately for democratization and consolidation, which explains the lower number of observations (e.g., only autocracies are included in column 5). This is done in order to limit the number of instruments needed and does not affect the validity of the results. The results presented in column 6 are robust to the use of only non-imputed observations (see Houle, “Inequality and Democracy”). Moreover, the results are unchanged when the regressions only cover the period from 1960 to 2000.

Lazarsfeld, Robert Lynd, and Kingsley Davis. Linz formed an especially close relationship with Seymour Martin Lipset, under whose supervision he would write a nine-hundred-plus page dissertation consisting of a systematic dissection of The Social Bases of West German Politics. Even before officially finishing the dissertation, Linz would also compile a “propositional inventory” and co-author with Lipset a two-volume manuscript The Social Bases of Political Diversity in Western Democracies in his capacity as Lipset’s research assistant. It was never published but widely recognized by Lipset and others, as a main source for Lipset’s own seminal work, Political Man.

A grant from the SSRC’s Committee in Comparative Politics allowed Linz to return to Spain in the Spring of 1958 to carry out field research for a study of the Franco regime, an experience which led to the publication of Linz’s first classic article, “An Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain.” Throughout his career, Spain would command his attention as a crucial case in comparative perspective. Linz did more than any other Spanish scholar of his generation to put his country at the very center of international debates in the social sciences, especially those in comparative politics about regime types, breakdowns, and transitions, as well as nationalism, all the while challenging prevalent stereotypes and “terrible simplifications.” In the process, he directed and conducted a plethora of pioneering survey research.

Linz was an enthusiastic and influential participant in a host of professional social scientific associations. He was a founding member of the International Sociological Association’s Committee of Political Sociology (CPS), alongside Lipset, Raymond Aron, Shmuel Esienstadt, and Stein Rokkan, among others. He served as President of the CPS (1971-79), as President of the Council for European Studies (1973-1974), President of the World Association of Public Opinion Research (1974-1976), and was a member of the Executive Committee of the ISA (1974-1982) as well as its Scientific Committee (1974-1978). He was also active in the International Political Science Association and the American Political Science Association, and served for many years on the Scientific Committee for the Center for Advanced Social Studies at the Instituto Juan March in Madrid.

When he died, Linz was Sterling Professor Emeritus of Political and Social Sciences at Yale. He was much decorated, having received many of his profession’s most coveted prizes. He was elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1976. He was awarded honorary doctoral degrees from five universities; the University of Granada (1976), Georgetown University (1987), the Autonomous University of Madrid (1992), the Phillips-Universität of Marburg (1992), the University of Oslo (2000), and the University of the Basque Country (2002). In 1987, he was the recipient of Spain’s most prestigious Premio Príncipe de Asturias; and in 1996, he won the University of Uppsala’s Johan Skytte Prize, perhaps the closest thing in Political Science to a Nobel Prize.

From the start of his career through the very end of his life, Linz was a devoted and beloved teacher. He supervised 65 dissertations on 31 different countries spanning the entire globe. Several of his students were political scientists and sociologists who would soon become eminent in their fields, such as Richard Hamilton, Kenneth Erickson, Arturo Valenzuela, Ezra Suleiman, Jan Gross, John Stephens, Robert Fishman, Houchang Chehabi, and Miguel Centeno. The authors of this obituary both have the honor to count themselves among this “Linzian” family. Alfred Stepan had the good fortune to first come across Linz early in his own graduate career at Columbia and to have the immense intellectual and personal reward of working as a co-author with Linz for thirty-five years on books and articles. Jeff Miley was Linz’ second to last PhD and asked to help in the selection, translation, and introductions to the sections of the seven volumes of Linz’s selected works.

Linz’s impact as a teacher stretched well beyond his official students; those who considered themselves such numbered many, many more. He and his wife Rocio de Terán were famous among students for their extreme generosity in terms of time and attention, and especially for the hospitality with which the couple opened the doors and spare bedroom, of their home in Hamden, Connecticut to so many.

Two excellent sources on Linz’s thought and writings are his sixty page interview with Richard Snyder in Munch and Snyder’s, Passion, Craft and Method in Comparative Politics, and the 50 page intellectual biography, done with Linz’s collaboration, by José Ramón Montero and Jeff Miley in their just published seven volume selected works of Linz, published in Spanish as Juan J. Linz. Obras Escogidas by the Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales in Madrid.

Linz was an irreplaceable mentor and a close friend to innumerable senior and junior scholars throughout the world. He will be sorely missed, and will certainly not be forgotten.

Alfred Stepan, Columbia University and Jeff Miley, Cambridge University
Certain circumstances, individuals prefer behavioral economics to explain why, under certain contexts, citizens will pursue it, even within groups status has distinct value, and in certain contexts, citizens will pursue it, even at the expense of their material interests. Dr. McClendon argues that individuals care about more than simply maximizing their material well-being. Specifically, they care deeply about their relative status vis-à-vis others within their same or similar group (for example, neighbors or co-ethnics). Envy, spite, and the desire for esteem can be powerful motivations for behavior. High-within groups status has distinct value, and in certain contexts, citizens will pursue it, even at the expense of their material interests.

The dissertation takes great care to define, both intuitively and formally, what is meant by within-group status concerns, and to distinguish this concept (theoretically and empirically) from similar concepts, such as relative deprivation, status anxiety, and last-place aversion. It builds a theory of how within group status concerns might influence political behavior. Specifically, certain contextual triggers (for example, high levels of within-group inequality) raise the salience of within-group status concerns. Within group status concerns can, depending on the context, encourage greater participation, or lead citizens to favor a “leveling down” of assets and incomes within neighborhoods and among group members.

Dr. McClendon evaluates her argument by drawing on data from both the U.S. and South Africa.

In South Africa she is able to show that where social status concerns have been triggered citizens are more likely to oppose Pareto improving provision of low-income housing, and as a result, such housing is undersupplied while resources for constructing low-income housing go unused.

Drawing on attitudinal and demographic survey data from both countries, she demonstrates that, consistent with her theory, social status concerns shape respondents’ attitudes towards redistribution. In South Africa, where inequality among neighboring co-ethnics has dramatically increased the correlation between within-group status and support for distribution is large and negative.

In the U.S. case, where status concerns are salient the degree to which the median voter is economically distant from rich group members while also close to poor group members correlates with the median voter’s support for anti-redistribution policies.

Finally, using a field experiment she finds evidence that the promise of in-group esteem induced higher rates of attendance at a rally for gay marriage in New Jersey.

