

Regime types and Democratization

Andrew Eggers

LSE

Day 4, Session 1, 9 January 2014

This session:

- ▶ What is a democracy? Non-democracy?
- ▶ What determines regime types?
- ▶ Why do non-democracies hold elections? Do they matter?



Defining regimes

- Minimalist definitions

- Broader definitions

Elections in non-democracies

Theories of democratization

- Cultural explanations

- Economic theories

- Distributional conflict: Recent work

Authoritarian outliers

Conclusion

Minimalist definitions of democracy



- ▶ Joseph Schumpeter (1942) *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*: democracy is “the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote”

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A corresponding measure: Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi (2000)’s binary classification – democracy if

- ▶ the chief executive is elected
- ▶ the legislature is elected
- ▶ there is more than one party competing in elections
- ▶ an alternation in power under identical electoral rules has taken place



Issues with a minimalist definition

- ▶ Awkward cases: South Africa, Japan, Botswana?
- ▶ Too coarse:
 - ▶ Possibly important variation within the binary categories in some of the preconditions for effective competition (e.g. civil liberties)
 - ▶ “Ability to vote a bad government out of office” may be better represented by a more continuous scale

A continuous measure of democracy/autocracy



The Polity IV Project ([link](#)) “envisions a spectrum of governing authority that spans from fully institutionalized autocracies through mixed, or incoherent, authority regimes (termed ‘anocracies’) to fully institutionalized democracies”

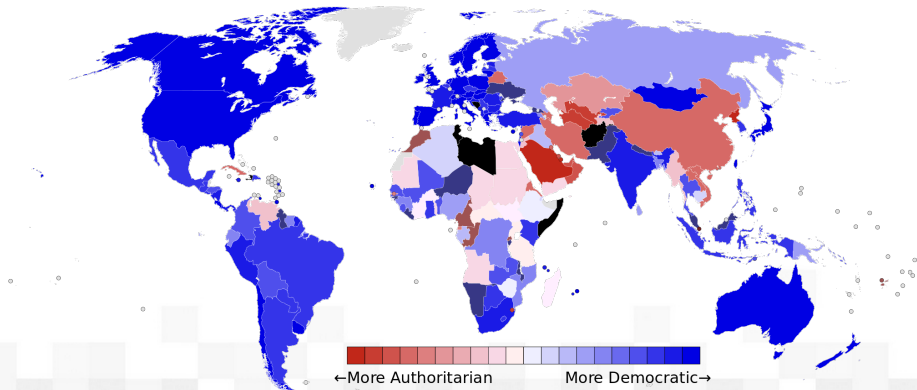
A continuous measure of democracy/autocracy



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Still focused on elections, but broader consideration of competitiveness, openness, level of participation (“polity” score is sum of several discrete measures)

Map: Polity IV in 2011



Source: Wikipedia

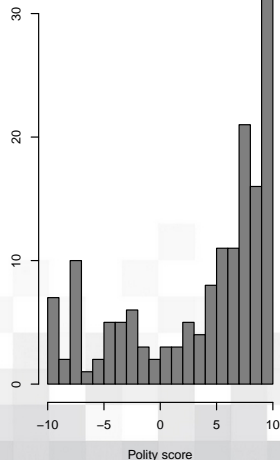
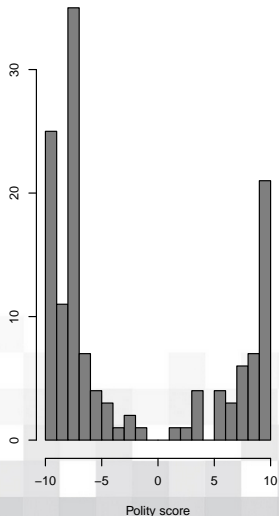
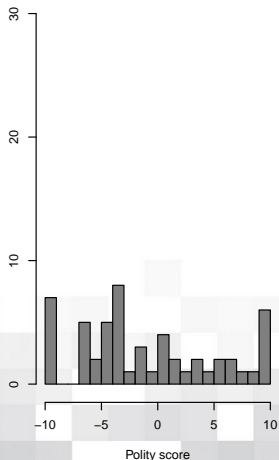
Histogram: Polity IV at three points in time

