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What the Democratization Literature Says—or Doesn't Say—About Postwar Democratization

Nancy Bermeo

Herodotus was probably right when he argued that wars make history, but whether and when wars make democracy remain open questions. The classics in the democratization literature are surprisingly reticent about the links between war and lasting democracy. Most of our theoretical literature on democratic transitions or democratic consolidation leaves the connection to war either wholly neglected or seriously undertheorized.

This is perplexing because so many new and renewed democracies emerge in the context of war. Of the seventy-three democracies founded after 1945 that still exist today, over half emerged either in the immediate aftermath of a war or as a means of bringing an ongoing war to an end. Table 1 shows how many electoral democracies emerged in a postwar setting.

The cases in Table 1 are electoral democracies—meaning that they are regimes in which leaders are selected in competitive elections. If we define democracy more strictly and consider only cases in which a full (or nearly full) range of individual liberties is provided, the pattern is the same. Half of all "free" regimes formed after World War II that are still in existence today were formed in the immediate aftermath of war (see Table 2).

The percentage of free regimes that were founded in postwar settings was as high ten years ago as it is today, so the existence of "postwar" democracies is far from new.[1] The subject of democratization after war is clearly worthy of close attention.

What do we currently know (or think we know) about how war affects democratization? What does the democratization literature teach us about building democracy in postwar settings? I sketch brief answers to both of these questions in the following sections. For the purposes of this article, my definition of *democracy* corresponds to the definition used most often in the canon of democratization literature: democracy "is a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable . . . by

Table 1 Current Electoral Democracies Formed After World War II

Democracies Formed in Peacetime	Democracies Formed After International War	Democracies Formed After Internal/International War	Democracies Formed After Internal War
Albania	Argentina	Bangladesh	Colombia
Armenia	Austria	Croatia	Costa Rica
Benin	Germany	Cyprus	Georgia
Bolivia	Greece	El Salvador	Indonesia
Botswana	Japan	Guatemala	Madagascar
Brazil	Panama	Guinea-Bissau	Mexico
Bulgaria	Portugal	India	Moldova
Chile		Israel	Niger
Czech Republic		Italy	Papua New Guinea
Ecuador		Mozambique	Paraguay
Estonia		Namibia	Philippines
Gambia		Nicaragua	Sierra Leone
Ghana		Russia	South Africa
Guyana		Slovenia	Sri Lanka
Honduras		South Korea	
Hungary		Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)	
Latvia			
Lithuania			
Malawi			
Mali			
Mauritius			
Mongolia			
Nepal			
Nigeria			
Peru			
Poland			
Romania			
Senegal			
Slovakia			
Spain			
Taiwan			
Thailand			
Turkey			
Ukraine			
Uruguay			
Venezuela			
Total: 36	7	16	14

% formed in peacetime context: 49
% formed in postwar context: 51
Total electoral democracies: 73

Source: Adrian Karatnycky, "The 2001 Freedom House Survey: Muslim Countries and the Democracy Gap," Journal of Democracy 13, no. 1 (January 2002): 108–109.

Notes: The list of electoral democracies comes from the 2001 Freedom House Survey. The peacetime versus postwar distinctions are based on whether the first free elections of the current electoral democracy were held in the aftermath of war. The outbreak of ultimately unsuccessful insurgencies after states established electoral democracies does not affect classification. Caribbean countries and countries with populations below 500,000 have been excluded.

Table 2 "Free" Regimes Formed After World War II

Democracies Formed in Peacetime	Democracies Formed After International War	Democracies Formed After Internal/International War	Democracies Formed After Internal War
Bolivia	Argentina	Croatia	Costa Rica
Botswana	Austria	Cyprus	Mexico
Bulgaria	Germany	El Salvador	Papua New Guinea
Chile	Greece	India	Philippines
Czech Republic	Japan	Israel	South Africa
Estonia	Panama	Italy	
Guyana		South Korea	
Hungary		Namibia	
Latvia		Portugal	
Lithuania		Slovenia	
Mali			
Mauritius			
Mongolia			
Poland			
Peru			
Romania			
Slovakia			
Spain			
Taiwan			
Thailand			
Uruguay			
Total: 21	6	10	5

% in peacetime: 50
% in wartime: 50
Total democracies: 42

Source: Adrian Karatnycky, "The 2001 Freedom House Survey: Muslim Countries and the Democracy Gap," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no.1 (January 2002): 108–109.

