The Post-Cold War Wave of Democratization: Regime Transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa and Postcommunist States Compared

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Abstract

ANNA BRIGEVICH: The Post-Cold War Wave of Democratization: Regime Transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa and Postcommunist States Compared
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The early 1990’s witnessed tremendous political and economic changes throughout the world. The collapse of the Soviet Union discredited the viability of authoritarian regimes throughout the globe, and, in a number of cases, replaced them with governments determined to enact pro-democratic, liberal reforms. The main goal of this paper is to lay down the first foundation for constructing a cross-regional theory of democratization and regime change in the post-Cold War wave by integrating Sub-Saharan Africa and the Postcommunist Space into one theoretical framework. Through the use of OLS regression and a number of case studies, I attempt to show that despite the ostensible incomparability of these two regions, the factors conditioning regime change in both regions are the same. More specifically, opposition cohesion and a vibrant civil society at the time of the first multiparty elections are crucial elements driving successful democratization in the post-Cold War wave.
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Introduction

The early 1990’s witnessed tremendous political and economic changes throughout the world. The collapse of the Soviet Union discredited the viability of authoritarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, parts of Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). This phenomena, which I refer to as the post-Cold War wave of democratization, swept away many authoritarian regimes and one-party systems, and, in a number of cases, replaced them with governments determined to enact pro-democratic, liberal reforms. However, the initial euphoria surrounding the relatively small number of genuine democratic transitions in post-Cold War wave quickly dissipated, as democratization scholars discovered that regime transitions were rarely synonymous with democratic consolidation.

In reality, successful democratization has proven to be only one of the possible regime outcomes in the post-Cold wave. Authoritarian regimes still exist, although they are less common now than before the collapse of the Soviet Union (Diamond 2002). However, more prevalent than democracies and autocracies are “hybrid regimes”¹ (Karl 1995; Diamond 2002) that exhibit elements of both authoritarianism and democracy. In these countries, multiparty elections may be held regularly, but government elites consistently manipulate these elections to make sure that the opposition has little chance of winning (Schedler 2006; Howard and Roessler 2006). Hence, as the post-Cold War wave of

¹ Throughout the past decade, scholars have coined a variety of labels to describe these hybrid regimes, such as “electoral authoritarianism” (Schedler 2002), “competitive authoritarianism” (Levitsky and Way 2002), “gray zone” countries (Carothers 2002), and “semi-authoritarianism” (Ottaway 2003).
democratization draws to a close, scholars recognize that democratic consolidation is not the global norm.

This paper takes a first cut at explaining regime variation in the post-Cold War wave. As such, it is concerned with two key puzzles in the democratization literature. First, what leads to successful democratization: why have countries managed a more or less flawless transition to democracy, while others have slipped back into authoritarianism? This question, although widely debated in the older democratization literature concerned with the transitiology paradigm (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Huntington 1991; Linz and Stepan 1996), has recently come under heavy scrutiny by scholars of hybrid regimes. They argue that we must “shed light on this murky set of regimes by studying them relative to one another, rather than highlighting the numerous ways in which they fall short of the standard set by advanced democracies,” (Howard and Roessler 2006, 365). Hence, the second key puzzle under investigation here is what gives rise to and accounts for the persistence of hybrid regimes in the post-Cold War wave? Despite this deep divide between transitiology and hybrid regime scholars, the two puzzles are not mutually exclusive. Rather, we must treat these questions as two critical components of a much larger, cross-regional theory of regime change in the post-Cold War wave.

The main goal of this paper, then, is to lay down the first foundation for constructing a cross-regional theory of democratization and regime change in the post-Cold War wave. I take the post-Cold War wave founding elections\(^2\) as the starting point of inquiry and argue

\(^2\) A distinction must be made here between founding elections in general, and the founding elections in the post-Cold War wave. While the term founding elections is not problematic in the context of postcommunist transitions, where true multiparty elections had not been held since the transition to communism, it becomes much murkier in the context of SSA. In Africa, most countries held founding elections in the 1960’s, following the withdrawal of colonial powers. However, with the exception of Botswana, these elections resulted in the institutionalization of an authoritarian regime, military rule, or a one-party state. Hence, no more genuinely
that the outcomes of these elections conditioned the success or failure of democratization a

decade and a half later. Furthermore, I argue that the outcome of these founding elections

was highly determined by the nature of three key groups involved in the transition process---

the old authoritarian elites, opposition movements, and civil society. In this paper, I develop

an agency-centered theoretical framework that tests the effects of these three groups of actors

on the degree of democratization achieved since the initial transition period. However, in

doing so, I do not treat successful democratization as a zero-sum game. Rather, I

conceptualize successful democratization as just one possible regime outcome on a

continuum of regime variation that spans consolidated democracy to consolidated autocracy.

Thus, my theory simultaneously addresses the two key democratization puzzles: Why some
countries have achieved a high level of democratization vis-à-vis those that have not, and

why others have achieved only a medium to low level of democratization that persists in

hybrid regimes.

I turn to a series of OLS regressions to test my theory, and demonstrate that cohesive

opposition movements and vibrant civil societies were critical for successful
democratization. However, this is only part of the explanation. I find that, although the

presence of cohesive opposition movements almost always correlates with higher levels of
democratization, it is the strength of civil society that sets apart hybrid regimes from

authoritarian regimes. Interestingly, this latter finding runs counter to the widely-accepted

belief in hybrid regime literature which posits that cohesive opposition groups, and not civil

society, are the driving force behind political liberalization in partially-democratized regimes

(van de Walle 2002; Howard and Roessler 2006).

democratic, multiparty elections were held until 1990, when a fresh wave of multiparty elections began anew. In this paper, I focus only on these post-1989 elections, and for comparability’s sake with the PCS, label them founding elections.
The secondary goal of this analysis, although no less important than the first, is to bridge the divide between scholars of the various regions that have been affected by the post-Cold War wave. Only by comparing these regions under one theoretical framework will we ever arrive at a broader theory of democratization that is not country or region-specific. However, as Gerardo Munck so aptly points out, a troubling trend in the current democratization literature is that “empirical tests have tended to rely on only a small set of cases… raising doubts about the generalizability and/or the validity of causal claims. As a result, knowledge cumulation has been seriously impeded and the findings produced by this literature have been, at best, tentative,” (Munck 2002, 122). Thus, to address this problem within the democratization literature, the analysis in this paper integrates two seemingly incomparable regions into one theoretical framework: the postcommunist space and Sub-Saharan Africa.

At first glance, the comparability of these two regions may appear questionable. Indeed, there has been little communication between scholars of the two regions. This is due, in part, to the argument made by some postcommunist scholars that postcommunist transitions are unique, and theories generated within the context of other regions, such as Latin America and southern Europe cannot possibly apply to the postcommunist space (Offe 1991; Bunce 2003). However, although I acknowledge that the postcommunist space is unique in certain respects, I agree with Schmitter and Karl (1994) that until we make the initial attempt to compare the postcommunist space with other regions, we will never be certain that other theories are not applicable. Thus, we must consider all cases of regime change, regardless of their geopolitical and cultural context, as parts of a common process of diffusion and causal interaction (Schmitter and Karl 1994, 178).
This paper is organized in the following manner: In Section One, I review the arguments of transitologists and hybrid regime scholars, and argue that the divide between these two groups can be easily bridged, thus aiding in the construction of a cross-regional theory of democratization that spans all regime outcomes. In Section Two, I argue that we must integrate SSA and the postcommunist states (PCS) into one theoretical framework for a number of methodological and theoretical reasons. In Section Three, I present a statistical analysis that test the effects on democratization of three variables that scholars of both regions have found to be important for regime change---elite capacity, opposition cohesion, and civil society strength. My findings reveal that opposition cohesion and civil society strength increase the chances for democratization in the post-Cold War wave. Finally, in Section Four, I present four short case studies that illustrate the varying effects of these two variables on regime transitions, and explain how the presence or absence of these two variables during the transition period generated feedback mechanisms that have “locked” countries into specific regime trajectories. I conclude with a brief discussion of what can be done to improve the quality of democracy in present-day hybrid and authoritarian regimes.
Section One: Bridging the Transitology-Hybrid Regime Divide

Democratization theory has evolved significantly since the 1960’s, reflecting both our increased understanding of the process of democratization, as well as the incorporation of newer democratic regimes into the theoretical framework. Initially, democratization scholars (Lipset 1959; Moore 1960; Tilly 1994) argued that long-standing structural factors were the best predictors for the success or failure of democracy, and historical legacies were seen as the driving force behind regime change. Furthermore, regime transition was conceptualized in terms of change towards greater democracy. These theories worked relatively well in explaining the centuries-long process of democratization in Western Europe, where democracy developed in concert with capitalism and populations were relatively homogeneous. However, as many scholars of post-Cold War wave transitions came to realize, traditional democratization theories offered little insight into the complex processes unfolding in the modern world. For one, these theories failed to reflect the reality of current transitions, where countries struggle to integrate into the world market and construct democratic institutions, oftentimes from scratch, at a remarkably faster pace than ever before (Offe 1991).

Furthermore, traditional theories simply could not account for the appearance of democratic movements in places where the required structural factors were largely absent. For example, the legacies argument cannot explain why a traditionally rural and economically underdeveloped Mongolia formed a strong multiparty system following the
post-communist transition, and why the country is currently one of the strongest democracies in the region. Additionally, it became increasingly apparent that transitioning countries were not simply moving towards forms of consolidated democracy, but exhibited a wide range of regime outcomes. As a result, scholars of the post-Cold War wave of democratization began searching for an alternative theory, one that reflected the changes taking place during the transition period. These scholars began analyzing the transition period itself and the decisions taken at the individual level by the elites, the opposition, and societal actors (Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Easter 1997; Fish 1999; Jones-Luong 2000; van de Walle 2002; McFaul 2002; Hale 2005; Way 2005).

One of the crucial steps towards constructing an agency-based theory to democratic transitions in the post-Cold War wave has been the development of the transitology paradigm, as first put forth by O’Donnell and Schmitter in their 1986 seminal work *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*. In the work, which was largely informed by third wave transitions in Latin America during the 1970’s and 1980’s, O’Donnell and Schmitter analyze the interactions between the old elites and opposition groups. They argue that there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself between the hard-liners and the soft-liners. Once these divisions become apparent, soft-liners have the incentive to either defect from the old regime or to initiate pacting, which they define as talks with the opposition movements on liberalizing the political system. As the soft-liners lower the cost for engaging in collective action, they quickly discover that former political identities reemerge and new ones expand beyond the public spaces the rulers were willing to tolerate at the beginning of the transition, (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 48-49). Emboldened by the thawing-out of the political system,
opposition groups will press for multiparty elections. If the split between the elites is severe, it will undermine their organizational capacity, lower extent of their ability to manipulate election results, and, ultimately, harm their chances of winning the election.

The handful of successful democratic transitions of the early 1990’s reinforced the notion among US policymakers and aid practitioners that countries undergoing political changes were moving towards democracy. However political scientists engaged in the study of democracy noticed that the reality was much murkier. As Thomas Carothers (2002) points out, many of the countries that were labeled as transitioning to democracy, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were in fact stalled democratic experiments or were experiencing a reversion to authoritarianism. As such, these countries were not transitioning at all, but were developing their own distinct form of governance that mixed authoritarianism with some elements of democracy. Carothers refers to these countries as being stuck in the “gray zone.” Given this fact, Carothers writes, “Sticking with the paradigm beyond its useful life is retarding evolution in the field of democratic assistance and is leading policy makers astray in other ways. It is time to recognize that the transition paradigm has outlived its usefulness and to look for a better lens,” (Carothers 2002, 6).