In short, the committee agreed that Dr. McClendon’s dissertation represents some of the best work being done in comparative politics. It combines novel theorizing with the clever and effective use of multiple empirical strategies. This work is sure to help reshape how we think about citizen preferences over public policy and political participation.”

Best Book Award: Milan Svolik (University of Illinois) was awarded the best book award for The Politics of Authoritarian Rule (Cambridge University Press).

This year’s award committee included David Samuels (University of Minnesota)
Committee Remarks on the Award Winner:

“Political science has witnessed a proliferation of scholarship on authoritarian regimes over the past 10-15 years. Rather than simply categorizing all non-democracies as totalitarian, where the dictator is supreme leader with unquestionable control over the elites and masses, we have come to appreciate the heterogeneity between dictatorships and to understand that even a dictator’s power depends on a coalition of supporters. The literature upon which these realizations are based has greatly expanded both our knowledge and interest in authoritarian politics. Missing from the extant literature, though, is a theory that unifies and enhances all that we have learned; a theory that lays the groundwork for future scholarship on the politics of authoritarian rule.

Svolik’s book provides such a theory. He argues that dictators face two dilemmas: 1) authoritarian power-sharing and 2) authoritarian control. The former is about managing their relationship with the ruling elite, and the latter is about managing their relationship with the masses. In explaining these problems and the solutions used by dictators to address them, Svolik’s work engulfs much of the literature on authoritarian rule. He addresses how best to conceptualize authoritarian regimes, why some dictatorships are more durable than others, why we sometimes dictators are able to personalize their rule, and how dictators use political institutions, parties and repression to prolong their rule. These topics are addressed with both rigorous (formal) theory and innovative empirical methods, which sometimes utilizes data collected specifically for this book. Ultimately, though, the most important contribution of this book is the dynamic theoretical framework it establishes for understanding authoritarian rule. This is a framework that will be built upon for years to come by scholars who seek to identify alternative ways in which dictators address the dilemmas of authoritarian power-sharing and authoritarian control first identified by Svolik.”

Michael Coppedge (University of Notre Dame) was awarded an honorable mention for Democratization and Research Methods (Cambridge University Press).

Committee Remarks on the Honorable Mention:

“This book provides a critical overview of the evolution of the scholarly study of regime change, with a focus on the interplay between different theories and different methodologies, highlighting the epistemological challenges that scholars - both qualitative and quantitative - face when attempting to make sense of this complex phenomenon. In addition to providing a most robust and yet precise conceptualization, Coppedge does more than merely summarize the democratization literature. By putting the question of regime transition in dialogue with methodologies he adjudicates between the theoretical and empirical evaluations of democracy’s causes. In doing so, he has provided a public good that will be an invaluable resource for all students of democratization, and will surely be assigned in most graduate seminars (and upper-division undergraduate courses) for years to come.”

Best Article Award: Robert Woodberry (National University of Singapore) won the best article award for his American Political Science Review piece, “The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy.”

This year’s award committee included Milan Svolik (University of Illinois) (Chair), Svend-Erik Skaaning (Aarhus University), and Leonardo R. Arriola (University of California, Berkeley).

Committee Remarks on the Award Winner:

“The committee unanimously decided to award the best article prize to Robert Woodberry for his article “The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy”. In this article, which came out in the May 2012 issue of the American Political Science Review, Woodberry argues that conversionary Protestants were a crucial catalyst that initiated the spread of the civic liberties and associations that ultimately resulted in the emergence of liberal democracy.

A brief version of Woodberry’s theoretical argument goes as follows: conversionary Protestants wanted ordinary people to be i) able to read the Bible and ii) actively involved in their church. Yet in their attempts to spread their faith, conversionary Protestants were in effect facilitating the spread of mass education, mass printing, and civil society. These byproducts of religious activism in turn led to the emergence of actors and conditions favorable to democracy: civic associations, political parties, religious liberties, and mass political participation.

Hence, according to Woodberry, democracy was not the autonomous triumph of modern forms of political organization and activity – like political parties, labor movements, and mass education. Rather, these modern political actors were the byproduct of a very traditional activity, namely, religious conversion and competition.

These arguments alone amount to an important and novel challenge to the standard versions of the modernization theory. Yet, Woodberry’s article is also exceptional in the way it combines historical and statistical research in order to evaluate this theoretical proposition.

First, Woodberry shows that there is a strong association between Protestantism and democracy across a number of historical and geographical contexts: in Western
Europe, in settler colonies, in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism, and in the rest of the contemporary world. Then he presents historical evidence of conversionary protestants’ involvement in the spread of mass printing, mass education, civil society, and the rule of law – and thus highlights the specific mechanisms by which conversionary protestants fostered conditions favorable to the emergence of democracy. And finally, using original data on Protestant missionary involvement around the world, Professor Woodberry demonstrates that the historic prevalence of Protestant missionaries explains about half the variation in democracy outside of Europe – even after controlling for most standard covariates and after accounting for endogeneity by an instrumental variable analysis.

To summarize, it is the combination of a new approach to a classic, important question and the nuanced use of different kinds of methods and evidence when evaluating his theoretical claims that led us to award this year’s best article prize to Robert Woodberry.

**Best Fieldwork Award:** Adam Auerbach won the best fieldwork prize for his dissertation project, “Cooperation in Uncertainty: Migration, Ethnicity, and Community Governance in India’s Urban Slums.”

**This year’s award committee included**
Leonard Wantchekon (Princeton University) (chair), Oeindira Dube (New York University), Gwyneth McClendon (Yale University).

**Committee Remarks on the Award Winners**
“This year’s committee is pleased to have selected Adam Auerbach’s dissertation project, “Cooperation in Uncertainty: Migration, Ethnicity, and Community Governance in India’s Urban Slums,” for the Comparative Democratization’s Best Fieldwork Prize. Auerbach’s dissertation project identifies a compelling research question — namely, what explains variation in the degree of development and level of public goods provision across slums in India? To answer it, Auerbach has employed a mixed-methods approach that has involved extensive ethnographic fieldwork over 15 months, a host of interviews with political leaders, gang members, and squatter settlement residents, the collection of about 3,000 documents from community meetings, election campaigns and leadership correspondence, an original survey of just under two thousand households across 80 slums, a database of party workers characteristics, and the creation of satellite-imaging maps. His fieldwork efforts are impressive in their sheer breadth, depth, and creativity. He has collected rich data on often-overlooked communities and political activities. His innovative approach has also thus far led to intriguing and novel results. For instance, Auerbach finds, contrary to much extant research, that ethnic heterogeneity can have a positive impact on public goods provision, at least when it leads to competitive and dense patronage networks. His dissertation project promises to make a key contribution to political science literatures on economic development, ethnic diversity, public goods provision, clientelism, political competition, and research design.”