Notes: The term *free regimes* comes from Freedom House, which designates as free all those regimes whose ratings average 1–3 on a seven-point scale for political rights and civil liberties. Caribbean countries and countries with populations below 500,000 have been excluded.

citizens acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives."[2] Though I acknowledge that this is a minimalist version of a much more complex and multifaceted phenomenon, I focus on electoral democracy because it defines a politically important and numerically large subset of regimes.

Can War Be Good for Democracy?

The democratization literature portrays the association between war and the transition to democracy as broadly positive. Indeed, wars seem to be associated with democratic transitions whether the state in question is

vanquished, victorious, or simply a partner in an inconclusive struggle. It is ironic that a devastating defeat seems to be an especially propitious setting for a transition to be made. Yet several scholars have marshaled sound evidence in favor of this proposition. They remind us that "the great majority of historical examples of successful redemocratization . . . are ones in which warfare and conquest play an integral part"[3]; that conquest by a democratic power allows for the dismantling of problematic military and political institutions;[4] "that military failure contributed to the downfall or weakening of at least five authoritarian regimes between 1974 and 1989"[5]; and that "defeat in warfare" often precipitates the elite settlements that lasting democracy requires.[6] The defeats that lead "most readily" to a democratic regime change are the devastating ones in which "elites are thoroughly replaced."[7]

Authoritarian regimes that conduct a war successfully may be toppled too. Victory in wars against "subversion" can eliminate a dictatorship's raison d'être and provoke a crisis of legitimacy.[8] Surprisingly, elites who face neither victory nor defeat may still make the transition to democracy if their armed struggle appears to be both "costly and inconclusive."[9] Theorists insist that the elite compromise that democracy requires emerges when leaders recognize "that the next round of conflict is likely to visit disaster on all sides."[10] Even the "*specter* of civil war," rather than engagement in war per se, appears in the literature as an incentive to democratization.[11] We link wars and democracy when wars are lost, when they are won, and even when they are only feared. The association between wars and democracy seems important, but it is regrettably underspecified.

None of the authors cited above pretend to offer us any definitive statements about the effects of war, and none make the claim that the generalizations that they make about war always hold. In fact, Alfred Stepan explicitly states that democratization through conquest is now unlikely, and Samuel Huntington argues that wars played a greater role in the first half of the third wave than in the last. Happily, more recent literature offers insights on what makes one outcome more likely than another. Dietrich Reuschemeyer, Evelyne Stephens, and John Stephens remind us that the consequences of war are not "unambiguously positive" and that the "potential for rapid advances toward democracy" will only be realized "if subordinated classes have or can develop [strong] organizations" to push for more participation.[12] Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan underscore how the consequences of war are shaped by the nature of civil and political society. They wisely draw our attention to the fact that wars will have different impacts in different sorts of dictatorships. A defeat in war or a war-related collapse can lead to democracy

in authoritarian regimes "if civil and political society are available and demand an electoral path." They argue that, for totalitarian and sultanistic regimes, defeat in war will not produce democracy without external monitoring and, for totalitarian regimes, outright occupation. A regime transition brought on by a war of armed insurgency might produce democracy in either a post-authoritarian or a post-totalitarian context but only if democratic groups are successful in calling early elections.[13] By attributing the link between wars and the formation of democracy to popular organizations, political society, and the timing of elections, these authors lead us toward our second research question.