Carothers and the critics of the transitiology paradigm were correct in asserting that successful democratization was not the only possible outcome of the post-Cold War wave. Rather, this newest set of transitioning countries exhibited a large degree of variation in regime type, spanning a continuum of consolidated democracy to full-fledged authoritarianism, with the majority of the countries falling into the hybrid-regime category. (Reference the large number of Partly-Free rated countries in Tables 3-6).
Given the prevalence of hybrid regimes, it is not surprising that democracy scholars currently focus primarily on this group of countries. Indeed, it is the only area of democracy studies that incorporates both the postcommunist and African regimes into one theoretical framework, (see Levitsky and Way forthcoming; Howard and Roessler 2006). Although I agree with Howard and Roessler that there is a need to study these regimes in relation to one another, rather than highlighting the numerous ways in which they fall short of the standard set by advanced democracies, the degree to which hybrid regimes have claimed the democracy studies spotlight is highly problematic for our advances in this field, as a whole. There are two problems with the hybrid regime approach. One, by focusing solely on hybrid regimes, we are losing sight of the overall regime change process in the post-Soviet and Sub-Saharan regions. More specifically, we are selecting cases solely on the dependent variable---Partly Free regime outcomes---while neglecting to take into account the other possible outcomes---Free and Not Free. This leaves us with an incomplete picture of the events unfolding in both regions.

Furthermore, by simply focusing on hybrid regimes, we cannot be sure of the relative significance of our independent variables if we exclude the countries in the other two categories (Munck 2002). For example, in their study of competitive authoritarianism and liberal electoral outcomes, Howard and Roessler identify the presence of an opposition coalition with an increased likelihood of liberal electoral outcomes. Thus, given their statistical evidence, one might conclude that Partly Free African countries, such as Kenya, Ghana, and Senegal, have achieved a higher level of democratization due to the strength of the opposition coalition. However, by focusing solely on competitive authoritarian regimes, this approach fails to take into account that both Angola and Cote d’Ivoire had strong
opposition coalitions competing in multiparty elections, yet failed to move out of the Not Free trajectory (Bratton and van de Walle 1997). To be clear, I am not arguing against the importance of an opposition coalition for higher prospects of democratization. However, by excluding both the democratic and authoritarian cases from the hybrid-regimes theoretical framework we cannot be sure of the validity of our findings. Indeed, as my analysis shows below, a vibrant civil society is equally crucial to political liberalization as opposition coalitions. This finding only becomes apparent when we compare hybrid regimes to the other two regime types, democracies and autocracies.

The only way to address the issues discussed above is to develop a comprehensive theoretical framework for regime change that encompasses all of the post-Cold War regime types. In a sense, we must resurrect the transitology paradigm, while updating it to reflect the prevalence and persistence of hybrid regimes. We must bring the focus back to the transition period and assess the events that unfolded at this critical juncture. In doing so, we must examine the roles that key actors played during the transition process, and evaluate the ways that their actions conditioned certain regime outcomes. Unlike structural and socio-economic theories of democratization, the transitology paradigm is the only theoretical framework that allows us to compare across culturally and economically diverse regions.

Furthermore, as I show in the following two sections, the initial transition period was the single most important moment of regime change for the majority of the countries in the analysis, as it indubitably set a precedent for the way regime change in a country has been conducted throughout the past decade. Only by analyzing the initial transition period for all the countries in this analysis is it possible to make sense of the factors that have facilitated or forestalled democratization. Such an approach provides an advantage over studies that focus
on post-transition periods because factors that may sustain democracies in the long run are not necessarily the same ones that bring democracy into being (Rustow 1970).
Section Two: Sub-Saharan Africa and the Postcommunist Space Compared

The purpose of this paper is to construct a broad, cross-regional theory of democratization and regime change in the post-Cold War wave. The analysis presented here takes a step in that direction by integrating the postcommunist space with Sub-Saharan Africa into one theoretical framework. In this section, I discuss a number of reasons as to why these two regions make for a fruitful and appropriate comparison. First, from a purely methodological standpoint, both regions exhibit a comparable level of variation on the dependent variable---regime outcome. Second, countries in both regions underwent the transition process at roughly the same time and for largely similar reasons. Third, despite the lack of communication between scholars of the two regions, the literature on democratization that has emerged from the two areas of study has many commonalities. Most importantly, scholars of both regions argue that the transition period, and the events surrounding the first multiparty elections, had a significant impact on the success or failure of democratization in the long term, and that opposition cohesion was the single most important factor conditioning the outcome of these elections (Bunce 1999; Vachudova 2005; Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Howard and Roessler 2006; Olukoshi 1999; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; van de Walle 2002; Levitsky and Way 2002). In this section, I explore these key points in turn, and show that an effective comparison between the two regions can and should be made.
The primary concern of this analysis is explaining variation in regime outcomes following the initial transition period. As I have already discussed above, it is important for any study of regime change in the post-Cold War wave to include all of the possible regime outcomes, and not focus solely on one particular type of regime. However, when comparing across regions, it is equally important that the regions exhibit a similar level of variation on the dependent variable. In this way, we can at least rule out some of the probability that regional effects are driving the course of democratization in the post-Cold War wave.

Variation in regime outcomes is particularly noticeable in the postcommunist region (see Ekiert, Kubik, and Vachudova 2006; Bunce 1999; McFaul 2002), which has claimed much of the spotlight in recent studies of democratization. The drive towards democratization was particularly strong in Central and Eastern Europe, where the first multiparty elections resulted in a resounding victory for pro-democratic opposition movements, such as Solidarity in Poland, Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia, and Democratic Forum in Hungary. However, the democratic transitions in the post-Soviet space have proven to be much more problematic. With the exception of the Baltics, and to a lesser extent Ukraine, democratic reform in the post-Soviet states has stalled, if not been altogether removed from the political agenda. In Russia, Moldova, and Armenia, the initial transition period significantly opened up the political arena, allowing for opposition parties to successfully contest the first multiparty elections. However, the transfer of power from the old communist elite to the opposition has resulted in only partial democratization that has persisted for over a decade. In the Central Asian Republics, powerful ex-communist elites have largely reversed the democratic gains of the initial liberalization period, and thus reinforced a continuation with the authoritarian past.
Successful democratization, political liberalization, and regime type variation are not confined to the postcommunist space alone, but are also found in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the early 1990’s, citizens launched large-scale protests in sixteen Sub-Saharan African capitals to express discontent with both military and civilian governments for failing to alleviate poverty and political oppression and to demand reform. As a result, by May 1991, at least twenty-one African governments adopted significant political reforms to permit greater pluralism and competition, and by 1995, thirty-five out of the forty-eight sub-Saharan African countries had held multi-party elections, (see Bienen and Herbst 1996; Bratton and van de Walle 1992; El-Khawas 2001). In a number of cases, such as South Africa, Benin, Mali, and Lesotho, the initial transition period has resulted in genuine democratization. However, as in the post-Soviet space, it has become increasingly apparent that many African regimes are struggling to fully implement democratic reform, or have abandoned democratization all together. In the majority of the African cases, such as Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Zambia, apparent political reform has been minimal, and often confined solely to the holding of multiparty elections, many of which have been fraudulent (Lindberg 2006). Furthermore, many African regimes, such as Angola and Cote d’Ivoire have not transitioned from authoritarian rule, relying on severe repression to forestall political liberalization.

As we can see, both regions exhibit a similar level of regime variation. This point is further reinforced with the Freedom House tables, which show that there is significant and similar (in number) dispersion of countries in both regions across the three different regime types. Admittedly, in Tables 5 and 6, we see that in the postcommunist space the proportion of Free regimes is greater than in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is undoubtably due to the democratizing effect of the European Union on Central and Eastern European countries (see
Vachudova 2005; Levitsky and Way 2005 and forthcoming). However, in all other respects, what we see in the post-Cold War wave is not regime variation by region, where postcommunist states outperform African states in democracy-building, but intra-regional variation. This is good news for democratization scholars analyzing the transition process in the post-Cold War wave as a whole, as it points to a larger global trend that can be effectively explored under one theoretical framework.

The second reason that PCS and SSA can be effectively compared under one theoretical framework is that countries from both regions experienced transitions at roughly the same time, 1989-1997, and in the same global environment. This setting provides us with the best approximation to a controlled laboratory experiment on democratization. Furthermore, both regions underwent the transition for the same reasons: the de-legitimization of authoritarian rule and international pressure for democratization. By the time the Soviet Union collapsed, liberalism in politics and economics had become the hegemonic standard, and few incentives were available to countries to embark on a different path of development (Bunce 1999; Levitsky and Way 2002; Verdery 1996).

Africanist scholars have long acknowledged the fact that the pro-democracy reforms that hit the continent in the early 1990’s were largely motivated by the collapse of the Soviet Union (Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Joseph 1997; El-Khawas 2001; van de Walle 2002). African opposition movements were encouraged by the events in Eastern Europe, particularly the crumbling of the Berlin Wall (El-Khawas 2001), and the mass demonstrations in Eastern Europe during 1989 certainly influenced the discourse and form of protest in SSA (Bratton and van de Walle 1992). For example, in Zambia, “Frederick Chiluba, chairman of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, paved the way for a multiparty debate by publicly asking,
in reference to eastern Europe, ‘if the owners of socialism have withdrawn from the one-party system, who are the Africans to continue with it?’” (quoted in Bratton and van de Walle 1992, 425). Thus, although it is indisputable that both regions are unique in many respects, Schmitter and Karl (1994) are correct in asserting that both should be treated as part of the same process of diffusion and causal interaction that characterizes the post-Cold War wave.

The final reason that PCS and SSA can be effectively compared under one theoretical framework is that the theories and findings emerging from both regions are quite similar, and oftentimes based on the transitology paradigm. In general, many scholars have chosen to focus on the transition period\(^3\) in their attempts to explain long-term regime change in both regions (Fish 1999; Bunce 1999; Vachudova 2005; Bunce and Wolchik 2004; Easter 1997; Way 2005; Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Joseph 1997; van de Walle 2002; McFaul 2002; Lindberg 2004 and 2006).

Democratization scholars from both regions argue for the importance of the transition period for two reasons. The first is that traditional historical, structural, and cultural explanations for democratization do not adequately explain the successful, or partially successful, transitions in the post-Cold War wave. For example, Fish points out that traditional theories could not predict that poor and agricultural Moldova would develop a reasonably structured party system, while Ukraine, the political and economic hopeful during the collapse of the USSR, “failed to realize political organizations even worthy of the name party,” (Fish 1999, 802). Similarly, in Africa, few countries are performing in line with conventional democratization theory, that posits that economic development and

\(^3\) For notable exceptions, see Grzymala-Busse and Jones Luong (2002).
democratization go hand in hand (Lipset 1959). For example, Mali and Benin, both considered to be functioning democracies, have essentially the same type of economy and social structure as neighboring, authoritarian Togo; while Congo-Brazzaville, one of the richest and most urbanized countries appears stuck in the “gray zone,” (van de Walle 2002, 70-71).

The second reason scholars focus on the transition period is that, for many countries, the regime type that emerged following the first multiparty elections has persisted well into the recent years. (I examine this argument in greater detail in Section Four). In other words, these elections set the precedent for the manner in which the democratization process was to be carried out. In the postcommunist space, successful democratization occurred in places where the opposition movement was able to secure a victory during the first multiparty elections (Bunce 1999; Vachudova 2005; Fish 1999; Easter 1997). Thus, in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the Baltics, where the opposition forces achieved a resounding victory, democratic reform proceeded in a quick and efficient pace. Conversely, where the opposition failed to challenge the authoritarian incumbent, as was the case in the Central Asian Republics, the ruling elite felt little pressure to continue with political liberalization.

A similar story can be told about Africa. As van de Walle points out, “Countries where incumbents went down in the transition maelstrom are significantly more democratic today than countries where the dictator rode out the coming of multiparty politics,” (van de Walle 2002, 71). The first elections set patterns that persisted throughout the decade, and were predicated on whether or not the opposition managed to establish themselves during these elections (van de Walle 2002; Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Lindberg 2004 and 2006). Hence, in Mali, Benin, and Cape Verde, incumbent turnover resulted in the
establishment of a stable democratic regime, while in Angola, Djibouti, and Equatorial Guinea the ability of the incumbent to retain control has resulted in a constriction of the political space.