Sarah Parkinson was also awarded an honorable mention for her work on “Reinventing the Resistance: Order and Violence among Palestinians in Lebanon.”

**Committee Remarks on the Honorable Mention:** “The committee is also pleased to award Sarah Parkinson’s dissertation, “Reinventing the Resistance: Order and Violence Among Palestinians in Lebanon,” an Honorable Mention. Parkinson went above and beyond the depth and personal risk typically undertaken for dissertation fieldwork and with striking results. She spent over 19 months, over the course of 5 years, living in and near refugee camps in Lebanon in order to make sense of variation in the reorganization of Palestinian militant organizations in the decades since 1980. Her central question — what explains the different ways in which militant organizations recover and reorganize after defeat? — advances literatures on war, on organizational theory and change, and on social networks. Under difficult and dangerous circumstances, Parkinson won and kept the trust of her research subjects. She integrated herself fully into daily life and collected impressive archival and oral history data from both women and male officers. The committee believes that the depth, integrity, and careful design of her project will make a very important contribution to political science.”

**Best Paper Award:** Kunle Owolabi (Villanova) won the best paper award for his work on “Literacy and Democracy After Slavery?”

**This year’s award committee included**
Zachary Elkins (University of Texas at Austin) (Chair), Daniel Ziblatt (Harvard University), and Joseph Wright (Pennsylvania State University).

**Committee Remarks on the Award Winner:** “We—the selection committee—agreed unanimously in our decision. We found Owolabi’s paper to be a highly original treatment of a fascinating research question. Owolabi notes a puzzling difference in literacy rates between two sets of countries characterized two different patterns of colonization: those in which colonizers imported non-indigenous laborers to colonies (largely in the Americas) and those in which colonizers dominated indigenous populations (largely in Africa and Asia). Paradoxically, those societies characterized by forced settlement (the first mode) exhibit much higher literacy rates in the post-colonial era than do those characterized by occupation (the second mode).
Owolabi’s explanation for this paradox is compelling. He suggests that the process associated with the abolition of slavery in colonies of forced settlement led to some surprising benefits with respect to citizenship and education. By contrast, societies of occupation maintained strict administrative codes for indigenous populations that essentially denied them fundamental citizenship rights until the post-World War II era. This deprivation in membership and status in the community had a remarkable impact on educational outcomes. Owolabi tests his theory convincingly with a careful statistical analysis. The result is a highly intriguing historical paper, which we expect will be published in the next several years in a top journal.

We congratulate Kunle Owolabi heartily and wish him the best of luck in his future work in this area.”

**Autocracies of the World Dataset Now Available:**

On October 18, 2013, Beatriz Magaloni, Jonathan Chu, and Eric Min at Stanford University released the first edition of the Autocracies of the World (AoW) 1950-2012 dataset. Among a variety of attributes, the data tracks regime types for all countries from 1950-2012 with more specific sub-categories (monarchy, single party, hegemonic, military) for all autocratic country-years. Building on top of extant regime classification datasets, the AoW offers at least three unique contributions: removing all hybrid classifications; correcting classification errors and omissions in other datasets; and including two new measurements of personalist rule that apply to all autocratic governments. Further details on these changes and other useful covariates (such as regime duration) can be found in the dataset’s codebook. Both the data and codebook will soon be housed by Stanford’s Center on Democracy, Development, and Rule of Law (CDDRL). Both resources are also currently available for free download at http://ericmin.com/aow-data.

**NEWS FROM MEMBERS**

**Nazneen Barma**, assistant professor of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School, has been awarded a grant from the 2013 Minerva Research Initiative, along with co-PIs Jessica Piombo and Naomi Levy. The research project is entitled “Public Service Provision as Peace-building: How Do Autonomous Efforts Compare to Internationally Aided Interventions?” and comprises comparative case study work in Cambodia, Laos, and Uganda on the relationship between peace-building and state-building.

**Michael Bernhard**, Raymond and Miriam Ehrlich Chair in Political Science, University of Florida, and Ruchan Kaya published “Are Elections Mechanisms of Authoritarian Stability or Democratization? Evidence from Postcommunist Eurasia” in the September 2013 Perspectives on Politics, in which the authors test whether elections have functioned as a mechanism of change or of neo-authoritarian stability in the postcommunist world. Bernhard’s coedited book (with Jan Kubik), Twenty Years after Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration, is under contract with Oxford University Press and is expected to be published in October 2014.

**Archie Brown**, Emeritus Professor of Politics, Oxford University, published the chapter on “Communism” in Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent, and Marc Stears (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies in 2013. Brown’s own more recent book, The Rise and Fall of Communism (Ecco, 2011), has been translated in nine different countries, most recently Israel and Russia.

**Matt Buehler**, alumnus of the University of Texas-Austin (2013), will begin a tenure track position at the University of Tennessee’s Department of Political Science in Fall 2014. This year, he is participating in a post-doctoral fellowship at the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar to work on his book manuscript that examines the success and failure of alliances between Islamists and leftists in Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauritania.


**Paul J. Carnegie**, senior lecturer in political science, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, published “Can an Indonesian Model Work in the Middle East?” in the Summer 2013 Middle East Quarterly. Recognizing that earlier concerns over an Islamist ascendancy after the fall of Indonesian President Suharto proved largely unfounded, Carnegie asks how this development was possible in the world’s most populous Muslim country and asks if it can serve as a template for the ongoing transitions in the Middle East. Carnegie was recently in Pontianak in West Kalimantan, Indonesia in late June, where he was conducting field research on the politics of decentralization reform in the country’s provinces.

**Dinissa S. Duvanova**, assistant professor of political science, University of Buffalo, SUNY, published Building Business in Post-Communist Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia: Collective Goods, Selective Incentives, and Predatory States (Cambridge University Press), in which the author shows that postcommunist business associations function as substitutes for state and private mechanisms for good governance. Please write to the author at duvanova@buffalo.edu for a discount code if you would like to purchase the book.