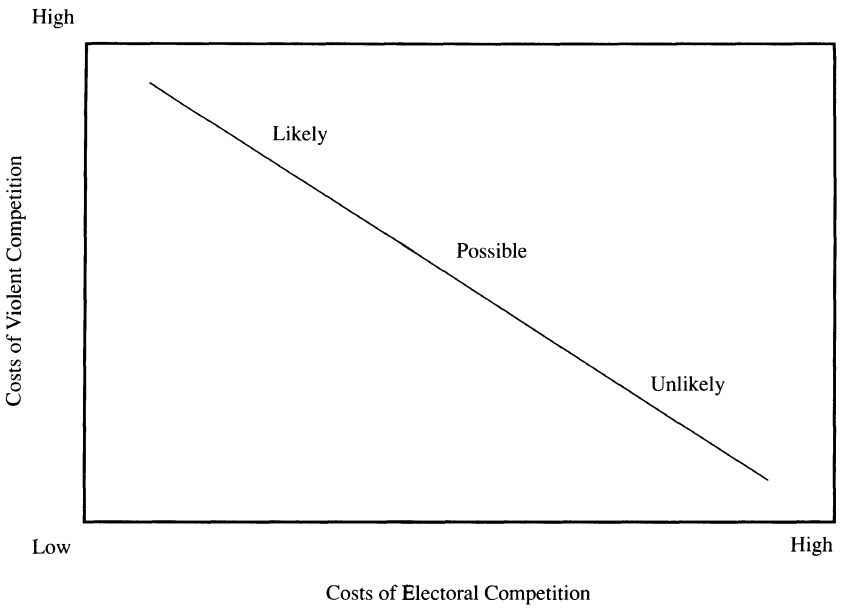
What Does the Construction of a Stable Postwar Democracy Require?

Elites in emerging, postwar democracies face a double challenge. On the one hand, they must raise the costs of violent competition. On the other hand, they must lower the costs of electoral competition. The probability of stable democracy is a function of both these processes and the many variables that drive them. The double challenge is depicted in Figure 1.

Raising the costs of violent competition means making the use of physical force undesirable and making coercive agents in the police and military subordinate to freely elected, civilian elites. In states emerging from internal wars, these challenges are especially difficult, but historical experience and the democratization literature in general give us several leads on how they might be met. None of these paths are easy to follow; indeed some may be impossible in certain settings.

There is widespread agreement that civilian control over military force is a necessary condition for consolidation. This control can be brought about in a variety of ways, ranging from occupation by a democratic power (as in Germany and Japan) to the outright dismantling of the national armed forces (as in Costa Rica). For the many countries in which these options are not available, the literature offers quite specific recommendations: (1) purge or retire any officer who is potentially disloyal,[14] (2) punish coup-makers ruthlessly, (3) clarify the chain of command, (4) reduce the size of the military, but use the money saved to improve the living conditions of the forces that remain, (5) invest in modern hardware and technology and reorient armed forces to military missions, (6) reduce the number of troops located near the capital and raise the number in border and remote areas, and, finally, (7) raise the status of the "reformed" military through public ceremonies and public identification.[15]

Figure 1 The Likelihood of Stable Democracy



Military forces are the ultimate "veto players" in a new democracy.[16] Thus, the task of keeping them in the barracks should be paramount in the minds of civilian leaders. Yet raising the costs of violent competition requires measures that extend beyond changes in the military as an institution. The perpetrators of violence in troubled democracies often come from outside the official armed forces. Democratic elites must make every effort to neutralize violent groups of all sorts. Two means of neutralization are essential.

First, the state must ensure that its police and judiciary take swift action against individuals who engage in political violence—regardless of ideology or social identity. If the police and the judiciary fail to neutralize violent actors through jail sentences, they provide compelling rationales for counterviolence and further lawlessness. The breakdown of democracy in Germany and Italy in the aftermath of World War I began with politicized police forces and weak judiciaries who were loath to punish political hooliganism. In contemporary Africa, "the judiciary is critical to the survival of the civil and political rights" that constitute a new democracy's "most tangible gains."[17] In a postwar setting in which citizens still have access to arms, the state must show that the costs of political violence are high and universal.