Given the consensus of both postcommunist and Africanist scholars on the importance of the transition period, O’Donnell and Schmitter’s transitology paradigm offers a fruitful theoretical framework for analyzing and comparing regime change. In this framework, the founding elections are a critical point, or juncture, in a country’s transition process; they are an important signal of an official break with the authoritarian past and a significant departure from the arbitrariness of authoritarian rule (O’Donnell 2002). At the same time, founding elections are moments of high uncertainty, and their results cannot be predicted from the existing political and social structures (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 61; Schmitter and Karl 1994, 4-5). During the transition, existing political institutions become temporarily suspended, and actors are forced to make hurried and confused choices. Those in power may seriously overestimate the support for the old regime, while those outside it may underestimate their capacity to draw votes from the masses (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 61). Thus, the outcome of these hurried decisions are often not what any one group would have initially preferred (Schmitter and Karl 1994; Fish 1999). Hence, in this highly uncertain context, the only way to understand regime outcomes is to examine the roles that key actors play during the transition period (Fish 1999). This is precisely what the analysis in this paper sets out to do.

Despite the applicability of the original transitology paradigm to an analysis of regime change in the post-Cold War wave, there is a critical difference between the findings of O’Donnell and Schmitter and those of post-Cold War wave scholars. In the argument laid
out by O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), political liberalization is initiated by a faction of the old elites, the “soft-liners.” Thus, the drive towards democratization originates, at least initially, from within the old regime. Yet, both postcommunist and Africanist scholars agree that the old elites play a much more limited role in bringing about political liberalization, and typically have a negative effect on the prospects for democratization (van de Walle 2002; Bienen and Herbst 1996; Easter 1997; Way 2005; Bunce 1999; Joseph 1997). However, at the core of both these arguments lies the idea that elite splits facilitate regime change by making elites less capable of fending off demands for political liberalization. As such, I do not view these arguments as necessarily incompatible. Rather, in the newer democratization theory, the burden of initiating regime change falls on other actors.

In the PCS and SSA, old elites were forced to initiate political liberalization as a result of the de-legitimization of one-party rule and the resulting popular protests that spread throughout the regions following 1989. In almost every case, authoritarian elites resisted extensive democratic reform, and fully intended to maintain their hold over political institutions.4 “Whenever multiparty sentiment raised its head, state leaders mounted an ideological campaign in defense of the status quo,” (Bratton and van de Walle 1992, 425). In Zambia, the leadership argued that party competition would incite ethnic loyalties and result in electoral violence (Bratton and van de Walle 1992, 425). Similarly, in Romania, the government attacked pro-Western opposition movements pushing for democratic reform, arguing that a victory for the opposition would result in tyrannical rule by the Hungarian population residing in Transylvania (Verdery 1996).

4 A notable exception here is Hungary in 1989, although Hungarian elites did resist earlier political reform in 1985.
Regardless of elite resistance to genuine political reform, international pressure⁵ (Levitsky and Way 2005 and forthcoming; Vachudova 2005) and domestic protests (Bratton and van de Walle 1992) sufficiently motivated the old elites to entertain the idea of multiparty elections. By 1997, with the exception of Congo-Kinshasa, Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia, and Swaziland, all countries in this analysis had held elections. However, most of these political “conversions” were made reluctantly as tactical moves to retain power (Joseph 1997) and multiparty elections were intended to further legitimate the rule of the old elite. In Poland, the communists went to great lengths to ensure their victory by reserving two-thirds of the Sejm seats to the communist party and its allies, thereby making it nearly impossible for the Solidarity opposition movement to overthrow the old regime. However, much to the surprise of the communists and the opposition, Solidarity garnered enough votes to depose the old regime and initiate democratization in earnest. The Polish example underscores the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the transition period, and points to the importance of an organized opposition movement in wrestling power away from the recalcitrant elite.

If the old elites were always resistant to political liberalization, then what accounts for the regime changes that transpired throughout the PCS and SSA? As I’ve already mentioned above, scholars of both regions agree that the single most important factor leading to political

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⁵ Within the current democratization literature there is some internal debate about the role that international actors play in fostering and aiding democratic reform. For example, Levitsky and Way (2005 and forthcoming) argue that there are two types of international pressure that can motivate authoritarian incumbents to allow for the element of uncertainty during election time, thereby making these elections more democratic: leverage and linkage. Leverage is the government’s vulnerability to external democratization pressures, such as Western threats to withdraw aid if certain conditions like multiparty elections are held. Linkage is the density of ties (economic, political, social, and geographic) between the country and the US and/or EU. The authors argue that linkage is more effective than the two foreign policy tools, as only linkage increases the possibility that Western governments will take action in response to autocratic behavior. However, McFaul (2005) argues that although democracy-assistance programs played a visible role in postcommunist transitions, foreign aid played no significant independent role in democratic breakthroughs (and rarely does). Africanists, such as Bratton and van de Walle (1992) agree with McFaul, arguing that although external pressures may serve as precipitating conditions, they are not the primary causal mechanisms for regime change. Furthermore, van de Walle (2001) argues that African foreign aid has a negative effect on democratization, as it allows authoritarian incumbents to reinforce their patronage networks and hold on to their political power.
liberalization and successful democratization was opposition victory during the founding elections (Bunce 1999; Vachudova 2005; Fish 1998; van de Walle 2002; Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Way 2005; Easter 1997). Victory for the opposition served to reinforce the break with the authoritarian past, and ushered in the potential for democratic reform.

This is not to say that opposition victory immediately translated into democratic reform. Indeed, in Belarus, upon winning the presidential elections, “opposition” candidate Lukashenka quickly began consolidating his power; as a result, Belarus has backslid into authoritarianism despite convening free and fair founding elections. Furthermore, in Niger, victory for the opposition movement Alliance of Forces for Change (AFC), comprised of six different parties, translated into little more than intra-group squabbling in the legislature, and the consequent break-down of the political system altogether. Interestingly, it was only when the old ruling party, the National Movement for a Society of Development (MNSD), won the subsequent elections that genuine democratic reform was able to proceed anew.

The case of Niger demonstrates that once regime change is initiated the chances for political liberalization increase dramatically. For one, opposition victory signals to the masses that regime change is possible, and the masses will be more likely to hold the opposition to its promise of democratic reform (Bunce 1999). Secondly, the old elite will be presented with two options: disband, and permanently relinquish all hold on political power, or reform, and adhere to the democratic rules of the new game (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Bunce 1999). Albeit, in reality, a group of the old elites may nullify election results and hijack the government, typically in the form of a military coup, or may suspend any further liberalization. For example, in Zambia, President Chiluba declared a state of emergency, fearing a coup by the old regime. In Niger, President Ousmane refused to appoint
a member of the opposition as prime minister after his own coalition collapsed. In Nigeria, the military annulled the election of Chief Abiola as president, and suspended civilian rule (Bienen and Herbst 1996). These examples highlight the tentative nature of the transition process, and show that democratization scholars must pay careful attention to the roles that key groups play during the transition.

Overall, opposition victory during the first multiparty elections has a significant, long-term democratizing effect on a country’s transition process. Postcommunist and Africanist literature reveals three possible causal mechanisms that condition the likelihood of opposition victory: the capacity of the old elites, opposition cohesion, and the strength of civil society. A more detailed discussion of these three groups, which serve as my independent variables, is found in the Theories and Hypotheses section below. However, I briefly explain them here to lay the groundwork for future discussion.

First, elite capacity has a negative effect on opposition victory and stymies democratization efforts (Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Way 2005; Easter 1997; Joseph 1997; McFaul 2002). As I have already discussed, old elites are resistant to democratic reform, and will go to great lengths to ensure that they retain power after the founding elections. Their capacity to do so depends greatly on the resources they command, as well as their ability to maintain unity among the ranks (Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Howard and Roessler 2006; McFaul 2002; O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986).

Second, opposition victory is highly dependent on the ability of different opposition groups to band together during election time, or opposition cohesion (Bunce, 1999; Vachudova 2005; Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Howard and Roessler 2006; Olukoshi 1999; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; van de Walle 2002). During the transition process,
opposition groups face serious power asymmetries vis-à-vis the old elites. Typically, the old elites have greater access to financial and social resources. Furthermore, many opposition groups are regional in nature, and cannot garner enough votes on the national level to carry the elections by themselves. As a result, it is crucial that opposition groups present a united front during election time.

Third, some authors argue that a vibrant civil society is necessary to secure opposition victory (Bunce 1999; Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Fish 1999). A vibrant civil society will pressure the authoritarian government for reform, and will actively support opposition candidates during election time. Furthermore, by actively protesting against the government, civic groups may encourage old elites to defect to the opposition, lowering elite capacity to maintain control of the state (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Bratton and van de Walle 1992). On the other hand, if civil society is weak, typically due to the oppressive nature of the old regime, it will be less vocal about the need for reform, and will support the authoritarian incumbent for fear of government backlash. However, as of yet, the role civil society plays in driving the post-Cold War wave democratization process is highly undertheorized and is absent from many explanations of regime change. This is due, in part, to the belief that civil society in both PCS and SSA is generally weak and plays an insignificant role in the transition process (Howard 2002; Randall and Svasand 2002; Bienen and Herbst 1996; van de Walle 2002; El-Khawas 2001).

Another part of the problem is that civil society is a nebulous and ill-defined term, and is often used to refer to both civic groups/organizations and political parties (Fish 1999).6

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6 It is particularly difficult to unravel the relationship between civic groups and political organizations in SSA, where unions have traditionally played a key role in advocating political change. Distrustful of political parties and their nebulous platforms, as well as lacking well-funded and organized civic associations, many people may choose to channel their political grievances through union activism. Thus, further inquiry must look into the
However, I argue that there is an important distinction in the function of these two groups of actors. Opposition movements and political parties attempt to affect regime change through contesting elections and holding political office. Civic groups, on the other hand, are not involved in the government directly, but attempt to affect change through casting a vote for specific candidates and holding the political leadership accountable for their policies. Thus, it is possible to have opposition and civic groups that vary in strength and effectiveness in the same political system, and these variations contribute to the different regime outcomes that characterize the post-Cold War wave.

A broad, cross-regional theory of democratization must jointly test for the significance of opposition cohesion and civil society strength, along with the capacity of the old elites, in driving the outcome of the transition process. Additionally, a broad theory must explain how the relative strength of these three groups of actors accounts for regime variation in the post-Cold War wave that spans democratic, authoritarian, and hybrid regime types.

So far, the discussion here has been centered on the first democratization puzzle---what makes democratic transitions successful---and thus on only two of the possible regime outcomes, democracy and authoritarianism. The broad argument proposed by scholars of both regions is that opposition victory in the first multiparty elections is a critical determinant of successful democratization. Opposition victory is highly contingent on opposition cohesion, or the ability of various opposition movements to band together and effectively challenge the authoritarian incumbent (Bunce 1999; Vachudova 2005; Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Olukoshi 1999; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; van de Walle 2002). In short, opposition cohesion is the single most important causal mechanism driving successful
democratization, although scholars also argue that elite capacity has some explanatory power (Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Way 2005; Easter 1997; Joseph 1997). In cases where elite capacity is low, the chance for successful democratization increases.

I now turn to the second democratization puzzle: what accounts for the presence of hybrid regimes? Although most of the authors discussed thus far have focused on explaining the first question, some have also attempted to explain the second. Their findings are that opposition cohesion and elite capacity also explain the hybrid-regime outcome (Bunce 1999; van de Walle 2002; Way 2005; Easter 1997; McFaul 2002). These findings are further confirmed by hybrid-regime scholars who have incorporated at least some of the countries from both regions into their analyses (Levitsky and Way 2002 and forthcoming; Howard and Roessler 2006; Schedler 2006; Carothers 2002). According to these authors, hybrid regimes emerge in situations where the opposition is fragmented but elite capacity is too low to fully exclude the opposition from participating in the new government or to fully consolidate authoritarian rule. Hence, this new government will be marked by deadlock, and democratic reform will be either stalled or diluted.

Within the hybrid regime category, two different election outcomes are possible, but the end result is invariably a hybrid regime. In the first group, which comprises 40% of the countries in this sample, the opposition manages to win the first multiparty elections, despite being fragmented, but is unable to work together within the new government and to keep the old authoritarian elites at bay. Although the opposition may attempt to initiate pro-democratic reform, the old elites will be able to effectively block any major changes to the political system (Bunce 1999). Furthermore, given the typically poor performance of the new
government, the opposition is voted out of office in the subsequent elections, and replaced by the “reformed” old elites. This, in turn, stalls pro-democratic reform.