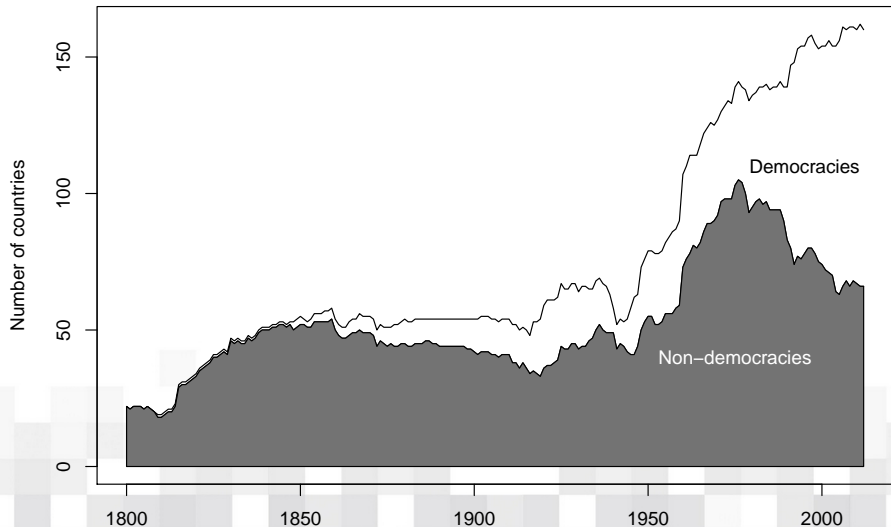


1900

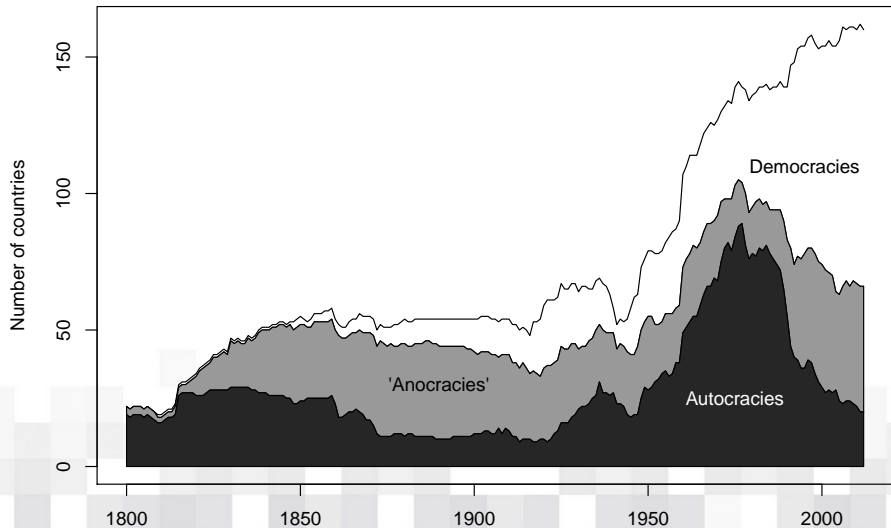
1980

2012

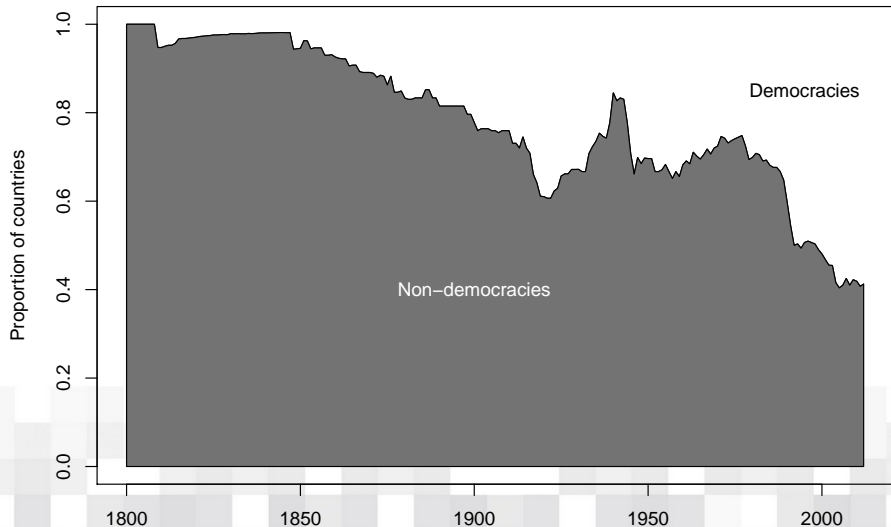


Time series: Democracy (≥ 6) vs non

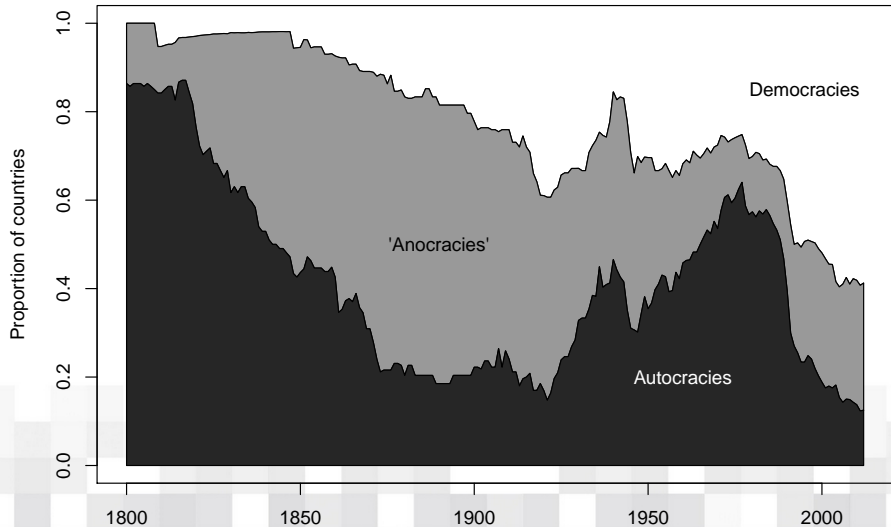
Time series: Democracy, anocracy, and autocracy