Second, elected officials must distance themselves from the purveyors of violence. Historically, politicians have often failed to condemn violence perpetrated by groups who locate themselves on the same end of the political spectrum or who act against the politician's own political enemies. This failure exaggerates the image of the violent group's support, sows panic in the minds of enemy groups, provides another rationale for counterviolence, and contributes to the likelihood of military intervention. Politicians who remain silent in an effort to maintain or expand their vote base should be made to realize that their actions jeopardize voting itself.

The state controls most of the costs of violence, but at least two forces outside the state can affect the costs of violence too. Groups in civil society can raise the costs of violent competition through defensive but lawful mass mobilizations. Coup coalitions do not act unless they believe that they have civilian support, and public actions that support democratic rather than rebel leaders can affect the calculations of violent competitors.[18] The power of popular resistance has been illustrated in a wide variety of cases—from the antidemocratic coup attempt in Moscow in 1991 to the anti–Euskadi Ta Azkatasuna (ETA—the Basque separatist movement) marches in Spain and the Basque country today.

A second set of forces that can raise the costs of violence comes from the international arena. International peacekeeping forces are an obvious example, but international civil society can play an important role too, whether embodied in electoral monitoring commissions, human rights groups, or a free press.[19] The costs of violence are raised where autonomous forces can bear witness. Democracies that emerge in postwar settings might have an advantage in this regard, as the recent wars may have already attracted international forces that can be marshaled to the cause of democracy.

Lowering the costs of electoral competition, like raising the costs of violence, requires a broad range of actions in several spheres. Elections are easily idealized as arenas in which conflicts are resolved, but they can exacerbate conflicts as well. They can be triggers for the breakdown of democracy (as in Brazil in 1964). They can provoke massive violence (as in Algeria in 1992) and even civil wars (as in Costa Rica in 1948 and, more recently, in Yugoslavia). All fair elections involve elements of uncertainty, but if competitors become convinced that they will be ruined by an opposition victory, the uncertainties of democracy will prove intolerable and they will attempt to organize a coup coalition to either preempt or overturn the electoral process. In a situation where electoral opponents have fought a civil war, democratizers must make sure that elections are not all-or-nothing propositions. The costs of electoral loss

must be made tolerable or actors may resort to previous behaviors. How can the costs of electoral competition be lowered? The solutions lie with political elites, political institutions, and civil society.

Much of the democratization literature focuses on the merits of elite pacts or elite settlements.[20] Pacts "are agreements between contending elites which define the rules of governance on the basis of mutual guarantees for the 'vital interests' of those involved."[21] Elite settlements are events in which "elite factions suddenly and deliberately . . . negotiate compromises on their most basic disagreements" and embrace the "norm of restrained partisanship."[22] Both pacts and settlements drive down the costs of electoral competition by limiting its risks. Historically, both pacts and settlements have been associated with wars; the English civil wars, the Colombian *violencia* and the lasting legacy of the civil war in Spain all resulted in pacts or settlements that were crucial to the founding of durable democracies. These links are good news for democratizers in postwar settings. Yet these elite agreements are also mixed blessings, as they are usually restrictive. Venezuela's founding pact restricted the range of issues that electoral competition could resolve. Colombia's founding pact restricted electoral competition to the two dominant parties. Costa Rica's elite settlement banned the Communist Party and restricted the franchise. Pacts may make democracies more durable, but they also make the deepening of democracy more difficult.

With or without pacts, political elites must be convinced that elections are the only viable route to rulership. It is not necessary that elites be deeply committed to democracy.[23] They must simply be "trapped" into "playing competitive politics."[24] As Larry Diamond puts it, "The single most important and urgent factor in the consolidation of democracy is political institutionalization."[25] The proper crafting of political institutions is essential to ensuring that cooperation continues. Though no single institutional arrangement is a necessary condition for durable democracy and each major institutional option has its critics and defenders, some arrangements seem more conducive to stability than others. Four sets of institutions emerge as especially important for lowering the risks of elections.