This two steps forward, one step back scenario can be clearly seen in the transition process of Moldova. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Moldovan Communist Party was banned in 1991. Moldova’s first president, Snegur, ran unopposed during the first free presidential elections, riding a wave of anti-Soviet sentiment. However, his term in office quickly became complicated by a part of the original opposition movement that sought reunification with Romania. This created a rift within the government, and pitted Snegur against a large portion of the leadership and the population, who opposed the reunification. The internal squabbling in Snegur’s administration gave the ex-communists ample time to marshal their resources and reform under the new label Agrarian Democratic Party (ADP). In the first legislative elections, held in 1994, the ADP, along with their allies, the Socialist Party, garnered 65% of the vote. In the late 1990’s, Moldova switched from a presidential to a parliamentary system to prevent future presidents from consolidating executive power. The ADP has continued to gain a majority of parliamentary seats in all subsequent elections, and “has used its dominance and cohesiveness to gain virtually unilateral control over state media and the courts system---both of which had maintained autonomy in the 1990’s,” (Way 2005, 253). However, the ex-communists have not been able to fully dominate the political process, with opposition groups and the masses challenging the government on contentious issues, and preventing a complete consolidation of party power.

In the second group of hybrid regime countries, the opposition loses the first multiparty elections, as a result of electoral manipulation and voter intimidation by the incumbent, but still manages to gain a minority of seats in the legislature. At the same time,
the incumbent and his party perform equally poorly, and manage to hold on to office by a slim margin. As a result, the incumbent cannot prevent a significant parliamentary opposition from arising, and this opposition keeps the incumbent party in check, ensuring that at least some of the gains made during the initial transition period are preserved (van de Walle 2002). In these cases, it is clear that the incumbent cannot survive a reasonably free and fair election against a united opposition.

For example, in Kenya, President Moi barely survived the first free presidential elections, winning only 36% of the popular vote. Although these elections were not deemed free and fair by the international community, part of the reason for Moi’s victory was the highly fragmented nature of the opposition. In the parliamentary elections held that same year, Moi’s party, Kenya African National Union (KANU), which had held power for forty years, received an equally dismal proportion of the vote, 24.5%. The next largest share of votes went to the opposition party Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD)-Asili, who received 20.6%. Moi went on to win the next presidential elections in 1997.

In 2002, Moi’s was constitutionally barred from running for president, although some of his supporters proposed amending the constitution to allow him to run for a third presidential term. However, facing significant international and domestic pressure, Moi chose to step down peacefully, and appoint a successor, instead. Moi’s successor, Kenyatta, lost the presidential elections to Kibaki, who had run against Moi in the past two elections. Kibaki’s opposition party National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) similarly won by a landslide in the 2002 parliamentary elections, proving that opposition victory is possible if the opposition parties ban together, (see Ndegwa 2003). The removal of Moi and KANU from
office clearly shows that political liberalization is possible in hybrid regimes, given the incumbent adheres to the democratic rules of the game.

As my analysis of the postcommunist space and Sub-Saharan Africa has show thus far, there are a number of important methodological and theoretical reasons for including the two regions in one broad, cross-regional framework of post-Cold War wave democratization. To recap, both regions show a similar level variation on the dependent variable, regime outcome. Both regions have undergone transitions at roughly the same time and for largely similar reasons. Furthermore, scholars of both regions, be they transitologists or hybrid-regime scholars, point to the same causal mechanisms driving regime outcomes. More specifically, we should see 1) successful democratization in cases where opposition cohesion is high and elite capacity low, 2) a continuation of authoritarianism where elite capacity is high and opposition cohesion low, and 3) a hybrid regime where both elite capacity and opposition cohesion are low.

In the following section, I incorporate all of the arguments made so far into one theoretical framework. I present a cross-national statistical analysis that encompasses the postcommunist space and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the full range of regime outcomes, democracy, autocracy, and hybrid regime.
Section Three: Statistical Analysis

Theories and Hypotheses

In the analysis presented in this section, I test for the effects of elite capacity, opposition cohesion, and civil society strength on the level of democratization achieved by 2002. My findings indicate that while democratization scholars are absolutely correct in arguing that opposition cohesion has a significant democratizing effect, they have largely miscalculated the important role that civil society plays during the transition process. While a strong civil society is critical for successful democratization, it is also equally important for hybrid regimes that often have a fragmented opposition competing for office. (This point is further elaborated upon in Section Four.

This section is organized in the following way: Before proceeding with the description of my main independent variables, I present a brief discussion of factors that are not incorporated in the model presented here. More specifically, this model excludes long-term structural and economic variables. Then, I empirically evaluate the claim made by post-Cold War wave scholars that the transition period serves as a critical juncture for the course democratization has taken in SSA and PCS in the past fifteen years. Following, I introduce my dependent and independent variables, and present three different models that test the hypotheses outlined in Section Two. I conclude by summarizing the findings of the statistical analysis.
What is not in the Model: Structural and Economic Variables

Before I present my statistical analysis, it is important to note that this analysis excludes both long-term structural and economic variables. For one, there are no indicators for economic development and reform that are comparable across both SSA and PCS because the two regions have distinctly different economic structures. More specifically, for the Postcommunist Countries any discussion of economic development centers on the pace of economic liberalization and privatization of state assets. As most studies of post-Soviet democratization reveal, countries that managed a quick transition to a capitalist/free-market economy, such as the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and the Baltics, were also the fastest and most efficient democratizers (Vachudova 2005; Bunce 1999; Fish 1998 and 1999). Although this correlation does not necessarily imply causation, there is reason to believe that a more successful democratic transition is partly responsible for the fast pace of economic reform. The postcommunist transition period created unique incentives for the ruling elite to postpone a full transition to a free-market economy by capitalizing on the rent-seeking opportunities generated by partial reform (Hellman 1998). In countries where the ex-communists retained at least some control of the political system, such as Russia and Ukraine, the revenue generated by partial reform undeniably put these elites at a competitive advantage vis-à-vis the democratic opposition.

The relationship between economic development and democratization in SSA is less clear. Most SSA countries have overwhelmingly large rural populations and the primary economic sector is agricultural. Thus, it makes little sense to speak of African economic liberalization or free-market economies, particularly at a time when most African countries
are in a period of deep fiscal crisis. Instead, most Africanist scholars focus on the impact of foreign aid and IMF structural funds on the extent of political liberalization and democratization (Bienen and Herbst 1996; Joseph 1997; Bratton and van de Walle 1992). A particularly popular view in the field is that extensive foreign aid is detrimental to the process of democracy-building in the region, as corrupt government elites use these funds to finance their extensive patronage networks, and to retain control of the political system (van de Walle 2001). Thus, although rent-seeking opportunities are prevalent in both regions, the causal mechanisms behind the creation of these opportunities are vastly different. This becomes even more apparent when one takes into account the role that foreign aid has played in the postcommunist region. For Eastern European countries, European Union funding and leverage have contributed to the eradication of rent-seeking opportunities not to their proliferation (Vachudova 2005).

Although it is difficult to find comparable economic variables for both regions, structural variables, such as geographic region and ethnic composition of society, as well as presence of military coups and civil war, are relatively easy to include in the analysis. Indeed, in preliminary versions of the analysis presented here, these variables were introduced into the theoretical framework. Earlier versions of the analysis included dummy variables for both regions, the presence of civil conflict, incidence of military coups, as well as an indicator of ethnic fragmentation. All of these variables had an insignificant effect on the level of democratization, and made the model less efficient. As such, I decided to abandon these controls, and only include the variables pertinent to our discussion thus far: elite capacity, opposition cohesion, and strength of civil society.
As I already mentioned above, scholars of both regions find that a cohesive opposition movement is crucial for democratic breakthroughs. However, I also test the importance of two other sets of actors—the old political elites and civil society. Powerful elites have the capability, as well as incentive, to stymie the transition process, while a strong civil society has the potential to agitate for political change and democracy. Although various scholars have previously tested the significance of each set of actors separately, or in combination of two (Howard and Roessler 2006; Shin 2006; Levitsky and Way forthcoming), all three variables have yet to be included in one over-arching theoretical framework of democratic transitions, (for one exception see Bratton and van de Walle 1997). I now examine the significance of the transition period and look at the three independent variables in turn.

The Transition Period

I argue that the initial transition moment, which I define as the year the first multiparty elections were held, was the most critical period for the development of regime change and, consequently, for the level of democracy achieved by 2002. The selection of the year 2002 is not arbitrary, but rather the reflection of the most recently available data from the Polity Project data set\(^7\), which most effectively operationalizes my dependent variable. In cases where the elections for the executive and the legislature are not simultaneous, I consider the transition period to be the earlier of the two. For most countries in SSA, the transition period spans the years 1990-1997. However, there are several exceptions. Five

\(^7\) Polity Project IV data set is available online at http://www.cidem.umd.edu/polity/
countries did not hold elections during this period: Congo-Kinshasa, Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia, and Swaziland. For these countries, I measure all the relative variables for 1997, the last year in the region’s overall transition period. Furthermore, Botswana and Mauritius have both held a series of multiparty elections before 1990. For these countries, I measure all the relative variables for 1989 and 1991, respectively.

I briefly address the importance of the transition period here by comparing the Freedom House scores of each country, spanning the time period of one year prior to the transition to 2002. My findings indicate that the transition period is indeed crucial, as the majority of the regimes in the analysis currently have a Freedom House score that is the same as the score during the transition period. This finding reinforces the argument made by transitology scholars that to understand the long-term success or failure of the democratization process we must evaluate the actions taken at the individual level by key actors during the transition process.

How similar are regimes today to the way they looked before, during, and after the transition period? If the transition period is not relatively important, then the first multiparty elections should have little, to no impact, on the success or failure of democratization. Instead, historical and structural factors, which have developed over time, and effectively predate the transition period, should drive the democratization process. Conversely, if the transitology argument is correct, and actors, not structural factors, drive the transition process, then a country’s regime in 2002 should roughly resemble its regime type during and after the transition period. Furthermore, if the transitology approach is correct in assuming that the founding elections represent a significant break with the past, then a country’s

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8 In 1998, Swaziland held its first legislative elections since the 1970’s. However, Swaziland still remains a monarchy, and the king has absolute power over the executive, legislature, and judiciary. This being the case, it is impossible to consider legislative elections as moments of possible transition.
regime type during the transition period should look markedly different than the one it has immediately prior to the transition.

Turning to the Freedom House Tables 1-6, we see that in SSA, 11 out of 47 countries, or only 23%, have a different regime type in 2002, as compared with the transition period. Among the PCS, six of the 25 countries, or 24%, currently have a regime type that differs from the transition period. Thus, since the transition period, only 23.5% of the countries in the sample have undergone regime change. Of these, only five countries have managed to develop from competitive authoritarian to fully democratic regimes since the initial transition period: Ghana, Lesotho, Senegal, Croatia, and Romania.

To state it differently, these Freedom House tables indicate that over 75% of the countries in the sample have the same regime type in 2002 as they did in the transition period. Furthermore, the Freedom House tables also indicate that there is a significant difference between regime type in the year prior to the transition period and the transition period, itself. In SSA, 20 countries, or 42%, have a different regime type in the transition period, as compared to one year prior; and the percentage is almost the same for PCS, where 10 regimes, or 40%, have a different regime type. This evidence certainly supports the statements put forth by scholars who argue in favor of the transitology approach to analyzing regime change.

*The Dependent Variable: Level of Democracy*

My definition of the level of democracy is based on that of Bratton and van de Walle’s, who argue that the essence of democracy is the “the right of all adults to vote and
compete for public office and elected representatives to have a decisive vote on public policies,” (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, 217). Although Bratton and van de Walle use the Freedom House political rights score to operationalize this definition, I believe that the Polity score provides us with extra conceptual leverage in measuring the level of democracy. Unlike the Freedom House rankings, which measure the presence of only pro-democratic political institutions, the Polity score is a composite indicator that measures both the presence of institutionalized democracy and autocracy. This is particularly helpful in capturing the contradictory elements of hybrid regimes. As such, the Polity score measures democracy on a continuous scale, ranging from -10 (full autocracy) to 10 (full democracy).