Time series: proportions (1)



Time series: proportions (2)





Questions from looking at Polity IV data

- ▶ Why has democracy become dominant?
- ▶ Will the whole world be democratic?
- ▶ What is “anocracy” and what explains its resurgence?



Møller and Skaaning (2013)

Three definitions of democracy:

- ▶ **Minimalist** (Schumpeter): competition for power via free elections
- ▶ **“Polyarchy”** (Dahl): free elections plus civil liberties
- ▶ **Liberal democracy** (O’Donnell): Free elections, civil liberties, rule of law



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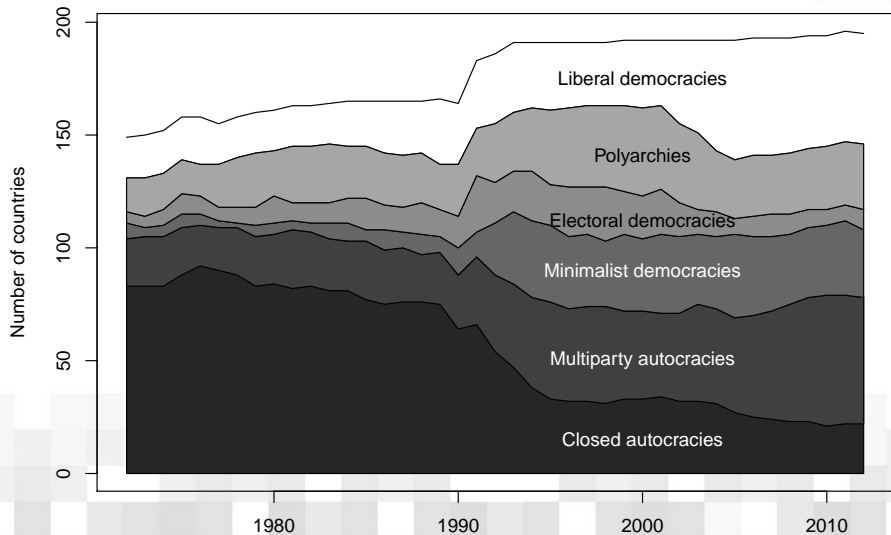
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Authors make two observations:

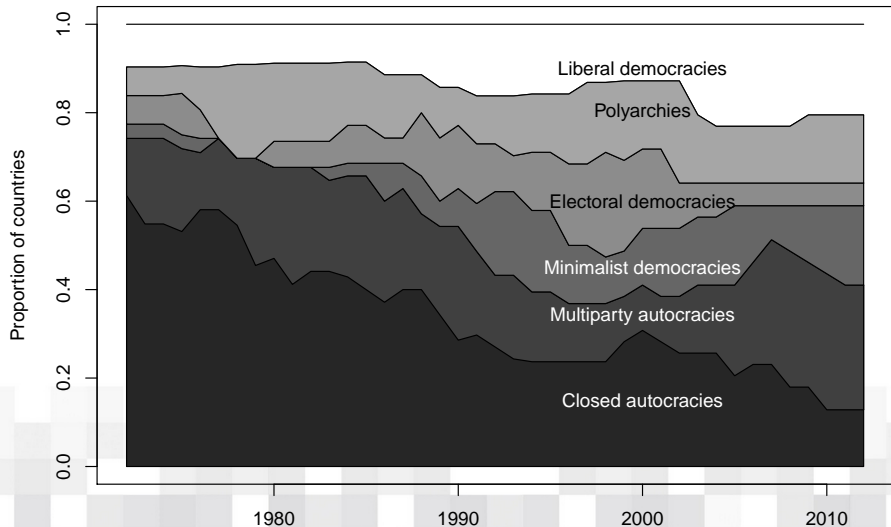
- ▶ **Conceptual:** Widely-used definitions of democracy are “nested”
- ▶ **Empirical:** “Democratic sequencing”
 - ▶ Countries with civil liberties tend to have free elections (but not necessarily the reverse)
 - ▶ Countries with rule of law tend to have civil liberties and free elections (but not necessarily the reverse)

Interesting debate about difference from historical experience, prescriptions for democracy promotion. (See Møller and Skanning, “Regime Types and Democratic Sequencing”.)