**Todd Eisenstadt**, professor of government, American University, and Karleen West of
West Virginia University have received a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation’s Law and Social Sciences Division for their work on “Collaborative Research: Identifying the Conditions Under Which Indigenous Communities Engage in Legal Mobilization.” Using a survey conducted with Ecuadorian partners, Eisenstadt and West are studying poor, rural, indigenous communities in that country - and in a comparative framework - to understand how they overcome socioeconomic and geographic barriers to launch new forms of social movements relying on Western science and international collaboration.

Bonnie N. Field, associate professor, Bentley University and visiting scholar at Harvard’s Center for European Studies, published “Resolute Leaders and ‘Cardboard Deputies’: Parliamentary Party Unity in the New Spanish Democracy” in the September 2013 South European Society and Politics, which puts forward a leadership-centered explanation of parliamentary party unity in new democracies. She also published Politics and Society in Contemporary Spain: From Zapatero to Rajoy (Palgrave 2013), co-edited with Alfonso Botti (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia). The book offers a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of contemporary Spain. Focusing on the second term of Socialist Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the dramatic defeat of the Socialists in the 2011 elections and the alternation of power to the conservative Popular Party, it underscores Spain’s deep economic and political crisis.

Julie Fisher Melton published Importing Democracy: The Role of NGOs in South Africa, Tajikistan, and Argentina. Published by the Kettering Foundation in 2013, the book examines the roles of NGOs in democratization by conducting hundreds of interviews in several countries across the world.

Erica Frantz, assistant professor of political science, Bridgewater State University, and Natasha Ezrow published Failed States and Institutional Decay: Understanding Instability and Poverty in the Developing World (Bloomsbury Publishing), in which the author explains how and why different types of institutions deteriorate and illustrates the impact that institutional decay has on political instability and poverty using examples from all over the world.

Vladimir Gel’man, professor of political science and sociology, European University at St. Petersburg, published (in Russian) Lz ognya da v polyoma: Rossiiskaya Politika Poro SSSR (Out of the Frying Pan, into the Fire: Russian Politics after the USSR), which analyzes why more than two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian politics has not brought the country closer to political freedom. Gel’man’s article, “Cracks in the Wall: Challenges to Electoral Authoritarianism in Russia” appears in the March-April 2013 Problems of Post-Communism.

Agustina Giraudy, assistant professor at American University’s School of International Service, published “Varieties of Subnational Undemocratic Regimes: Evidence from Argentina and Mexico” in the March 2013 Studies in Comparative International Development. Recognizing the shortcomings of subnational undemocratic regimes literature, the author calls for a separation between two orthogonal dimensions: the access to and the exercise of state power.

Henry Hale, associate professor of political science and international affairs, The George Washington University, Nikolay Petrov, and Maria Lipman published “Three Dilemmas of Hybrid Regime Governance: Russia from Putin to Putin” in the September 2013 Post-Soviet Affairs. The authors investigate how hybrid regimes supply governance by examining a series of dilemmas (including elections, the mass media, and state institutions) that their rulers face. A copy of the article is available by request by writing to hhale@gwu.edu.

Debra Javeline, associate professor of political science, University of Notre Dame, Jessica J. Hellmann, Rodrigo Castro Cornejo, and Gregory Shufeldt, published “Expert Opinion on Climate Change and Threats to Biodiversity” in the August 2013 Bioscience. The authors suggest policymakers consult environmental biologists on emerging and controversial issues such as climate change and use transparent, standardized metrics of expertise when deciding which scientists to consult.


Todd Landman, executive dean, faculty of social sciences, University of Essex, published Human Rights and Democracy: The Precarious Triumph of Ideals (Bloomsbury Academic Press), in which the author traces how state and non-state actors have created social, political, and legal institutions that seek to constrain the worst forms of human behavior and embraced the ideas of democracy and human rights in new ways.

Staffan I. Lindberg, association professor of political science at the University of Gothenburg and the University of Florida,

James Melton, Lecturer in Comparative Politics, University College London, Tom Ginsburg, Leo Spitz Professor of International Law, Ludwig and Hilde Wolf Research Scholar and Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago, and Zachary Elkins, associate professor of government, University of Texas at Austin, have launched a new website, Constitute, which uses data from the Comparative Constitutions Projects to allow national constitutions to be served by topic. Constitute can be accessed at www.constituteproject.org/#/.

Yonatan Morse has taken an appointment as visiting assistant professor and associate director of the Center for Democracy and Civil Society at Georgetown University’s department of government. Morse also published “Party Matters: The Institutional Origins of Competitiveness and Hegemony in Post Cold War Tanzania,” which will appear in an upcoming issue of Democratization.

Leila Piran, adjunct professor at George Washington University’s School of Professional Studies, published Institutional Change in Turkey: The Impact of EU Reforms on Human Rights and Policing (Palgrave MacMillan). The book explores the domestic reasons behind police reform in Turkey in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup and argues that, while important, the EU’s influence on democracy and human rights only began to influence police reform after 1999.

Sebastian Royo, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Suffolk University, recently published Lessons from the Economic Crisis in Spain (Palgrave); “Portugal in the European Union: The Limits of Convergence” in a special issue of South European Society and Politics that focused on “Europeanisation and the Southern Periphery”; and a book chapter entitled “A ‘Ship in Trouble’ The Spanish Banking System in the Midst of the Global Financial System Crisis: The Limits of Regulation” to the book Market-Based Banking, Varieties of Financial Capitalism and the Financial Crisis, edited by Iain Hardie and David Howarth and published by Oxford University Press.

Sanjay Ruparelia, assistant professor of politics, New School for Social Research, was recently awarded a Postdoctoral Fellowship for Transregional Research to conduct fieldwork for his new project, “Demanding a Right to Basic Social Welfare: Contesting the Law in India and China,” by the Social Science Research Council. Ruparelia also published “India’s New Rights Agenda: Genesis, Promises, Risks” in the September 2013 Pacific Affairs.

Ben Ross Schneider, Ford International Professor of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, published Hierarchical Capitalism in Latin America, in which the author argues that Latin America has a distinctive, enduring form of hierarchical capitalism characterized by multinational corporations, diversified business groups, low skills, and segmented labor markets.

Hollie A. Semetko, Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Media and International Affairs and Professor of Political Science, Emory University, was named a Fulbright Nehru Scholar to India for 2013-14. She is based at IIT Bombay for the fall semester. Her research on strategic communication in India focuses on business, government, and international affairs. The Sage Handbook of Political Communication, edited by Holli Semetko and Margaret Scammell, was published in 2012.