Independent Variables:

Elite Capacity

O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) argue, there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself between the hard-liners and the soft-liners. However, recent scholarship shows that in postcommunist and African states, elite splits were not the main impetus for political reform. Rather, the old elites initiated liberalization of the political space in reaction to international and domestic pressure (Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Way 2005; Easter 1997; Joseph 1997). Although

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9 Although I agree with Dahl (1998) that political freedoms and democratic institutional arrangement alone do not guarantee that liberal democracy will be upheld, but that democracy is also a process of protecting and assuring civil liberties, I believe that such a definition is outside the scope of this analysis. Dahl’s definition speaks primarily to the consolidation of democracy, which only a handful of the countries in this analysis have yet achieved. As such, I focus solely on the level of political freedom achieved by 2002.

10 The measurement of the Polity score fits in line with my argument that political freedom, and not civil liberties drive the democratization process. Polity explicitly states that its composite democracy and autocracy measures do not code for the presence or absence of civil liberties, only for institutionalized political freedom, (Polity IV Project Data User’s Manual, 13).
elite splits are not the chief causal mechanism driving democratization, these splits are important because they severely undermine the capacity of the old government to manipulate the transition process. Easter (1997) notes that postcommunist elites that entered the transition relatively intact successfully retained their monopoly on power resources throughout the transition period, and prevented the opposition from altering the traditional means of acquiring power in the political system. On the other hand, if the elites were highly fragmented, they could not prevent the opposition from gaining control of the transition process and denying the old elites their access to power resources. As a result, the old elites were forced to compete for power in the same manner as the new political actors in the transition phase (Easter 1997, 187; McFaul 2002).

There are several reasons for the appearance of such a division among the ranks of the elite. International pressure for democratization, particularly from potential aid donors like the IMF and the World Bank, may create tension between those elites that wish to maintain a tight hold over the political system at all costs, and elites that are willing to open up the system in exchange for further aid (Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Bienen and Herbst 1996). Furthermore, some soft-liners might opt for liberalization in response to growing protest against the regime from the masses and opposition groups (Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Bunce 1999). Whatever the reasons behind such elite splits, once the division becomes apparent, the chances for democratization increase (O’Donnell and Schmitter). However, measuring the preferences and motivations for such elite splits is incredibly difficult. It is almost impossible to get into the heads of elites, even when autobiographical accounts or surveys exist, as there is always incentive to provide misinformation.
If we cannot assess elite preferences, then the next best course of action is to measure the capacity of elites to retain power in the face of possible transition. In other words, we must look for reasons that elites may become weaker and unable to maintain control of the transition process. As Howard and Roessler point out, one of the central findings of democratization literature is that economic crisis is often linked to regime transitions, (see Geddes, 1999; Haggard and Kaufman, 1995). An economic crisis undermines support for an authoritarian regime, divides the ruling elites, and creates opportunities for the opposition to mobilize (Howard and Roessler, 2006, 373) In moments of economic crisis, elites are less capable of maintaining the patronage networks that serve as the foundation for regime support (Bratton and van de Walle 1992; van de Walle 2001; Bienen and Herbst 1996; Collins 2004). Additionally, given a lack of financial resources, elites will be less likely to buy off the electorate, or to co-opt the opposition. Conversely, if the authoritarian regime is experiencing a moment of relative prosperity directly before and during the transition period, then it will stand a much greater chance of winning the elections, be it legitimately or fraudulently, (legitimately because the electorate will associate economic growth with the regime, and fraudulently because it will have more resources at its disposal to manipulate the transition process).

To operationalize this idea, I calculate the average level of economic growth---measured as the percent change in GDP---in each country for the five years prior to the transition year. Several Post-Soviet countries are missing data for the five-year period, in which case I calculate the change from the earliest year available. I expect that lower or negative levels of GDP growth will result in a higher democracy score in 2002.
Opposition Cohesion

Scholars of both regions strongly agree that opposition cohesion, particularly during election-time, is critical for successful democratization (Bunce 1999; Vachudova 2005; Bratton and van de Walle 1992; Howard and Roessler 2006; Olukoshi 1999; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; van de Walle 2002). I define opposition cohesion as the willingness (and capacity) of various opposition groups to ban together, despite ideological differences, for the purpose of jointly contesting the elections.

A cohesive opposition increases the prospects for democratization in several ways. First, it takes votes away from the ruling regime and introduces the possibility of a democratic regime turnover (Bunce 1999; Fish 1999). Second, it prevents the incumbent regime from utilizing a divide-and-conquer-strategy, in which the government manipulates, co-opts, and represses less powerful opposition parties (van de Walle 2002). Third, the government will be less likely to engage in electoral manipulation for fear of public backlash from the opposition supporters (Howard and Roessler 2006). These factors all contribute to the institutionalization of democratic practices in a previously closed political regime. Furthermore, opposition candidates, once in power, will be more likely to keep their campaign promises and to stick to the democratic rules of the game because they realize that the same electorate that voted them into office may just as easily vote them out (Bunce 1999).

Opposition cohesion is important because only by presenting a united front can the opposition successfully beat the authoritarian incumbent. In the initial transition period, there is a large degree of asymmetry between the ruling party and the opposition movements, and the latter typically face an uphill battle in persuading voters to choose them over the
incumbent, (Howard and Roessler 2006, 371). There are several reasons for this asymmetry: One, most of the resources used to fund electoral campaigns are concentrated in the hands of the old elite, while opposition parties rely on a handful of patrons, usually their leaders, to finance their activities. Writing about the general weakness of African opposition parties, Olukoshi notes that as part of the strategy employed by incumbent regimes to weaken the opposition, public sector patronage was withdrawn from private sector business organizations that were sympathetic to or identified with the opposition (Olukoshi, 1999, 29). As a result, opposition parties lack the sufficient resources to build a nationwide political party that has the capacity to effectively challenge the incumbent. This problem is further exacerbated in ethnically diverse states, where regional opposition parties run on platforms that appeal to only their own ethnic groups.

Two, during the transition moment, information asymmetries prevail as the government still has unequivocal control of the media and thus the capacity to discredit the opposition in the public eye. For example, in Romania, the government publicly accused the pro-democratic opposition of plotting with the Hungarian minority in Transylvania to overthrow the regime (Verdery 1996). This resulted in a public backlash against the opposition movement, who were by far more democracy-oriented that the government elites. Given these asymmetries, the only way opposition parties have the capacity to overthrow the incumbent is by pooling their resources and presenting a united front during election time that appeals to a majority of voters.

The opposition cohesion variable in this analysis is a dichotomous variable, with 0 indicating little to no opposition cohesion and 1 indicating significant opposition cohesion. For SSA, I use the Bratton and van de Walle Opposition Cohesion measure, taken from the
Political Regimes and Regime Transitions in Africa data set.\footnote{Bratton and van de Walle’s “Political Regimes and Regime Transitions in Africa: A Comparative Handbook” is available online at the University of Michigan International Consortium for Political and Social Research.} For the Post-Soviet cases, I rely on my own knowledge of the region, as well as Bunce’s 1999 article “The Political Economy of Post Socialism.” My expectation is that cases with opposition cohesion will have a much higher democracy score in 2002 than those that do not.

\textit{Civil Society}

Until very recently, the role civil society plays in democratic transitions has been largely undertheorized. Most scholars of the post-Cold War wave of democratization agree that civil society is typically too weak, repressed, and disorganized to affect any real change in the transition period (Randall and Svasand 2002; Bienen and Herbst 1996; van de Walle 2002; El-Khawas 2001). This is particularly true of countries in Africa, as well as most countries in the Post-Soviet region. This is not to say that a vibrant civil society is not an important component of democracy---it absolutely is (Diamond 1999; Dahl 1998). However, scholars argue that strong civil society is most important for the consolidation of democracy and not necessarily for its inception.

Despite this prevailing skepticism of the importance of civic groups for transition moments, a recent trend in the study of post-Cold War wave transitions is to incorporate social movements into the democratization paradigm. Largely pioneered by Freedom House, and driven by the Colored Revolutions in the NIC, this new literature argues that civic groups are crucial to the transition process because they put the greatest amount of pressure on the old regime to change (Karatnycky and Ackerman 2005; Bunce 2003; Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Fish 1999; Bratton and van de Walle). This has certainly been the case in a number of

Furthermore, within the postcommunist space, the most successful transitions to democracy began with mass protest: Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia (Bunce 2003). Bunce identifies numerous ways that mass mobilization helped democratic transitions in Eastern and Central Europe. Mass mobilization signaled the breakdown of the authoritarian order; created a sense that there was an alternative to that order; forced authoritarian leaders to bargain with the opposition; and gave opposition a resource advantage when bargaining with the elites (Bunce 2003, 172).

Given this new theoretical shift, I test the significance of a strong civil society during the transition period. I measure civil society strength based on the data from Freedom House’s *How Freedom is Won* report, which rates the strength of civic movements during the transition period on a three-point scale. Karatnycky and Ackerman, the authors of the report, define civil society as a grassroots conglomeration of civic forces that includes civic organizations, students, and trade unions, who may turn to mass protests, strikes, boycotts, blockades, and other forms of civic disobedience to affect political change. The report codes all PSC, as well as almost half the countries in SSA. I rely on the Bratton and van de Walle data set to code the remaining countries myself. The data set provides information on the number of trade unions and civic organizations active during the transition period, as well as the number of political protests, in each SSA country. The Bratton and van de Walle data
correlates nicely with that available from the Freedom House report. I expect that countries with stronger civil societies will have a higher democratization score in 2002.

**Cross-National Statistical Analysis**

Having specified my theoretical argument, I now turn to statistical analysis, using OLS regression to test my hypotheses, and better understand what accounts for regime outcomes across the post-Cold War wave. I ran three separate models to capture the difference in regime outcomes between successful, unsuccessful, and partial democratizers. Model 1 tests the impact of elite capacity, opposition cohesion, and civil society strength across all the countries in SSA and the postcommunist space. Hence, the model evaluates the first puzzle dealt with in this paper: what accounts for successful democratization? However, we also want to know what accounts for the presence of hybrid regimes, (the second puzzle), and why those regimes developed differently than the other two regime types in the analysis, autocracies and democracies. To capture the differences among the three regime types, I introduce two restricted models. Model 2 tests the effects of our three variables among Free and Partly Free regimes, thus evaluating the significant factors that pushed democratization further in the Free countries than in the Partly Free. Model 3 tests the effects of our three variables among Partly Free and Not Free regimes, and lets us see what sets apart hybrid regimes from autocracies. Table 8 reports the findings of the analysis, with coefficients, standard errors, and significance levels for the three variables in the models.
Interpreting the Results

The results in Table 8 fit quite nicely with my theory. In Model 1, both opposition cohesion and civil society strength are statistically significant at the .01 level and have the predicted sign. These results lead us to conclude that countries that are the more successful democratizers by 2002 had cohesive opposition movements and vibrant civil societies at the time of the transition, meaning that these two groups were crucial in driving democratic reform. The coefficients for these two variables are significantly large, 3.786 and 3.108, respectively. This indicates that the presence of cohesive opposition movements during the transition process increased the level of democratization by roughly three points. This is a very significant increase given that the dependent variable, the level of democracy, is on a twenty-point scale. Likewise, the presence of a vibrant civil society had a significantly large and positive effect on the level of democratization.

In Model 2, which compares the levels of democratization between democracies and hybrid regimes, we see that only the opposition cohesion variable is statistically significant at the .01 level. This leads us to conclude that chief reason that hybrid regimes did not attain a similar level of democratization as democracies is the absence of a cohesive opposition during the first multiparty elections. This finding underscores the importance of cohesive opposition movements for successful democratization, and corresponds nicely with the arguments made by democratization scholars. Once again, the coefficient for the opposition cohesion variable is rather large, 3.435, indicating that the presence of a cohesive opposition during the transition period increased the level of democratization by roughly three points.
Model 3 compares the levels of democratization between hybrid regimes and autocracies. For this model, only the strength of civil society variable is statistically significant at the .05 level. The coefficient is relatively large, 2.534, indicating that the presence of a strong civic movement noticeably increased the level of democratization. This model shows that what sets apart hybrid regimes from autocracies is the extent of civil society strength during the transition period. In other words, regimes that had strong civic movements during election time, despite having typically fragmented oppositions, managed to initiate much more extensive democratic reform. This is the primary reason that these regimes emerged as hybrids, rather than autocracies.