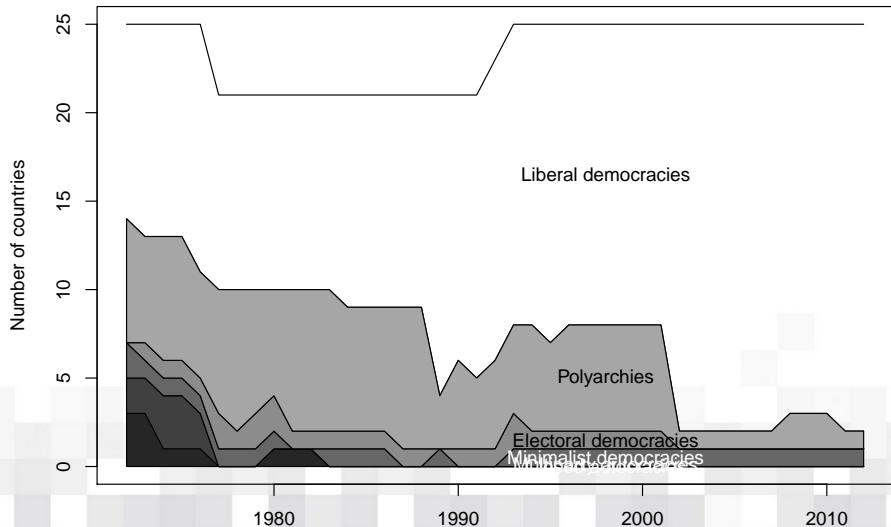
Whole world, 1972-2012



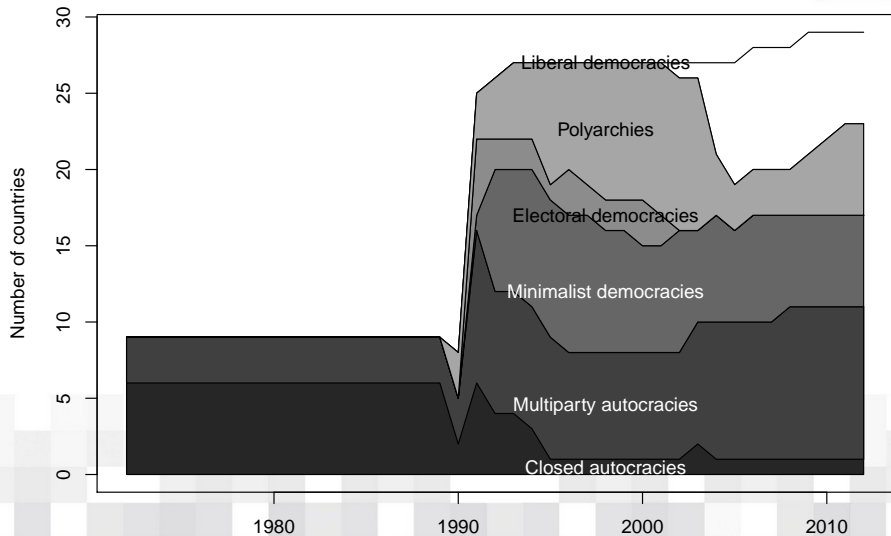
Whole world (proportions), 1972-2012



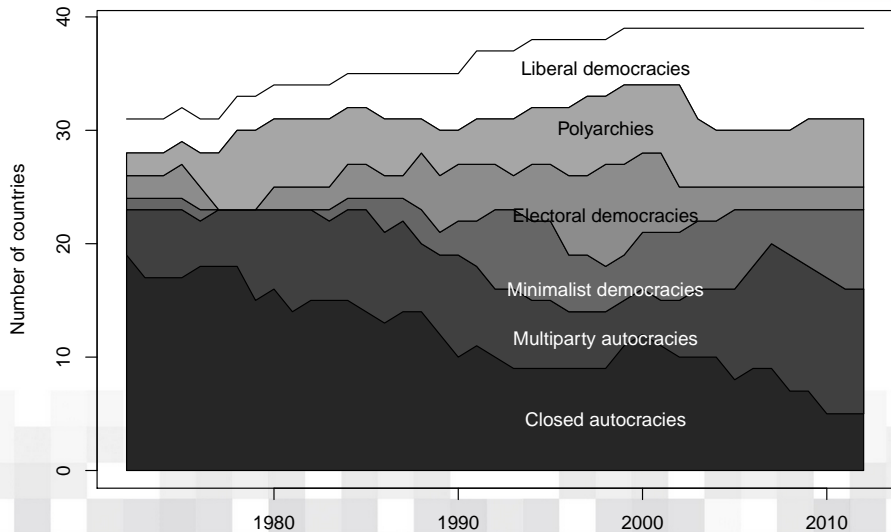
Western Europe, 1972-2012



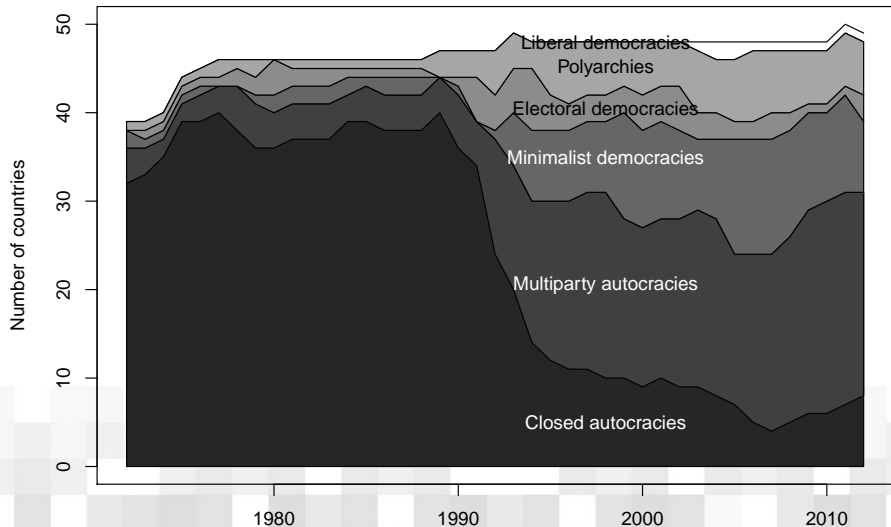
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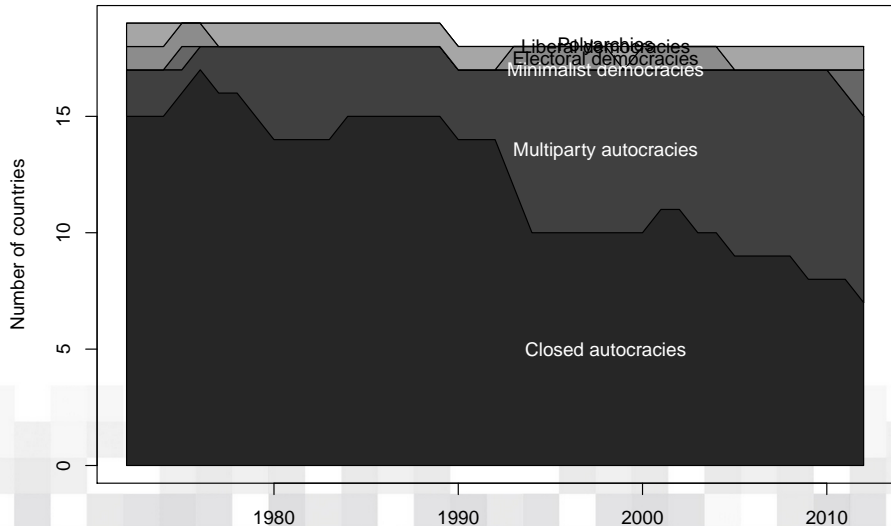
Asia-Pacific, 1972-2012



Sub-Saharan Africa, 1972-2012



Middle East and North Africa, 1972-2012



Questions from looking at Møller and Skaaning data



- ▶ Why has democracy become dominant? Will it continue to expand?
- ▶ Why is autocracy so persistent in Sub-Saharan Africa, MENA?
- ▶ What are multiparty autocracies?

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What makes these multiparty elections not “free and fair”?

- ▶ Electoral irregularities (fraud, violence, etc)
- ▶ Legal restrictions on opposition parties, jailing of opposition candidates
- ▶ Controls on media
- ▶ Aggressive manipulation of electoral rules (formula, apportionment, boundaries, etc)
- ▶ Aggressive use of clientelistic approaches to win support
- ▶ Co-optation of opposition

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Some of these tactics can be viewed as extreme versions of tactics used in any democracy (Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009).

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- ▶ To **increase legitimacy**
 - ▶ Legitimacy of regime (external, internal audience)
 - ▶ Legitimacy of power allocation within ruling party/coalition (internal audience)
- ▶ To **credibly share power** (i.e. Acemoglu-Robinson story) (Boix and Svobik, 2013)

See Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) for more extensive discussion.

When dictators lose elections



Sometimes the ruling party loses an election in an authoritarian regime!
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- ▶ By Schumpeterian definition: it was **actually** a democracy
- ▶ By broader (e.g. Dahl) definitions: not democracy until elections become free & fair

Debate exists about whether holding elections makes dictators more or less secure.