If a postwar democracy is emerging in a state with strong territorial cleavages, democratizers should consider some sort of federalism.[26] Federalism provides the combination of self-rule and shared rule that can help hold a divided country together. Federalism lowers the stakes of national elections because it gives groups that would never be victorious in central government elections a concrete stake in regional government instead. Despite the tragedies in Yugoslavia and Chechnya, federalism only rarely leads to successful secessionist movements. On the

contrary, it disadvantages violent secessionists because it offers a high degree of autonomy without the high costs of waging war. Federalism increases the likelihood of integrating potentially divisive leaders, because the task of governing subunits often forces former rebels to become more moderate.[27] Representing a subunit within the central government binds local elites to the larger body politic and gives them a stake in the existing order. These facts may explain why no violent separatist movement has ever triumphed in a federal democracy.[28]

Federalism's main danger is that the group that is numerically dominant within a given subunit will use its autonomy from the center to oppress local minorities. Federalism will work best if the central government's judiciary and armed forces are given the resources and incentives to protect minorities in every region. Federalism also works best with strong, nationally popular political parties.

There is broad agreement in the democratization literature about the connection between consolidation and robust political parties. We know that the existence "of two or more strong political parties" distinguishes cases of low military involvement from cases where involvement is high,[29] and we can guess that this distinction holds because strong parties narrow the range of risk that electoral competition implies. We also understand that the "nature of parties" and "the nature of party systems" influence both "the prospects that stable democracy will emerge" and whether the regime will be legitimate and effective.[30] What we do not yet understand is how popular and effective parties develop in the first place. They are often at least partially the product of able and charismatic leadership (as exemplified by India's Congress Party or South Africa's African National Congress). But gifted leaders cannot be produced by institutional design, and leadership is only part of the picture. We need more systematic work on the etiology of effective parties. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan argue, for example, that the growth of viable national parties will be disadvantaged if regional elections are held first,[31] but Donald Horowitz shows that early regional elections in Malaysia enabled the formation of a strong party incorporating previously warring ethnicities.[32] We need more systematic research on how the timing of elections and a whole range of other variables affect party viability. We also need more systematic research on how existing parties can successfully incorporate "new (or newly salient) generational, regional, ethnic or class groups."[33] Since these are precisely the challenges that postwar democracies have to face, they require immediate attention.

There is widespread consensus that electoral laws shape party systems and that systems with too many parties are unlikely to survive.

Democratizers in postwar polities must limit the number of parties in their legislatures. However, they must also choose an inclusive electoral system, because the costs of elections may seem intolerable if many voters feel closed out of power in winner-take-all elections. The solution to the inclusion-diffusion dilemma is probably a proportional representation (PR) system with a 5 percent threshold. The D'Hondt PR system worked remarkably well in helping Portugal consolidate its democracy in the aftermath of its colonial wars.

There is much evidence suggesting that the costs of electoral competition will be lower under parliamentary systems than under presidential ones—especially if the parliamentary system is not of the Westminster type (where members of parliament are chosen through first-past-the-post elections).[34] Linz argues that "the control of the executive in presidential systems is [not simply] 'winner-take-all'" but also "'loser loses all' for defeated candidates."[35] Elections under presidentialism seem to be intrinsically higher risk. Quantitative work offers confirmation of Linz's skeptical view,[36] but the generalization may hold better in middle- and high-income states than in poor ones.[37] Moreover, since Latin American states shun parliamentarism and "all the new democratic regimes in Africa have adopted some form of presidentialism,"[38] the "costs" of executive elections may be essentially fixed.