Dan Slater, associate professor of political science, University of Chicago, published a coauthored article in the September 2013 Perspectives on Politics with Joseph Wong, professor of political science, University of Toronto, entitled “The Strength to Concede: Ruling Parties and Democratization in Developmental Asia.”

Lahra Smith, assistant professor, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, published Making Citizens in Africa: Ethnicity, Gender, and National Identity in Ethiopia (Cambridge University Press). Using data from Ethiopia and developing a historically informed and empirically nuanced study of language policy and ethnicity and gender identities, the book analyzes the contestation over citizenship that engages the state, social movements, and individuals in substantive ways.

Etel Solingen was recently appointed as the Thomas T. and Elizabeth C. Tierney Chair in Peace Studies at the University of California Irvine. Solingen also served as the president of the International Studies Association from 2012 to 2013 under the theme “The Politics of Transnational and Regional Diffusion,” highlighting a large number of panels on comparative democratization, the Arab Spring, and related topics. She also published “Three Scenes of Sovereignty and Power” in Martha Finnemore and Judith Goldstein (eds.), Back to Basics: Rethinking Power in the Contemporary World (Oxford University Press).
Section News

A book written by Guillermo Trejo, associate professor of political science, University of Notre Dame, entitled Popular Movements in Autocracies: Religion, Repression, and Indigenous Collective Action in Mexico (Cambridge University Press), received an honorary mention for the 2013 Charles Tilly Award for Best Book Published in Collective Behavior and Social Movements from the American Sociological Association (ASA).

Maya Tudor, university lecturer in government and public policy, Oxford University, published The Promise of Power: The Social Origins of Democracy in India and Autocracy in Pakistan (Cambridge University Press), in which she suggests that the emergence of a stable democracy in India and an unstable autocracy in Pakistan is best explained by the historically-specific interests of the dominant social group which led each independence movement as well as by the varying strength of the political parties which were created to pursue those interests. Tudor also published The Historical Inheritance of India’s Democracy (Routledge Handbook on Indian Politics).

Rollin F. Tusalem was recently promoted to associate professor of political science at Arkansas State University. He recently published “Bringing the Military Back In: The Politicisation of the Military and its Effects on Democratic Consolidation” and “The Impact of Diamonds on Economic Growth, Adverse Regime Change, and Democratic State Building in Africa” (with Minion K.C. Morrison) in upcoming issues of International Political Science Review and “The Effect of Political Dynasties on Effective Democratic Governance: Evidence from the Philippines” (with Jeffrey Pe-Aguirre) in Asian Politics and Policy.

Rachel Vanderhill, visiting assistant professor of international relations, Wheaton College, and Michael E. Aleprete, Jr. edited International Dimensions of Authoritarian Persistence: Lessons from Post-Soviet States (Lexington Books). The edited volume explores how international factors interact with domestic conditions to explain the persistence of authoritarianism throughout the region. The selections in the volume cover several countries, including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, South Ossetia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and the Russian Federation. The failure of democratic consolidation among post-Soviet states offers important lessons for policymakers and academics dealing with the recent wave of political transitions in the Middle East and Asia.

Michael Wahman (formerly University of Texas at Austin) started a new position as Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow at London School of Economic’s Department of Government on September 1. Wahman’s research is supported by a two-year grant from the Swedish Research Council. During his time at LSE, he will concentrate on a project studying African sub-national variation in election manipulation and electoral behavior.

Shannon Drysdale Walsh was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend for 2013 to support two months of full-time writing and research on her book project Engendering State Institutions: State Response to Violence Against Women in Latin America. This book manuscript proposes a theoretical framework to explain variation in the construction and performance of specialized state institutions that address violence against women. Drysdale Walsh compares Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Honduras, countries that have relatively few resources and little political will to implement legal norms that aim to prevent and sanction violence against women. In part, she argues that transnational advocacy networks help overcome state resistance to advancing institutional specialization and performance by providing external pressure and international funding to support new institution-strengthening efforts within the justice system.

Kurt Weyland, Lozano Long Professor of Latin American Politics, University of Texas at Austin, won the Mary Parker Follett Prize of the APSA Politics and History section for two of his articles: “Diffusion Waves and European Democratization: The Impact of Organizational Development” and “The Arab Spring: Why the Surprising Similarities with the Revolutionary Wave of 1848?” Weyland also published “The Threat from the Populist Left” in the June 2013 Journal of Democracy’s cluster of articles on “Latin America’s Authoritarian Drift.”

Matthew S. Winters, assistant professor of political science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, Stanley J. Bernstein Assistant Professor of Political Science, Brown University, published “Lacking Information or Condoning Corruption: When Do Voters Support Corrupt Politicians?” in the July 2013 Comparative Politics. Using an original survey experiment, the article finds little evidence of Brazilian voters accepting a tradeoff in which they support corrupt politicians who are otherwise providing public goods; instead, when voters are given information about political corruption, they express a preference for removing the politician from office.
NEW RESEARCH

Journal of Democracy

The October 2013 (Vol. 24, no. 4) Journal of Democracy features a cluster of articles on “Tracking the ‘Arab Spring,” as well as individual case studies on democracy and the quality of the state, governance, Paraguay, Malaysia, and elections in Africa.

“Democracy and the Quality of the State” by Francis Fukuyama
What is the relationship between high-quality state administration and democracy? A look back at modern Greece and Italy, along with Germany and the United States, provides some insights.

“Reflections on ‘Governance’” by Marc F. Plattner
“Governance,” once merely a synonym for government, has taken on new meanings that tend to downplay the importance of the political. But can “good governance” be achieved today without the protections of liberal democracy?

Tracking the “Arab Spring”
I. “Why the Modest Harvest?” by Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds
Popular uprisings have occurred only in some Arab states and in even fewer have authoritarian rulers been overthrown. What factors allow us to predict whether an authoritarian regime will be vulnerable?

II. “Egypt’s Failed Transition” by Nathan J. Brown
The July 2013 military takeover has squashed democratic hopes in Egypt, at least for now. How did things go so wrong, and what lessons are to be drawn from this lamentable episode?

III. “Syria and the Future of Authoritarianism” by Steven Heydemann
The Assad regime has been adapting to the new challenges posed by mass uprisings through a process of “authoritarian learning,” and at least some of its methods are being applied elsewhere in the region.