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Culture and democracy



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Culture and democracy



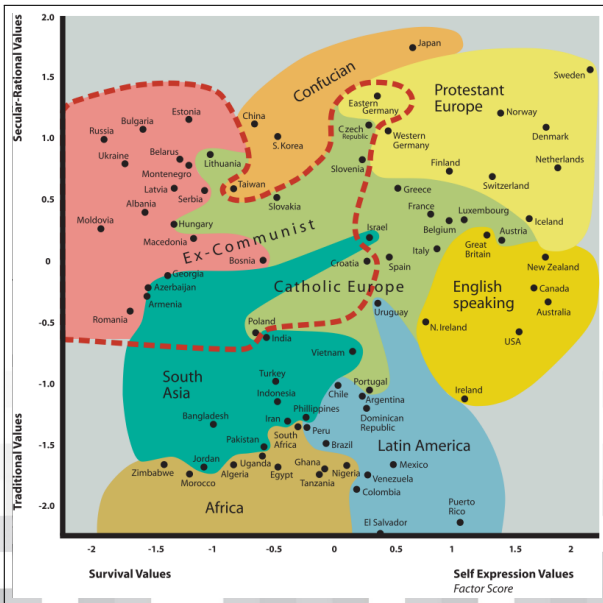
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 - ▶ combination of active and passive orientations toward government
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- ▶ **World Values Survey** (Inglehart, Welzel) since 1981 collecting data on people’s values and beliefs in about **100** countries.

WVS map of the world



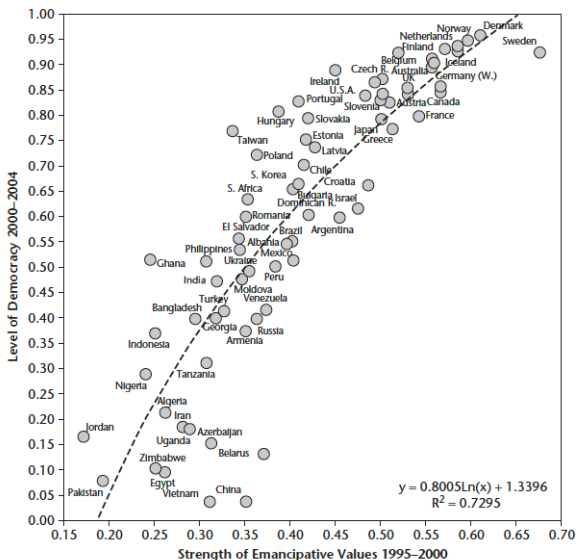
Congruence thesis



Congruence theory argues that, in order to be stable, the authority patterns characterizing a country's political system must be consistent with the people's prevailing authority beliefs.

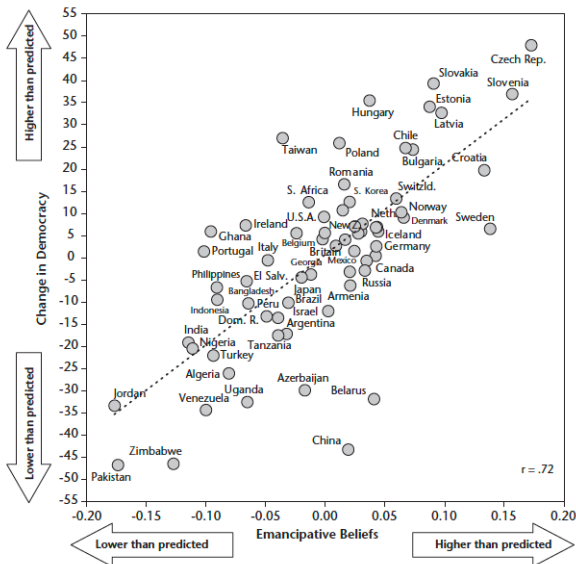
Welzel and Inglehart, page 134.

Attitudes and democracy



- ▶ **Emancipative values:** composite of 14 WVS questions on gender equality, tolerance, autonomy, and participation
- ▶ **Level of democracy:** avg of four indices (e.g. Freedom House)

Causal?



- ▶ **x-axis:** emancipative values around 1990, controlling for level of democracy 1984-1988
- ▶ **y-axis:** change in democracy index, 1984-1988 → 2000-2004

Modernization theory



In brief: Economic development produces social changes favorable to democracy.

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Perhaps the most common generalization linking political systems to other aspects of society has been that democracy is related to the state of economic development. The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy ... A larger middle class tempers conflict by rewarding moderate and democratic parties and penalizing extremist groups.