The costs of electoral competition are certainly affected by the nature of civil society. If society is not "civil" enough—that is, if citizens' groups gravitate toward extremist parties or even toward extremist behavior before elections—the costs of open electoral competition may become too high. The consolidation literature is packed with calls for strong civil societies, but building a "strong" civil society is not as desirable as building a civil society that is tolerant and nonviolent and thus supportive of democracy. Democratizers should concern themselves with the nature of associational life rather than with its "density."[39] They should take special care to promote associations that mix citizens of diverse social ethnic or religious groups. Our social science literature gives us two reasons to emphasize diversity within civic groups. First, only heterogeneous groups are likely to produce the sense of generalized trust that is essential for the give-and-take that democracy requires. Homogeneous associations may give people some of the skills that democratic participation requires, but they often produce or reinforce a distrust of others.[40] The second reason for promoting heterogeneous groups is that heterogeneous associations serve as barriers to intracommunal violence. In India, for example, Ashutosh Varshney has found that violence between religious groups flourishes only in areas where associational life is segregated. Where class and other associations

encompass more than one religious group, violence is absent—even if the mix of ethnic groups is the same.[41] Since intracommunal violence is likely to be a special concern in postwar democracies, investments in preempting its occurrence are well spent.

The mention of investments brings me to a last set of factors that loom large in the literature on consolidation. These involve wealth and its distribution. The association between per capita income and democratic endurance has been amply documented. "The probability that a democracy will survive increases steeply and monotonically as per capita incomes get larger."[42] Poverty, on the other hand, is believed by many to be the single "most consistent predictor" of democratic collapse.[43]

The leaders of new postwar democracies will not find consolation in these facts or in the fact that polyarchies are "almost certain to survive when per capita incomes rise above U.S.$4,000."[44] New postwar polyarchies are likely to fall far below this statistical threshold for the foreseeable future. Fifty-seven percent of all enduring democracies had a per capita GDP below $4,000. Thirteen percent of all "third wave" democracies had a per capita GDP below the updated equivalent of this threshold in the year 2000.[45]

Happily, wealth, unlike some of the other factors I listed above, is not a necessary condition for democratic durability. Even economic growth is not a necessary condition for consolidation today. It is certainly very helpful, as are moves toward material equality, but today's democracies are withstanding unprecedented levels of material strain. Lawrence Whitehead has suggested that we are living through "a revolution of falling expectations."[46] Citizens have come to believe that international (and uncontrollable) forces shape domestic economies and, in the economic realm, simply may not expect as much from their states as they did in the past. If this is true, political elites in postwar democracies may have more time to make the changes and build the institutions that democracy really does require.

More time for the crafting of institutions and the acquisition of materials may prove helpful, but the construction of solid democracies will take much more than time. The blueprints offered by the classics in the democratization literature were inspired, for the most part, by a distinctive set of cases. The democratized states that drew most attention were (and remain) dramatically different from the postwar democracies that struggle to survive today. As the guest editors of this issue remind us in their introductory article, "Most of the literature on democratization, civil society, and participation draws on European and Latin American experiences" (and, I would add, a particularly well-off subset of the latter). Most of today's postwar democracies emerge in relatively poorer

countries, with weaker civil societies, weaker political parties, and less historical experience with democratic forms of government. These contextual differences are very likely to be consequential because what works in one setting may be either impossible or undesirable in another. Many of the recommendations drawn from European and Latin American cases may not apply to democracies in the poorer regions of today's world. Even a brief discussion of the contexts in which democracies are emerging in Africa illustrates the point.

In the year 2000, Africa was home to 35 percent of all the electoral democracies in the third world.[47] Though contextual factors vary across the continent, most of these polities differ dramatically from those that gave rise to the generalizations discussed above.