The elite capacity variable is statistically insignificant across all models, although the sign on the coefficient is in the right direction, indicating that higher levels of elite capacity correspond to lower levels of democratization. This finding contradicts the argument made by some scholars that weakened elite capacity has a positive effect on the extent of political liberalization. In particular, this finding challenges the assumption of hybrid regime scholars who argue that low elite capacity, coupled with low opposition cohesion, results in a hybrid regime outcome. In fact, in Model 3 we see that elite capacity and opposition cohesion are irrelevant to the formation of hybrid regimes, and it is civil society that distinguishes these regimes from their authoritarian counterparts.

One possible explanation for the insignificance of the elite capacity variable across all models is that the variable has been mis-specified, and that the percent change in GDP does not adequately capture the ability of the old elites to manipulate the transition process. However, in a number of preliminary models, I tested two different conceptualizations of the elite capacity variable. The Bratton and van de Walle 1997 data set provides measures for
elite repression and elite cohesion in SSA. These are two important components of elite
capacity: elite repression measures the capability of the old elites to control the reform
process through physical manipulation, while elite cohesion taps the ability of the old elites
to present a united front against the opposition and retain control of power resources.
Surprisingly, both variables came out statistically insignificant. Given this fact, I did not
attempt to construct similar measures for the postcommunist space. Even if these measures
did prove to be statistically significant for the PCS (which is arguable), they would have
created a regional effect in the model, which is precisely what this analysis strives to avoid.

In short, the statistical analysis presented here confirms the longstanding argument
made by democratization scholars that opposition cohesion is crucial to successful
democratization. However, it also points to the importance of a vibrant civil society in
affecting positive regime change. When coupled together, the two groups produce a
democratic regime. When a cohesive opposition is absent during the founding elections, a
strong civil society still has the capability of creating momentum for democratic reform, and
ensuring that the old elites do not revert back to authoritarianism. In the following section, I
explore these arguments in greater detail by drawing on a number of specific cases to
demonstrate the dynamic between elites, opposition groups, and civil society, and the roles
that these groups play in the transition process. Furthermore, I show how the outcome of the
founding elections condition the prospects of democratization further down the line.
Section Four: Regime Transitions as a Path-Dependent Process

As the statistical analysis in the previous section suggests, there were two causal mechanisms that dictated the outcome of the first multiparty elections: opposition cohesion and civil society strength. Whether a country emerged from the transition phase as a full democracy, a hybrid regime, or an autocracy was largely predicated on the relative strength and capability of these two different sets of actors. However, as I have argued above, it was not only the transition period that was affected by the various combinations of opposition cohesion/fragmentation and civil society strength, but the long-term prospects for democratization, as well. Following the outcome of the first multiparty election, seventy-five percent of the countries in this sample found themselves “locked into” their regime type, clearly indicating building and maintaining democratic institutions is a path-dependent process (Pierson 1995)\(^\text{12}\). In this section, I elaborate in greater detail on both the short-term and the long-term democratizing effects of these two groups of actors by presenting four short case studies that illustrate the three different regime outcomes.

\(^{12}\) Formal definitions of path dependence are rare, and almost always subject to the scholar’s interpretation. However, more generally, path dependence refers to the notion that specific patterns of timing and sequence matter, and that large consequences may result from ostensibly small events. Furthermore, certain events have the potential to become “critical junctures,” meaning that they set the course for political development in a particular direction that becomes impossible to reverse as time goes on (Ikenberry 1994; Krasner 1989). In the context of regime transitions, path dependence implies that once a country has started down a particular track, or trajectory, the costs for reversing that trajectory are very high. As Margaret Levi points out, “There will be other choice points, but the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice,” (Levi 1997: 28). Thus, earlier events matter more than later ones, and different sequences of events may produce entirely different outcomes, or regime types. In this analysis, the transition period is the “critical juncture,” and the ways in which the first multiparty elections play out dictate the long-term success or failure of democratization.
As the discussion so far has shown, regime outcomes following the initial transition period have persisted over time, well into the present decade. As the Freedom House Tables indicate, of the nineteen countries in this sample that were rated as democracies in the transition period, only three (The Gambia, Malawi, and Zambia) have slipped back into hybrid regimes. Thus, countries that became democracies in this period have largely remained democracies. Similarly, of the nineteen autocracies in this sample, only two (Burkina Faso and Mauritania) managed to transition to hybrid regimes following the onset of multiparty politics. As is to be expected, most of the movement along the democracy-autocracy continuum has been in the hybrid regime category. By 2002, out of a total of thirty-three countries, only five hybrid regimes (Ghana, Lesotho, Senegal, Croatia, and Romania) transitioned to democracies and five more (Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Belarus, and the Kyrgyz Republic) reverted to authoritarianism. More recently, in 2006, Ukraine has finally completed its democratic transition, while Russia has lapsed back into dictatorial rule. Hence, even in this category, which is so frequently characterized by its political instability, roughly two-thirds of the countries have retained the same type of regime.

I argue that the starting point of inquiry into the relationship between founding election outcomes and long-term democratization is understanding that path dependence, as a social process, is grounded in the dynamic of “increasing returns” (Pierson 2000). Meaning, institutions or processes, once established generate feed-back mechanisms that reinforces these institutions, and make switching to a different course of action extremely difficult and costly (North 1990). In the context of post-Cold War transitions, the winners of the founding elections dictate the new rules of the game: they either create new institutions and procedures
that reinforce the process of democratic reform, or they resurrect old authoritarian institutions and practices that prevent further reform from taking place (Easter 1997; Jones-Luong 2000). Although, typically, civil society’s role in creating new democratic institutions is less clearly defined, the cases in this sample show that civic action can have a profound effect on the initiation of the democratization process and on the long-term adherence to the new rules of the game.

**New Democracies**

In new democracies, where a cohesive opposition won the founding elections, the new pro-democratic government set explicit limits on executive power, which constituted a definitive break with the authoritarian past (Bunce 1999, Bunce and Wolchik 2006). These successful democracies typically adopted a parliamentary system, which gave parliament the capability to check the president, thereby preventing the consolidation of one-party rule (Easter 1997).13 Furthermore, the new government was much more likely to enshrine the principle of checks on executive power in a new constitution that empowered the courts, and made the judiciary an independent actor in determining the legitimacy of executive decisions and upholding the rule of law, (see Magnusson 2001).

Additionally, a cohesive and powerful opposition was much more successful in creating rifts within the old authoritarian elite and shifting the balance of power in favor of

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13 Of the twenty-two democracies in this sample, only seven countries currently have a presidential system: Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, and Senegal. The other fifteen are parliamentary systems: Botswana, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Mauritius, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and South Africa. Indeed, as a testament to the democratizing effects of adopting a parliamentary system, in a recent effort to speed up the pace of democratic reform, the Moldovan government opted to scrap the presidential system that allowed the ex-communists to consolidate their power over the past five years.
the new pro-democratic government. In such cases, during the period surrounding the founding elections, old elites sensed that the tide was turning against them, and that the opposition had gained significant support among the masses—significant enough to carry off a victory (Bunce 2003; Vachudova 2005; Bunce and Wolchik 2006). Perceiving the probability of a loss in the founding elections, rank-and-file members of the old elite deserted their old party, distancing themselves from the party bureaucracy and realigning themselves more closely with the opposition (Easter 1997; Hale 2005). By doing so, these elites indicated that they accepted and supported the new rules of the game, thereby solidifying the country’s commitment to political reform, and “locking” the country into a path of democratization.

An active civil society was important for successful democratic reform in three key ways. First, in most cases, the initial opening up of the authoritarian system was done in response to mass political protests against the government, which indicated to the old regime that political reform could no longer be forestalled (Bunce 1999; Fish 1998; Bratton and van de Walle 1992). These protests signaled the breakdown of authoritarian rule and created a widespread sense that there were alternatives to the old order (Bunce 2002, 172).14 These mass demonstrations indicated to the old elite that the opposition camp would have popular support during election time, and prompted the old elites to abandon authoritarianism and defect to the opposition. This is precisely why a successful democratic transition also hinges on decisive civic action, rather than solely on opposition cohesion.

Second, a vibrant civil society severely limited the options available to the old elites during the transition period. If the opposition could mobilize widespread support among the

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14 As Table 7 indicates, of the successful democracies in this sample, thirteen had highly active civic groups as the time of the transition, six had moderately active civic groups, and only three had weak civic organizations.
population, this raised the cost of incumbent attempts to perpetuate electoral fraud, made it less likely that fraud would succeed, and perhaps deterred the incumbent from attempting it in the first place (Hale 2005, 141). Any attempts to do so carried the risk of mass uprisings, which would be costly to suppress and threaten the country’s stability. In SSA, in particular, where post-colonial rule was marred by political protests and subsequent military coups, many incumbents were cautious about perpetrating overt electoral fraud.

Finally, an active civil society was instrumental in conditioning both the opposition and the old elites to adhering to the new rules of the democratic game. Once elected to office on the promise of democratic reform, opposition parties were bound to their platforms. Because both the opposition and the old elites had accepted the standard of free and fair multiparty elections, opposition parties were aware that a failure to carry out their promises could potentially result in a loss of power in the subsequent elections (Bunce 1999). This is indeed what happened in a number of cases, such as Poland, Hungary, and Benin. Interestingly, in these countries, it was the old, but reformed, elite that won the second multiparty elections. However, rather than reverting to their old ways, these elites were conditioned to follow through with the democratic reform initiated by the opposition and civil society, or risk being ousted out of office in the following elections. Hence, we see that the extent of civic protest and active participation in the elections process is, in itself, part of the dynamic of increasing returns.

**Poland:** Poland serves as perhaps the best example of a successful democratic transition in the post-Cold War era that was facilitated by both a highly cohesive opposition movement, Solidarity, and a particularly vibrant civil society, (especially in comparison with its Eastern
European neighbors.)\textsuperscript{15} The Pole’s first experience with mass resistance came in the 1930’s with the Nazi occupation, and the grassroots system that developed from that point onward was well organized, paving the way for future mobilization against the communists (Rothschild and Wingfield 2000). Well before the collapse of the Soviet Union, civil society voiced its discontent with the communists, the Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR), and their policies, and demanded greater political rights. Out of this discontent emerged Solidarity, a dockworkers’ trade union that attracted widespread popular support. By 1981, Solidarity’s membership grew to ten million, approximately a quarter of the Polish population (Derleth 2000).

Solidarity’s mass appeal was great cause for alarm among the communists, who banned the union and imprisoned its leader, Lech Walesa. However, by 1989, a wave of strikes, a desperate economy, a crumbling of the old Soviet-style institutions and the withdrawal of support from Moscow, convinced the communists that political reform was inevitable if they were to remain in power. As a result, in early 1989, the government invited Solidarity to roundtable negotiations on power-sharing (Vachudova 2005). Ostensibly, the Roundtable Agreement was a means of extricating Poland from authoritarian rule by providing for semi-competitive elections to take place later that year, and paving the way for a non-Communist government. In reality, the agreement was designed to postpone democracy, creating a broader, less restrictive dictatorship, by giving Solidarity a weak exercise in power (Bernhard 1997).

The Roundtable Agreement created new electoral rules for both the President and the National Assembly. The President would be elected by a majority vote of the combined

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\textsuperscript{15} On the traditional weakness of civil society in the post-Communist states, see Howard, 2002.
houses of the National Assembly, with a two-thirds quorum. The electoral provisions for the National Assembly were much more restrictive, and ensured the selection of a communist president. In the new elections, set for June 4, 65% of the Sejm (lower house) seats were reserved for the communists and their electoral allies. The remaining 35% of the seats and all of the hundred Senate seats were open to contestation in a national election. In this way, the communists expected to remain in power by maintaining a majority in the Sejm, and thus preventing the opposition from overriding presidential vetoes or rewriting the constitution (Bernhard 1997). However, if Solidarity could win control of the Senate and prevent the communists and their allies from gaining the few mandates that would give them a two-thirds majority in the Sejm, Solidarity could gain the power to block or slow legislation.