Seymour M. Lipset (1960) *Political Man*

Modernization theory (2)



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	Traditional society	Modern society
Agricultural sector	Large	Small
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Urban middle class	Small	Large

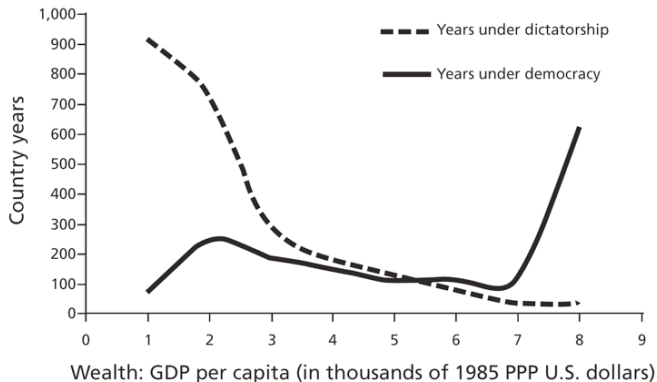
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Implies:	Dictatorship	Democracy

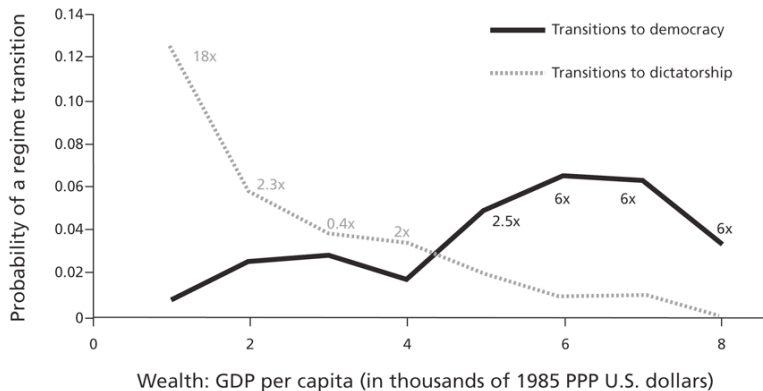
Development and democracy: evidence (1)



Source: Data are from Przeworski et al. (2000).

Note: The figure plots the number of years that all countries (country years) have lived under democracy or dictatorship at different levels of wealth.

Development and democracy: evidence (1)



Source: Data are from Przeworski et al. (2000).

Note: The numbers in the figure indicate how many times more likely it is for a country to transition one way or another. For example, the gray "2x" indicates that a country is twice as likely to transition to dictatorship as transition to democracy when its GDP per capita is \$4,000.

Democracy, autocracy and distribution



General claim: Autocracy benefits a small group; democratization is a way for excluded groups to get more.

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A common formulation of the more specific claim:

- ▶ The poor want more redistribution than the rich do (Meltzer-Richard model)
- ▶ In autocracy, policy reflects the preferences of the rich (low redistribution)
- ▶ In democracy, policy reflects the preferences of the poor (high redistribution)

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Democracy as a way to **lock in** pro-majority/pro-poor policies.

Democracy as a commitment device



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Conventional view: Democracy came about because revolutionaries wanted democracy.

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Ace-Rob view: Democracy came about because revolutionaries wanted *redistribution*, and would accept **power** but not **promises**.

Commitment problem?



COSMOPOLITAN

SEX/LOVE : HAIR/BEAUTY : CELEBS/STYLE : FOOD/COCKTAILS : SECRETS/ADVICE

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Quiz: Are You a Closet Commitment-Phobe?


Are you forever a free agent? Take this quiz to find out.

BY MOLLY FAHNER

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Are You a Closet Commitment-Phobe?

By Molly Fahner

A photograph of a young man and woman in a close embrace, looking at each other affectionately. The woman is on the left, wearing a dark patterned top, and the man is on the right, wearing a light-colored shirt. They are outdoors against a blue sky with light clouds.

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Cosmo: *Unwillingness to commit.*

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Cosmo: *Unwillingness* to commit. **GV478E:** *Inability* to commit.

Commitment problems



A commitment problem: *A* has a commitment problem (or a credibility problem) when *A* wants to promise/commit to a certain course of action but other player(s) do not believe *A* will take this course of action, resulting in lower payoffs for *A*.

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Static, normal-form representation of a commitment problem:

		Player B	
		Left	Right
Player A	Up	0,1	2,2
	Down	1,0	3,-1

Commitment problems: examples



- ▶ **Relationships:** A man wants to have children with a woman. The woman wants this if the man will be faithful, but not otherwise. The woman knows the man prefers not to be faithful.

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- ▶ **Revolutionary threat:** An autocrat wants to maintain power with the fewest possible concessions. The working class manages to organize a revolt and is poised to topple the regime. They will go home if the autocrat gives them a stream of benefits into the future, but they know the autocrat will renege on his promise once the crisis has passed.

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In each case, the first player (man, politician, autocrat) would do better if he could **tie his hands** (be faithful, not inflate, commit to future redistribution).

Commitment devices: examples



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Commitment devices: examples

- ▶ **Relationships:** Marriage (ceremony, contractual/legal obligations)
- ▶ **Monetary policy:** Delegation to independent central bank
- ▶ **Revolutionary threat:** Democratization (i.e. delegation to voters)

If successful, the commitment device either changes future payoffs or transfers authority such that a promise becomes credible.

For more, see Dixit and Nalebuff *Thinking Strategically*.