IV. “Yemen Changes Everything...And Nothing” by April Longley Alley
A long-ruling strongman president has been unseated by popular unrest and a negotiated transition is under way, but to many Yemenis this all appears to be a change more of appearance than of substance.

V. “Libya Starts from Scratch” by Mieczyslaw P. Boduszynski and Duncan Pickard
Qadhafi is gone after subjecting his country to a brutal dictatorship for more than four decades, but the devastated institutional landscape that he left behind bodes ill for Libya’s democratic prospects.

“The Third Wave: Inside the Numbers” by Jørgen Møller and Svend-Erik Skaaning
Is democracy threatened by a “reverse wave”? Examining regional patterns and distinguishing between different types of democracy gives us a new basis for assessing this question.

“Paraguay and the Politics of Impeachment” by Leiv Marsteinredet, Mariana Llanos, and Detlef Nolte
The phenomenon of the “interrupted presidency” remains a key source of democratic instability in Latin America, as was demonstrated once again by the 2012 impeachment of Paraguayan president Fernando Lugo.

Research Report
“Assessing the Quality of Elections” by Pippa Norris, Richard W. Frank, and Ferran Martinez i Coma
Determining whether an election has met international standards is a pressing issue for both practitioners and scholars. An important new study aims to systematize the assessment of electoral integrity.

“Malaysia’s Elections: A Step Backward” by Bridget Welsh
Despite losing the popular vote, Malaysia’s long-ruling Barisan Nasional triumphed again in the country’s 2013 elections, disappointing an emboldened opposition that had high hopes after a strong performance in 2008.

Exchange
I. “Reexamining African Elections” by Matthijs Bogaards
Do even unfree and unfair elections in sub-Saharan Africa, if repeated often enough, really contribute to democratization? A fresh look at the evidence casts doubt on the theory of “democratization by elections.

II. “Confusing Categories, Shifting Targets” by Staffan I. Lindberg
Staffan Lindberg replies to Matthijs Bogaards’s critique, finding the latter’s methodology problematic and arguing that the evidence for association between repeated elections and democratization remains strong.

The July 2013 (Volume 24, no. 3) issue of the Journal of Democracy features clusters of articles on “Latin America’s Authoritarian Drift,” “Putin versus Civil Society,” and “Kenya’s 2013 Elections,” as well individual case studies on Jordan, Algeria, and Bahrain. The full text of selected articles and the tables of contents of all issues are available on the Journal’s website.

Latin America’s Authoritarian Drift
I. “The Threat from the Populist Left” by Kurt Weyland
The left-populist authoritarianism that is taking hold across a swatch of Latin America bears many resemblances to the rightist populism that was once widespread in the region. There are signs, however, that the leftist variant will be an even bigger problem for liberal democracy.

II. “Technocratic Populism in Ecuador” by Carlos de la Torre
President Rafael Correa, now entering his third term, has built a curious form of populist-authoritarian regime. He champions redistributionism and a kind of technocratic leftistism while assaulting the traditional left along with such mainstays of a liberal society as the freedom of the press.

III. “Chavismo After Chávez?” by Miriam Kornblith
Can a regime built by and centered around a populist strongman survive that strongman’s death? A natural experiment is now unfolding in
Venezuela as a resurgent opposition and a crisis of governability converge on the would-be heirs of Hugo Chávez.

Putin versus Civil Society
I. “The Long Struggle for Freedom” by Leon Aron
Today’s Russian protest movement in many ways resembles past civil-rights and civil-resistance efforts in other parts of the world, from its commitment to nonviolence to its key demands—a vote that counts and equality under the law.

II. “Outlawing the Opposition” by Miriam Lansky and Elspeth Suthers
The Putin regime, having faced its first real challenge in the form of mass protests after the 2011 Duma elections, is responding with a series of laws intended to intimidate its civil-society opposition, if not stamp it out altogether.

“Transforming the Arab World’s Protection-Racket Politics” by Daniel Brumberg
The Arab world’s old autocracies survived by manipulating the sharp identity conflicts in their societies. The division and distrust that this style of rule generated is now making it especially difficult to carry out the kind of pact-making often crucial to successful democratic transitions.

“Algeria versus the Arab Spring” by Frédéric Volpi
Not only did the Algerian regime survive the “Arab Spring,” it hardly deviated from its normal methods of authoritarian governance—patronage, pseudodemocratization, and effective use of the security apparatus.

“Bahrain’s Decade of Discontent” by Frederic Wehrey
When this small island kingdom in the Gulf joined the wider Arab world’s political upheavals in March 2011, it was a reaction to regional events, but also a reflection of internal problems that had been festering for a decade.

“Jordan: The Ruse of Reform” by Sean L. Yom
The Hashemite monarchy still fails to understand the challenges that threaten Jordan’s political order. The old playbook of limited, manipulated reform is no longer enough, but key players fail to realize it.

Kenya’s 2013 Elections
I. “Choosing Peace over Democracy” by James D. Long, Karuti Kanyinga, Karen E. Ferree, and Clark Gibson
In March 2013, Kenyans took to the polls in what turned out to be another disputed election. Why did the peace hold this time, unlike in 2007, and what are the implications for democracy in Kenya?

II. “Technology Is Not Democracy” by Joel D. Barkan
In an effort to avoid repeating the 2007 electoral debacle, Kenya’s election commission turned to technology, but its high-tech voter-registration and vote-count processes fell short. Its experience has important lessons both for emerging democracies and for international donors.

Democratization
The October 2013 (Vol. 20, no. 5) Democratization is a special issue on “Religiously Oriented Parties and Democratization.”

“Introduction: Religiously Oriented Parties and Democratization” by Luca Ozzano and Francesco Cavatorta

“The Many Faces of the Political God: A Typology of Religiously Oriented Parties” by Luca Ozzano

“The Perils of Polarization and Religious Parties: The Democratic Challenges of Political Fragmentation in Israel and Turkey” by Sultan Tepe

“Moderation through Exclusion? The Journey of the Tunisian Ennahda from Fundamentalist to Conservative Party” by Francesco Cavatorta and Fabio Merone

“Reframing the MODIFICATION Thesis. Two Religious Parties and Indian Democracy: the Jana Sangh and the BJP between Hindutva Radicalism and Coalition Politics” by Christophe Jaffrelot

“Religious Parties in Chile: the Christian Democratic Party and the Independent Democratic Union” by Juan Pablo Luna, Felipe Monestier, and Fernando Rosenblatt

“Religion and Democratization in Northern Ireland: Is Religion actually Ethnicity in Disguise?” by Eoin O’Malley and Dawn Walsh

The August 2013 (Vol. 20, no. 4) Democratization features articles on democracy promotion in eastern Europe, elections in Tanzania and Uganda, measuring democracy, regime type and the impact of democracy assistance, institutional factors and party systems in new democracies, and the influence of external actors on democratization.