The results of the partially free elections proved disastrous for the communists. Solidarity took 99 seats in the Senate and took every mandate open to contestation in the Sejm. As a result, the communists’ coalition partners, the United Peasant Party (ZSL) and the Democratic Party (SD) defected, refusing to back the communist presidential candidate Wojciech Jaruzelski in the upcoming presidential election. The two parties wanted to distance themselves from the failed PZPR for future elections, and the ruling coalition quickly disintegrated (Bernhard 1997). The message sent by the masses was unequivocally in favor Polish democratization. Solidarity decided to form its own coalition in parliament under the head of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and Lech Walesa was elected president in 1990. Political reform was quickly implemented, the old institutions were completely overhauled, a new liberal constitution was approved by a national referendum in 1997, and a new electoral system, guaranteeing free and fair elections, was finalized in 1993.
It would be misleading to say that Poland’s transition to democracy was flawless. Shortly after the first elections, Solidarity splintered and dissolved. In the first completely free elections, held in 1991, no single party received more than 13% of the vote. In the following two years, Poland had three governments and experienced waves of strikes, (Vachudova 2005). In 1993, the post-communist Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD) and the ex-communist Polish Peasant Party (PSL) won a joint 66% of the seats in the Sejm and controlled the government for four years until the 1997 election. However, Poland’s transition was exceptional in that the governments in power, regardless of their previous political orientation, kept the political reforms apace. Similarly, the governments adhered to the will of the electorate and upheld the new constitution, stepping down when their time was up. In fact, no party or coalition has maintained power for more than one term at a time. Yet, due to the firm commitment to democratization in Poland, the new political system has stabilized. This is a true testament to democracy taking root in Poland.

**Benin:** Benin warrants closer examination here not only because it is considered one of the handful of democratization success stories in SSA, but also because it is an outlier on one of the two key variables in this sample. Benin is one of the two democratic countries in this analysis that had a relatively weak and fragmented opposition contest the first multiparty elections and emerge victorious, despite this fragmentation. However, the cohesive and active nature of the Beninese civic groups that pushed for democratic reform before and after the transition ensured that the incumbent would be ousted and that democratic reform could proceed unimpeded. Benin’s transitional experience highlights the importance of a vibrant

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16 Bulgaria is the other country.
civil society in the democratization process, and challenges the current strain of
democratization theories, which posits that opposition cohesion is the chief explanatory
variable in successful democratic transitions.

Following its independence from France in 1960, Benin witnessed a series of military
coups, and the its political system stabilized only when General Mathieu Kérékou seized
power in 1972, and promptly declared Benin to be a one-party Marxist-Leninist state.
Through the 1970’s, Kerekou managed to stabilize both the political and economic systems
by creating vast patronage networks and increasing state employment in hundreds of state-
owned enterprises (Magnusson 2001; 218). However, in the 1980’s, Benin, much like all the
other countries in SSA, lapsed into economic crisis due to the collapse of oil prices (van de
Walle 2001). In 1989, immediately following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Beninese civil
service workers, unions, church organizations, and to a more limited extent university
students, took to the streets in Cotonou, Benin’s capital, to protest against Kerekou’s regime
and the country’s economic decline (Bratton and van de Walle 1992, 422-423).

Unlike in Poland, however, these civic groups were not mobilized around a specific
opposition movement, like Solidarity. Indeed, the opposition’s leading candidate during the
founding elections, Nicéphore Soglo, was not an opposition party leader, but a technocrat in
the Kerekou government, elevated to the post of Prime Minister at the insistence of the
French government in exchange for economic aid (Bratton and van de Walle 1992, 435).
Nevertheless, despite the absence of a cohesive opposition movement to champion
democratic reform, civic protest, economic crisis, and international pressure, were sufficient
to prompt Kerekou to consider opening up the political system. By the end of 1989, Kerekou
allowed several independent civilian ministers into his government, pronounced general
amnesty, and renounced Marxism-Leninism (Bratton and van de Walle 1992, 424; Magnusson 2001, 218). The result of this political liberalization was similar to that of Poland: Kerekou’s own government allies began to desert him, his army officers distanced themselves from the regime, and part of the government-controlled trade union, the UNSTB, defected to the opposition camp (Bratton and van de Walle 1992, 424).

Following political liberalization in 1989, a reformist section of the political elites convinced Kerekou to hold a national conference to rebuild state authority (Magnusson 2001, 218; Brown and Kaiser 2007, 1135). The conference drew together all sectors of Beninese society: teachers, students, the military, government officials, religious authorities, non-governmental organizations, more than 50 political parties, labor unions, business interests, and farmers (Brown and Kaiser 2007, 1136). Kerekou initially believed that he could retain control over the 488-delegate conference. However, in February 1990, under the leadership of Soglo, the conference declared its sovereignty and established the mechanisms for a transition to a constitutional democratic regime, with a strong national assembly and a constitutional court (Magnusson 2001, 218). In exchange for a full pardon for any crimes committed, Kerekou peacefully ceded power, and by 1991, the Beninese electorate ratified a new constitution, and democratically elected Soglo as president (Brown and Kaiser 2007, 1136).

Although Soglo rode into office on a wave of promises to reform the political system and resurrect the failing economy, his term proved highly disappointing to the Beninese populace. Shortly after taking office, Soglo’s wife was implicated in corrupt activities, the crime increased drastically, and the economy plunged into another crisis (Magnusson 2001). Civil society took to the streets again, and another military coup was barely averted. On
August 2, 1994, in an attempt to consolidate power and remedy the failing economy, Soglo invoked emergency powers under the constitution to execute his own budget. The national assembly was outraged by what it perceived as an abuse of presidential power. Because Benin’s constitution requires the national assembly to fix a deadline limiting the validity of emergency powers, the assembly quickly voted for a deadline of August 5, and appealed the presidential action to the constitutional court (Magnusson 2001, 225). The court ruled in favor of the national assembly, asserting its new authority as the neutral final arbiter of executive-legislative disputes. This incident set an important precedent for future constraints on executive power, and demonstrated that the court was fully committed to upholding the rules outlined in the new constitution.

As can be seen above, the political environment in Benin in 1994 was highly volatile, and threatened long-term democratic stability in the country. However, despite the outbreak of protests against the Soglo government, civil society and the general populace chose to mediate its frustrations through formal institutional channels, such as political parties, government-union negotiations, and most importantly, elections (Magnusson 2001). In the 1996 presidential elections, Soglo’s principal opponent was none other than a newly-reformed Kerekou, who won the elections with ease. The result was a peaceful transfer of power from one democratically elected leader to another, which demonstrates the commitment of both elites and civil society to consolidating democracy in Benin. Furthermore, although both Kerekou and Soglo contested the 2001 presidential elections, with Kerekou winning by a slim margin, both men peacefully accepted that they were barred from running in the 2006 elections due to the age restrictions outlined in the constitution.
**Present-Day Autocracies**

In authoritarian regimes, the opposition was highly fragmented and weak at the time of the founding elections, and was inevitably crushed by the old regime. Whatever momentum for pro-democratic reform existed prior to the elections was subsequently stomped out by the old elite. However, in many cases, electoral victory for the old regime was not over-determined at the outset of the transition period, and possibility for regime turnover was genuinely possible even in the more repressive regimes (see Ivonhber et al. 2002).¹⁷

As I’ve already noted above, the first multiparty elections were a period of relative uncertainty and instability, and it was difficult for both the authoritarian elite and the opposition to effectively gauge their potential appeal to the electorate, as well as the power of their opponents. As we see in the cases of successful democratization, the possibility of opposition victory, translated into the defection of the key members of the old regime into the opposition camp, both before and after the elections. In authoritarian regimes, old elites may have been uncertain about the way that the elections would play out, but sensing the disorganized nature of the opposition, remained ostensibly loyal to the old regime. I say ostensibly because I take as given the assumption that political elites are motivated primarily by career security, and the desire to maintain or advance their positions (Hale 2005; Magalon 2006). If the elites judge that it would be more personally and politically beneficial

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¹⁷ For example, both Benin and Cameroon had similarly repressive regimes prior to the transition period, as well as highly unpopular incumbents contesting the founding elections. Yet, Benin managed a relatively fluid transition to democracy, while Cameroon remains under the oppressive leadership of Banda despite holding regular elections. However, there are some notable exceptions in the Central Asian countries: in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and, to a certain extent in Kazakhstan, the old regime’s manipulation of the electoral process, as well as the severe intimidation of the opposition sent clear signals to the electorate and to the opposition parties that the founding elections would not result in an electoral transfer of power.
to defect, they are more likely to do so, and in greater numbers, despite their ideological preferences over a certain type of political system.

In authoritarian regimes, the old elites adopted a wait-and-see strategy, suspending any definitive actions until after the first elections, which would send clear signals about the strength of the incumbent and the opposition. When the incumbent won the elections, be it through political manipulation or through a legitimate electoral mandate, the elites chose to throw their lots in with the winner, and accept the continuation of the old authoritarian regime. In doing so, they participated in the reinforcement of old authoritarian institutions that concentrated all the power in the executive, and allowed the incumbent to suspend further reform (Easter 1997). These countries quickly adopted presidential systems that placed all the power in the hands of the incumbent, while stripping the legislature of any true power (van de Walle 2003).

Thus, the outcome of the first multiparty elections gave the incumbent a carte blanche to manipulate the political system, crafting policies that would prevent the opposition from posing an effective challenge to authoritarian rule. The new constitutions and electoral reforms in these countries prohibited any checks on the executive power and disempowered the national courts. Electoral commissions and Constitutional Courts were staffed with supporters of the old regime, (see Makumbe 2002; Lansner 1994). Voting eligibility requirements were changed to exclude any potential dissenters of the regime (Makumbe 2002; Chirot 2006).

For example, following the founding elections in Cote d’Ivoire, president Henri Konan-Bédié and his camp created the concept of “Ivorité,” which excluded those that lived in the northern region of the country, the region where he received the least electoral support.
Bédié passed new citizenship laws that required proof that one’s parents had been born in Cote d’Ivoire, but this was for the most part only required of northerners. As a result, many northerners were stripped of their citizenship and classified as “foreigners,” (Chirot 2006, 68). Furthermore, Bédié introduced a new electoral code stipulating that a presidential candidate had to be born of Ivorian parents, thereby effectively sideling his only serious rival, Alassane Ouattara, a northerner (Bratton 1998, 58).

A passive civil society damaged the prospects for democratization in several ways. For one, the lack of civic protest against the regime indicated to the old elites that the opposition would have a highly difficult time mobilizing an electorate to vote in its favor, and thus, kept the old elites in the incumbent’s camp. Furthermore, as I note above, an active civil society was instrumental in opening up the political system and convincing the incumbent to convene founding elections. In SSA, in particular, this lack of protest allowed the incumbent to postpone the founding elections and marshal all of his resources to rig the elections.

In a parallel situation in the PCS, in the success cases, civic protest and demand for multiparty elections began years prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and severely limited the options available to the old elites. However, in the failed democratic transitions in Central Asia, talks of democratic reform were initiated by the incumbent only after the collapse of the USSR and conducted unilaterally by the old elite. In these cases, multiparty elections were convened not at the behest of the electorate, but used by the incumbent to legitimate a continuation of one-party rule.

Additionally, the absence of strong civic organizations hurts the prospects for long-term democratization because it does not provide opposition parties with sources for mass
mobilization around genuine issues of reform. Instead, as has been the case in most of SSA, opposition parties focus primarily on the politics of ethnic identity that appeal only to a small subset of the electorate (Randall and Svasand 2002, 41). The result is a highly fragmented opposition that avoids the important issue of democratic reform, and aims at securing representation and political favors for their particular ethnic or regional group (van de Walle 2003). This is also the pattern seen in Central Asia, where society is organized around clan lines, and political parties, where they do exist, represent only the interests of their clan (see Collins 2004; Jones-Luong 2000). Finally, this fragmented nature of the opposition makes it much easier for the incumbent to co-opt parties in the legislature in exchange for minor concessions, thereby lessening the odds that a cohesive opposition will challenge the government on grounds of genuine democratic reform.