For example, Africa's armed forces are likely to make raising the costs of violence and establishing order especially difficult. Africa's state armies are small by comparative standards, with only two soldiers per 1,000 citizens (compared to 3.5 soldiers per 1,000 citizens on average in other developing countries).[48] Yet, they face territories that are at least as difficult to police as any in Latin America (to say nothing of Europe). They also face situations where the diffusion of weaponry and "instruments of violence" is (with the exception of contemporary Colombia) probably unmatched. The availability of small arms is a special problem. The U.S. government estimates that "small arms are fuelling conflicts in 22 African countries and have taken 7–8 million lives." The durability of small arms presents a "continuous risk," for they "frequently outlast peace agreements and are taken up again in the post-conflict period."[49] These conditions make raising the costs of violence extremely difficult for new governments.

To make matters worse, specialists inform us that "the internal condition of many African armies borders on anarchy," and that "intra-military conflicts of an ethnic . . . character have often spilled over to threaten the political order." In some cases, dictators have virtually privatized the armed forces, while in others, the military has become "the unofficial political party of a particular ethnic alliance."[50] Latin American armed forces have serious difficulties too, but they have longer and stronger traditions of professionalism and are not nearly as affected by ethnic cleavages. Even if elected civilians manage to dominate Africa's armed forces, the institutions may be ill suited to the tasks before them. This is one of the reasons that "Africa is the most conflict ridden region in the World" and the only region in which armed conflicts were on the increase as of the year 2000.[51]

The unique qualities of African civil societies may complicate the consolidation process as well. African civil societies have been stronger

and more active than many outsiders recognize. Alliances of civic groups helped drive authoritarians from power in a wide range of African states, including South Africa, Benin, Mali, Niger, Madagascar, and Congo, to name just a few.[52] Civil associations "can take a large share of credit" for bringing about "the beginning of formal democracy in the early 1990s." Yet "the ability of civil society to help deepen democratic governance remains in serious doubt."[53] Civil society's capacity to deepen democracy is problematic everywhere, but in Africa these capacities may be especially weak. A vibrant civil society is aided by concentrations of population and urbanization, yet Africa's population is especially dispersed. Sixty-nine percent of all Africans live in rural areas—a percentage much larger than in other low and middle-income states.[54]

Though associational life in Africa can be rich by many measures, its qualities are often quite different from associational life in the states where theories of civil society first emerged. African civil societies are likely to be "significantly more segmented" than their European counterparts. Class and the commercial and industrial associations that played key roles elsewhere are likely to be weak or "largely absent."[55] Business groups exist, but "there is not much evidence that the business elite in any African country has played the role in democratization" played by business elites in more economically developed third world states.[56] Middle class and professional groups also exist but "are losing most of their membership and capabilities"[57] due to economic crises. With weak communication infrastructures and grinding poverty, it is understandable that many activists across the continent "withdraw into the household realm in order to address pressing needs" as soon as the transition is under way.[58]

Though civil society may be expanding as well as contracting, depending on the group in question, the nature of the groups that are expanding may be ill suited to the tasks of consolidation. Scholars have noted, for example, an expansion of independent charismatic churches that tend to "foster docility toward temporal authority and political apathy."[59] Scholars have also noted that "kin-based or religious organizations" are increasingly providing refuge from state inadequacies, but these groups tend to "be pre-liberal or illiberal and to subscribe to . . . undemocratic values." Their leaders "often view democratization with indifference or hostility" and the groups themselves are "inherently exclusionary" and "often chauvinistic."[60] They bear little resemblance to the heterogeneous groups that foster generalized trust or social capital in other states. Worst of all, the defense of democracy throughout Africa is likely to be hampered by the inability to unite civil society

across ethnic divisions. "One African country after another has seen its movement for democracy fracture along ethno-regional and sectarian lines either during or just after the transition from authoritarianism."[61] In Kenya, the opposition split into Luo, north Kikuyu and south Kikuyu, groups. In Malawi, the opposition fractured into groups from the north, south, and center.[62]

The salience of ethnicity affects African political parties as well as civil society. Ethnic cleavages, combined with ubiquitous neopatrimonialism, make the construction of effective political parties extremely difficult. Our literature gives us a clear picture of how effective parties should function, but the mechanics behind their creation remain unclear. European and Latin American models fit the African context uneasily due to dramatic differences in heterogeneity, class structure, and the timing and sequencing of state formation.