“Linkages and the Promotion of Democracy: the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood” by Gwendolyn Sasse

“Elections and Landmark Policies in Tanzania and Uganda” by Anne Mette Kjær and Ole Therkildsen

“Bringing Direct Democracy Back In: Toward a Three-Dimensional Measure of Democracy” by David Altman

“Does Regime Type Matter for the Impact of Democracy Aid on Democracy?” by Agnes Cornell

“Institutional Factors Affecting Party Systems in New Democracies: Endogenous or Exogenous Predictors?” by Mazen Hassan

“When One Might not See the Wood for the Trees: the ‘Historical Turn’ in Democratization Studies, Critical Junctures, and Cross-Case
New Research

Comparisons” by Jørgen Møller

“When Can External Actors Influence Democratization? Leverage, Linkages, and Gatekeeper Elites” by Jakob Tolstrup

“Inclusive Institutions and Stability of Transition toward Democracy in Post–Civil War States” by Madhav Joshi

“Remembering Violence: the Role of Apology and Dialogue in Turkey’s Democratization Process” by Mneesha Gellman

SELECTED JOURNAL ARTICLES ON DEMOCRACY

This section features selected articles on democracy that appeared in journals received by the NED’s Democracy Resource Center, June 1–June 1, 2013.

_African Affairs, Vol. 111, no. 449, October 2013_

“The Volatility of a Half-Cooked Bouillabaisse: Rebel–Military Integration and Conflict Dynamics in the Eastern DRC” by Maria Eriksson Baaz and Judith Verweijen

“Resource Curse or Resource Disease? Oil in Ghana” by Dominik Kopitiski, Andrzej Polus, and Wojciech Tycholiz

“Continuity and Change in Senegalese Party Politics: Lessons from the 2012 Elections” by Danielle Resnick

_African Affairs, Vol. 111, no. 448, July 2013_

“The Roots of Resilience: Exploring Popular Support for African Traditional Authorities” by Carolyn Logan

“Democratic Revolutionaries or Pocketbook Protesters? The Roots of the 2009–2010 Uprisings in Niger” by Lisa Mueller

“From Warlords to Freedom Fighters: Political Violence and State Formation in Umbumbulu, South Africa” by Sarah M. Mathis

*American Political Science Review, Vol. 107, no. 3, August 2013_

“Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War” by Sarah Elizabeth Parkinson

“Quality of Government: Toward a More Complex Definition” by Marcus Agnafors

“Quality Over Quantity: Amici Influence and Judicial Decision Making” by Janet M. Box-Steppensmeier, Dino P. Christenson, and Matthew P. Hitt

“Empowering Women through Development Aid: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan” by Andrew Beath, Fotini Christia, Ruben Enikolopov

“Perils or Promise of Ethnic Integration? Evidence from a Hard Case in Burundi” by Cyrus Samii

“The Simplescence of Democratic Revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” by Mark R. Beissinger

_Communist and Post–Communist Studies, Vol. 46, no. 3, September 2013_

“Continuity and Change in Russia’s Policy toward Central and Eastern Europe” by Yury E. Fedorov

“The Semblance of Democratic Revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” by Mark R. Beissinger

_Comparsive Political Studies, Vol. 46, no. 10, October 2013_

“The Behavioral Foundations of Social Politics: Evidence from Surveys and a Laboratory Democracy” by Benjamin Barber IV, Pablo Beramendi, and Erik Wibbels

“The Varying Political Toll of Concerns About Corruption in Good Versus Bad Economic Times” by Elizabeth J. Zechmeister and Daniel Zizumbo-Colunga

“Mainstream or Niche? Vote-Seeking Incentives and the Programmatic Strategies of Political Parties” by Thomas M. Meyer and Markus Wagner

“Violence Against Civilians in the Second Intifada: The Moderating Effect of Armed Group Structure on Opportunistic Violence” by Devorah Manekin

_Comparitive Political Studies, Vol. 46, no. 9, September 2013_

“Vote Buying With Multiple Distributive Goods” by Michael Albertus

_Comparitive Political Studies, Vol. 46, no. 8, August 2013_

“Competitiveness, Partisanship, and Subnational Protest in Argentina” by Moisés Arce and Jorge Mangonnet


“Attitude Variability Among Latin American Publics: How Party System Structuration Affects Left/Right Ideology” by Imke Harbers, Catherine E. de Vries, and Marco R. Steenbergen

“Campaign Spending in Proportional Electoral Systems: Incumbents Versus Challengers Revisited” by Joel W. Johnson

_Comparitive Political Studies, Vol. 46, no. 7, July 2013_

“Engendering Politics: The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women’s Political Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa” by Tiffany D. Barnes and Stephanie M. Burchard

“Catchall or Catch and Release? The Electoral Consequences of Social Democratic Parties’ March to the Middle in Western Europe” by Johannes Karreth, Jonathan T. Polk, and Christopher S. Allen

“When Parties Meet Voters: Assessing Political Linkages Through Partisan Networks and Distributive Expectations in Argentina and Chile” by Ernesto Calvo and Maria Victoria Murillo

Comparative Politics, Vol. 46, no. 1, October 2013
“The Left and Minority Representation: The Success of General Strikes in Western Europe, 1980–2009” by Kerstin Hamann, Alison Johnston, and John Kelly

“Subnational Islamization through Secular Parties: Comparing Shari’a Politics in Two Indonesian Provinces” by Michael Buehler

Comparative Politics, Vol. 45, no. 4, July 2013
“Regime Legacies and Levels of Democracy: Evidence from Latin America” by Aníbal Pérez-Liñán and Scott Mainwaring

“E lecting Extremists? Party Primaries and Legislative Candidates in Mexico” by Kathleen Bruhn

“Lacking Information or Condoning Corruption? When Will Voters Support Corrupt Politicians?” by Matthew S. Winters and Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro

“Political Representation in Microstates: The Cases of St. Kitts and Nevis, Seychelles, and Palau” by Wouter Veenendaal

“Perspectives on the Power and Persistence of States in Africa and Beyond” by Erin Hern