Distributional conflict and democracy determinants



- ▶ **Inequality:** Subtle relationship.
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- ▶ **Collective action/coordination:** what determines the threat of revolution?

Distributional conflict: evidence

Do democracies redistribute more? Mulligan, Gil, Sala-i-Martin (2004, JEP) say no, based on cross-country regressions.

Table 1
Democracy and Spending Policy across Countries

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Dependent variable:</i> <i>(each is a percentage of GDP)</i>		<i>Government</i> <i>consumption,</i> <i>1960–1990</i>	<i>Education</i> <i>spending,</i> <i>1980–1990</i>	<i>Social spending</i>	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	<i>Pension</i>	<i>Nonpension</i>	
Democracy index, 1960–1990	-1.27 (2.14)	1.57 (1.99)	0.42 (0.52)	-0.08 (0.44)	0.72 (0.63)	
Communist dummy	-0.87 (1.75)	-0.45 (1.66)	1.09 (0.45)	0.82 (0.40)	1.62 (0.60)	
British legal origin	2.80 (1.28)	2.91 (1.17)	0.53 (0.31)	-0.35 (0.28)	-0.86 (0.40)	
Percentage of population aged 65+, 1960–1990	0.01 (0.25)	0.25 (0.23)	0.07 (0.06)	0.58 (0.05)	0.49 (0.07)	
Log(population)/10, 1960–1990	-9.77 (2.54)	-8.16 (3.36)	-2.28 (0.86)	-0.24 (0.76)	0.02 (1.08)	
Real GDP per capita, 1960–1989 average, log	-2.96 (0.75)	-4.58 (0.76)	-0.06 (0.29)			
Share of value added from agriculture, 1960–1990			-3.38 (1.60)	-1.95 (0.93)	-2.01 (1.35)	
Military spending, percentage of GDP		0.60 (0.14)				
Adj-R-squared	.27	.38	.25	.78	.65	
Countries	131	125	110	110	102	

Notes: Ordinary least squares standard errors in parenthesis. All regressions include a constant term (not shown).



Distributional conflict: evidence (2)

Are regime changes about distributional conflict? Haggard and Kaufman (2012) see a relatively small role in the “third wave” of democratization (1980-2000):

- ▶ About 56% of **transitions to democracy** could be viewed as distributive in nature
- ▶ About 63% of reversions (collapses of democracy) were non-distributive; even in high-inequality countries e.g. Pakistan, Ghana, Nigeria

But: Haggard and Kaufman (2012) confirm importance of crisis in precipitating regime changes.

Defining regimes

- Minimalist definitions
- Broader definitions

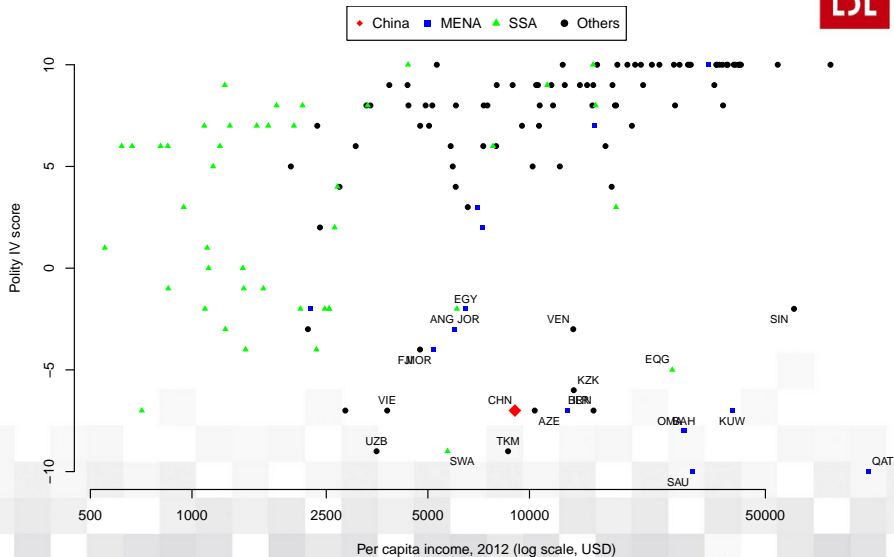
Elections in non-democracies

Theories of democratization

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- ▶ More likely, according to Diamond (2010):
 - ▶ Fear of Islamist takeover, given democratic opening (“one person, one vote, one time”)
 - ▶ “Resource curse” of rentier states: plenty of resources for buying off potential opposition; no need to offer political concessions.
“Not a single one of the 23 countries that derive most of their export earnings from oil and gas is a democracy today” (Diamond 2010, p. 98).



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- ▶ Other key factors?
 - ▶ Fast & steady economic growth
 - ▶ A “resource curse” emerging from huge trade surpluses, growth

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- ▶ “Authoritarian outliers” partly explained by regimes’ resources, idiosyncratic factors