In some African states, parties and party systems need to be created from scratch, but, in most cases, democratizers have to deal with the possibly more serious challenge of reforming or neutralizing the problematic parties that already exist. Most African countries are stuck in one of two unpromising scenarios. Either they are home to one or two entrenched parties that have a long history of patronage and no interest in reform, or they contain several new but personalistic parties with little institutional connection to the citizenry, few internal democratic procedures, and no clear ideology beyond that of the leader.[63]

Transforming these scenarios or rising to the challenge of bringing on a transition from authoritarianism in the first place is made especially difficult by ethnic divisions. In countries such as Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Zaire, and Zimbabwe, opposition parties tend to split along ethnic lines. Thus, inside and outside of government, authoritarians face a multiplicity of warring parties instead of a unified anti-authoritarian opposition.[64] Sometimes, as in Kenya and Malawi, autocrats will get the voluntary vote support of ordinary people simply because they are "their ethnic group's favorite son."[65]

The pervasiveness of ethnic divisions means that "cultural pluralism has to be acknowledged rather than ignored, through arrangements that induce inclusionary politics and create structural incentives for intercommunal cooperation."[66] In theory (and in other real world contexts) we might expect some of these incentives to come from heterogeneous groups in civil society. But this is unlikely in Africa because, first, as stated above, civic life is often divided along ethnic lines; and, second, because African political parties have been, thus far, relatively distant from civic organizations of all sorts. As Jennifer Widner reminds us, cooperative relationships between civic "organizations and political

parties have not materialized in most places. With some important exceptions, parties have made little effort to win the support of trade associations, unions and other economic groupings" and instead have used "kin-based or clientelistic networks to build constituencies."[67]

The lack of a linkage between parties and civil society brings us to the subject of pacts and to another important distinction between the African context and the contexts that gave rise to the canon of democratization literature. Pacts are difficult to forge in Africa and even more difficult to keep. As Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle explain, the transition dynamics described in the democratization literature, whereby moderates in government make pacts with moderates in the opposition outside the state, "simply does not fit most African cases." The nature of political institutions in state and civil society usually prevent it.[68] Among the few places where pacts have emerged are "settler societies," including "war weary" Namibia, Mozambique, Angola, and South Africa. Bratton and van de Walle argue that pacts emerge in settler societies because these states have at least some tradition of institutionalized political competition.[69] But even in these states, where the context for the emergence of pacts is relatively propitious, the fulfillment of the promises embodied in pacts may prove especially hard. As Jeffrey Herbst concludes, pacts in non-African countries have worked because elites could deliver the support of their followers. The underlying politics of elite-mass relations in Africa are so different that bargains may not hold. Even in South Africa, where the relatively powerful African National Congress maintains relatively close relations with civil society, "the degree to which South African leaders can deliver their constituencies is unclear."[70]

Even the most economically developed countries of Africa are starkly different from the Latin American and European cases that have dominated our thinking about democratization. Formulating new theories that take these differences into account should be at the top of our research agenda. Specifying how leaders in Africa (and elsewhere) might best cope with the challenges of creating a democracy in the aftermath of war should be integral to this task. Our work on democratization has focused a great deal on elections. Democracies everywhere rest on elections—but elections rest on a whole host of other institutions that vary markedly across levels of development, cultures, and continents. Masses of people put their hopes in elections as a "force for cohesion and consensus"[71] and as "a means of closure after civil war."[72] If elections are to meet people's hopes, political scientists will have to furnish more specific (and realistic) advice on how the complex institutional environment for truly free elections can be built. ⊕

Notes

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1. If we duplicate the classifications presented in Table 2 for the year 1991, the breakdown of postwar versus peacetime foundings is still 50-50. See Freedom House Survey of Freedom in the World, 1991–1992.

2. Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is and Is Not," in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *The Global Resurgence of Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

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