Demokratizatsiya, Vol. 21, no. 3, Summer 2013
“Patterns of Electoral Contestation in Russian Regional Assemblies: Between ‘Competitive’ and ‘Hegemonic’ Authoritarianism” by Petr Panov and Cameron Ross

“Party System Institutionalization in Ukraine” by Olena Rybiy

“The Negative Consequences of Proportional Representation in Ukraine” by Serhij Vasylychenko

European Politics, Vol. 29, no. 2, May 2013
“State Functions and Media Politics: Case Study on Print Media in Slovenia” by Nikolai Genov

International Political Science Review, Vol. 34, no. 5, November 2013
“The Internet: A New Route to Good Governance” by Susan Khazaeli and Daniel Stockemer

“Why Do People Vote? Rationality or Emotion” by Ching-Hsing Wang

“A Right-to-Left Policy Switch? An Analysis of the Honduran Case under Manuel Zelaya” by Clayton M. Cunha Filho, André Luiz Coelho, and Fidel I. Pérez Flores

“Repression, Political Threats, and Survival under Autocracy” by Abel Escribá-Folch

“Voting Differently across Electoral Arenas: Empirical Implications from a Decentralized Democracy” by Pedro Riera

International Political Science Review, Vol. 34, no. 4, September 2013
“Is Corruption an Enemy of Civil Society? The Case of Central and Eastern Europe” by Patty Zakaria

“Opening Pandora’s Box? Inclusive Institutions and the Onset of Internal Conflict in Oil-Rich Countries” by Tim Wegenast

“Changing the Rules of the Game: Determinants of Successful Electoral System Change in Central and Eastern Europe” by Philipp Harfst

“Second Time Around: Ex-Combatants at the Polls in Liberia” by Johanna Söderström

Middle East Journal, Vol. 67, no. 3, Summer 2013
“Iran’s Basij: Membership in a Militant Islamist Organization” by Ashon Ostovar

“University under Siege: The Case of the Professors’ Basij Organization” by Saeid Golkar

Middle East Policy, Vol. 20, no. 3, Fall 2013
“Power Sharing in Syria: Lessons from Lebanon’s Taif Experience” by Stephan Rosiny

“Hamas and the Arab Spring: Strategic Shifts?” by Beverley Milton-Edwards

“The Rise of Militant Salafism in Azerbaijan and Its Regional Implications” by Emil Souleimanov and Maya Ehrmann

Middle East Policy, Vol. 20, no. 2, Summer 2013
“Order, Freedom and Chaos: Sovereignties in Syria” by George Abu Ahmad

“Creating Democrats? Testing the Arab Spring” by Ashley Barnes

“Transition in the Middle East: New Arab Realities and Iran” by Mahmood Sariolghalam

Party Politics, Vol. 19, no. 6, November 2013
“Analysing Multiparty Competition in Plurality Rule Elections” by Patrick Dunleavy and Rekha Diwakar

“Have the Cake and Eat It: The Rational Voter in Africa” by Staffan I Lindberg

Party Politics, Vol. 19, no. 5, September 2013
“Political Parties, Independents and the Electoral Market in sub-Saharan Africa” by John Ishiyama, Anna Batia, and Angela Sortor
New Research

“Measuring Vertical Integration in Parties with Multi-Level Systems Data” by Lori Thorlakson

“Do Electoral Coalitions Facilitate Democratic Consolidation in Africa?” by Danielle Resnick

“Beyond Outbidding? Ethnic Party Strategies in Serbia” by Christina Isabel Zuber

Party Politics, Vol. 19, no. 4, July 2013

“The Fate of Intra-Party Democracy: Leadership Autonomy and Activist Influence in the Mass Party and the Cartel Party” by Karl Loxbo

“The Politicization of Indigenous Identities in Peru” by Christopher Raymond and Moisés Arce

“How Things Fall Apart: Candidate Selection and the Cohesion of Dominant Parties in South Africa and Namibia” by Shane Mac Giollaibhui

SELECTED NEW BOOKS ON DEMOCRACY

ADVANCED DEMOCRACIES


Congress and the Politics of Problem Solving.


ASIA


EASTERN EUROPE AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION


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Executive Editors

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Benjamin Smith is an associate professor of political science at the University of Florida. His research focuses on ethnic conflict, regime change, and the politics of resource wealth. His first book, Hard Times in the Land of Plenty: Oil Politics in Iran and Indonesia, was published in 2007 by Cornell University Press, and his articles have appeared in World Politics, the American Journal of Political Science, Studies in Comparative International Development, the Journal of International Affairs, and other journals and edited volumes. Dr. Smith is currently working on a book exploring the long-term factors that shape the success of separatist movements.

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Kate Baldwin is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Florida. She studies state-building, clientelism, and the political economy of development with a regional focus on sub-Saharan Africa. Her current research projects seek to understand the political consequences of involving non-state actors, such as traditional chiefs and non-governmental organizations, in the provision of goods and services.

Michael H. Bernhard is the inaugural holder of the Raymond and Miriam Ehrlich Eminent Scholar Chair in Political Science at the University of Florida. His work centers on questions of democratization and development both globally and in the context of Europe. Among the issues that have figured prominently in his research agenda are the role of civil society in democratization, institutional choice in new democracies, the political economy of democratic survival, and the legacy of extreme forms of dictatorship.

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Bryon Moraski is an associate professor of political science at the University of Florida. His research considers the politics of institutional choice, institutional development, and the influence of short-term electoral incentives on long-term political trajectories. His first book, Elections by Design: Parties and Patronage in Russia's Regions (Northern Illinois University Press, 2006) explores the origins of Russia’s sub-national legislative electoral systems. He has published numerous book chapters and articles, including works in The American Journal of Political Science, Government and Opposition, and the Journal of Politics. He is currently completing a co-authored book manuscript with William Reisinger (University of Iowa) that examines the links between federal elections and gubernatorial (s)election in Russia and their influence on the country's post-Soviet trajectory.
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Philip Williams is the director of the Center for Latin American Studies and a professor of political science and Latin American Studies at the University of Florida. He also co-directs the Latin American Immigrants in the New South project. His research interests include religion and politics, transnational migration, democratization, social movements, and civil-military relations. His latest book, *A Place to Be: Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican Immigrants in Florida’s New Destinations*, was published by Rutgers University Press in 2009 and his articles have appeared in numerous academic journals, including *Comparative Politics*, *Latin American Perspectives*, *Latin Studies*, and the *Journal of Latin American Studies*.

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Managing Editor
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