**Cameroon:** Cameroon serves an excellent example of how the fragmentation of the opposition movement and the sporadic and disorganized nature of civic protest at the time of the founding elections translated into an easy victory for the incumbent, Paul Biya, and hindered the progress of incipient democratic reform. As in other present-day autocracies, Biya’s unlikely win in the founding elections set a precedent for the way multiparty elections were to be conducted from that point onward, and allowed Biya to develop a strategy of opposition cooptation that plagues the Cameroonian political system to this day.

The weakness of Cameroonian opposition parties and civil society stems from decades of cooptation and coercion into a single-party structure of the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM), formerly the Cameroon Nation Union (CMU), headed by President Biya. Indeed, these two groups played only a marginal in convincing the Biya
regime to democratize. Rather, Biya conceded to opening up the political space in response to international pressure for democratic reform, and as a means of appeasing his French benefactors. Nevertheless, at the time of the founding elections in Cameroon, domestic discontent with Biya’s regime was widespread, which led many international observers to conclude that the introduction of multiparty politics would inevitably result in Biya’s demise (Takougang 2003, 473).

A leading opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), did emerge in the early stages of the transition period. Led by Fru Ndi, the SDF boldly challenged the old regime with its unauthorized launching on May 1990, seven months before Biya had legalized party competition. This move earned the SDF tremendous national appeal, and convinced many observers that it was simply a matter of time before Fru Ndi and his party would replace Biya’s regime (Ihonvbere et al. 2003, 381).

The SDF was moderately successful at mobilizing civil society, although this was done in a highly disorganized and sporadic manner. In 1991, the SDF and other opposition parties organized a series of boycotts and demonstrations, known as Ghost Towns, aimed at stifling the national economy and forcing Biya to call a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) to discuss the nation’s political future, much like the one in Benin (Ihonvbere et al. 2003; Forje 2006). The SDF was overly confident that the demonstrations would force Biya to the negotiating table, or to step down entirely. Biya, of course, had little intention of bargaining with the opposition. Cleverly, instead of using brute force to squash the rebellions, and thereby drawing negative attention from the international community, Biya implemented a wait-and-see strategy that led the demonstrations to flounder, and eventually surrender.
Instead of holding the SNC, Biya authorized his prime minister to organize a Tripartite Conference, the regime’s version of the SNC that was stacked with regime supporters (see Takougang 2003; Takougang and Krieger 1998; Ihonvbere et al. 2003; Mbe Akoko and Mbuagbo Oben 2006, 37). The SDF participated in the early phases of the conference, but grew frustrated with its inability to influence the conference agenda, and withdrew its participants before the final accord was signed (Ihonhbere et al. 2003, 384). In the end, the Yaounde Tripartite Accord very much reflected the visions and aspirations of Biya’s regime, and served to divide the Cameroonian opposition.

Between 1991 and 1992, the SDF made a series of mistakes that severely undermined any leverage it had against the highly unpopular regime and fragmented the coalition of many opposition parties and civic groups, called the National Coordination of Opposition Parties and Associations (NCOPA). For one, the SDF failed to successfully carry off the Ghost Town projects, which created a rift between different factions of the NCOPA, with some groups arguing that the project had run its course and should be abandoned (Ihonhbere et al. 2003, 386). Two, they withdrew their representatives from the Tripartite Conference, while two other major opposition parties, the National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP) and the CDU, signed the final Accords. Most importantly, still angry over the dictatorial manner that the Biya regime conducted the conference, the SDF decided to not participate in the 1992 legislative elections. This proved to be the most serious mistake made by the SDF. According to most political observers, Biya and the CPDM were so politically weak in 1992 that the SDF would certainly have won the majority of the seats in the legislature and would have the opportunity to directly influence the political process (Ihonhbere et al. 2002, 382).
The fragmented state of the opposition was also seen in the presidential elections of 1992, in which the SDF did choose to participate. Going into the election, the SDF’s Fru Ndi was by far the most popular candidate, and could have easily won the elections had Bouba Maigari, the UNDP candidate, thrown his support behind Fru Ndi rather than running his own campaign. In the end, Biya received 40% of the national vote, as compared to Fru Ndi’s 36% and Bouba Maigari’s 19.2% (Olukoshi 2001, 273). Clearly, had the opposition banned together, Biya could have been easily deposed. Bouba Maigari then dealt another blow to the opposition by endorsing the outcome of the elections, while the SDF and other opposition parties were protesting the results (Ihonvbere et al. 2003, 387).

Bouba Maigari’s actions are telling of the way that the Cameroonian opposition parties have chosen to deal, and bargain, with Biya’s regime. Following Biya’s presidential victory, two high-ranking members of the UNDP accepted cabinet posts in the Biya government. Because both men accepted the positions without the approval of the party’s leadership, they were dismissed from the party. However, five years later, Bouba Maigari, himself, accepted a cabinet post in the Biya regime without party approval (Takougang 2003, 440; Ihonvbere et al 2003, 391). Even more discouraging for the state of Cameroonian opposition politics is that even the SDF, which has been fighting the Biya regime for over a decade, may be willing to be co-opted by the regime. In 2002, following the legislative elections in which the CPDM won a majority of the seats, reports circulated that the SDF was willing to join the administration if it was offered six cabinet positions, including the post of prime minister (Takougang 2003, 440).

The inability of the SDF to wrestle power away from the Biya regime in the early phases of the transition period had a devastating effect on the pace and extent of political
reform in Cameroon. However, the other major opposition parties are to blame as well. They have routinely allowed themselves to be manipulated and co-opted by the Biya regime, and are gladly willing to sacrifice democratic reform in exchange for personal wealth and a greater access of power to the political system (Ihonvbere 2003, 391). For its part, civil society played a very limited role in the transition process. Although the masses were willing to participate in boycotts and demonstrations, they did so with little planning and for only a short period of time. The continuation of the Biya regime well into 2007 has left many people apathetic to democratic reform and has fostered a general distrust in the political process. As a result, voter turn out is very low, and civil society has retreated into the private space (Forje 2006).

*Hybrid Regimes*

In hybrid regimes, where neither the old authoritarian elite nor the opposition manage to win a clear electoral mandate and are forced to govern in cooperation with the opposing side, the extent of democratization will necessarily be stalled until the opposition emerges victorious (Bunce 1999; McFaul 2002). As we already know, the likelihood of opposition victory hinges on its ability to form a cohesive coalition among various opposition parties and their supporters. Indeed, this is no easy task during the initial transition period, when numerous opposition parties attempt to carve out their niche in the incipient party system. These parties are tempted to secure the spoils of victory for themselves, and may be reluctant to consider sharing these spoils with others. However, it becomes even more difficult to form cohesive coalitions with subsequent elections, and to convince the electorate that an
opposition-led government is a viable alternative to the government of the day. This
dynamic, explored below, creates feedback mechanisms that lock the country into a hybrid
regime trajectory and prevents the consolidation of democracy.

In hybrid regimes, the rules of the game, as well as elite policy preferences, are ill-defined, as the opposing sides attempt to accomplish their contradictory agendas within the same political space. While the opposition pushes for further democratic reform, the old elites strive to preserve the status quo and hold on to the power resources left over from the old regime (Easter 1997). This situation is complicated by the fact that both the opposition and the old elites are weak and have to share institutional power (Bunce 1999). Typically, the incumbent, or his party, managed to win the presidency in the founding elections, but failed to prevent the opposition from gaining a significant portion of seats in the legislature. Thus, while the incumbent tried to rewrite the rules of the game to consolidate his power, the opposition was strong enough to block at least some of the anti-democratic reforms. The result is authoritarian rule coupled with some democratic reform that defines hybrid regimes (van de Walle 2002).

For opposition parties, gaining unequivocal control of both the executive and the legislature is key to crafting successful pro-democratic reform. However, there are a number of reasons that opposition parties in hybrid regimes have consistently failed to win a clear victory in the polls following the founding elections. Clearly, old elites still command many of the power resources left over from the old regime, which allows them to manipulate the electoral process (Howard and Roessler 2006). Yet, more importantly, opposition parties themselves have failed to pursue an effective strategy that would give them an advantage vis-à-vis the incumbent during election time or facilitate democratic reform.
One of chief problems with the strategy of the opposition is that party platforms are typically designed solely to attract enough voters in the hopes of winning the election, but lacking in substance or a clear direction for future political reform (Randall and Svasand 2002; van de Walle 2002; Fish 1998). As Randall and Svasand write about the state of African party politics, “…it seems to be that parties care little about presenting clearly distinguishable policy platforms, and that, if, exceptionally, they do, the platform has little relevance to what the party does once in office,” (2002, 33). Although the idea of pro-democratic reform may be popular among the masses, citizens are rarely mobilized along these lines. Instead, they are forced to choose among candidates representing regional or ethnic differences, or running on their personal popularity among a small group of voters. Hence, even when opposition candidates are elected to office, no coherent pro-democratic reform strategy emerges and no new institutions are created to “lock-in” that strategy.

Furthermore, because the party system is not yet fully crystallized, and coherent party agendas not yet defined, new parties spring up regularly around election time, and further add to the fragmentation of the embryonic party system (Randall and Svasand 2002; van de Walle 2002). Seeing that significant room still exists for newer parties to put forth their agendas and carve out their own niche in the party system, many (local/regional) elites are tempted to create their own parties in order to contest elections and reap the benefits of political power, rather than joining up with the already established opposition parties. As is the case with authoritarian regimes, even when these small opposition parties do manage to win seats in parliament, they are particularly prone to cooptation by the old elites. Thus, in hybrid regimes, the ill-defined rules of party competition that emerge following the initial
transition period allow for small parties to enter the political arena and fragment the party system, thereby reinforcing sporadic and fleeting democratic reform.

If opposition parties are unwilling or incapable of working together to further the democratic agenda, where does the impetus for political reform originate? If the opposition remains fragmented following the first multiparty elections, what prevents the old elites from capturing the political system and overhauling any of the democratic gains of the initial transition? The statistical analysis presented here reveals that the key causal mechanism in the level of democratization between hybrid regimes and autocracies is the presence of an active civil society. Although the role of civil society is largely undertheorized in the hybrid regime literature, I argue that civil society plays a key function in pushing forward democratic reform in these regimes.

It is true that, overall, civil society, was and is less vibrant in the hybrid regime category than in the democratic category, (see Table 7). Certainly, in the beginning of the transition period, civic groups played a more marginal role in demanding democratic reform and opening up the political space than in present-day democracies. However, by voting in at least some opposition parties in the founding elections, civil society did indicate to the old elites that democratic reform had to be put on the political agenda. Furthermore, as in the case of present-day democracies, the threat of public backlash against overt electoral manipulation made it more likely that the old elites would avoid such behavior. Hence, in hybrid regimes, civil society serves the same functions as in democratic regimes, as it waits for opposition parties to better define their platforms, form cohesive coalitions, and present a viable alternative to the ruling government of the day.
The growth of civic activism over the past decade and a half has led to further liberalization of the political space in many hybrid regimes. While civil society may have been relatively passive in the beginning phases of the democratic transition, due to the high level of uncertainty surrounding the incumbent’s willingness to use force and repression to punish regime dissenters, the recent years have seen a dramatic increase in civic protest against anti-democratic government policies. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Rose Revolution in Georgia showed the old elites that electoral fraud in national elections would not be tolerated, resulted in regime turnover, and served as an important starting point for renewed democratization (McFaul 2005; Harris Jr. 2004). Similarly, the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, although much less organized than in Ukraine and Georgia, did put an end to fifteen years of Akayev’s rule and resulted in a peaceful transfer of power (Radnitz 2006). In 2002 in Moldova, the communist government backed down from expanding Russian language instructions in schools, after thirty to eighty thousand protesters took to the streets for months (Way 2005). These events all show the capacity of an active civil society to affect the course of the transition and improve the quality of the democratization process.

**Ukraine:** The slow and painful process of democratization in Ukraine provides an excellent example of the opposition-civil society dynamic in hybrid regimes, and underscores the importance of civic activism following the initial transition period. In the decade following the 1991 founding elections, Ukraine developed a highly fragmented party system, which often made it impossible for the electorate to distinguish reformers from non-reformers, much less rally around a specific opposition party. Civil society itself, remained dormant throughout the 1990’s from fear of government brutality. Hence, towards the close of the 20th
century, many remained skeptical of Ukraine’s fragile electoral democracy and predicted a return to authoritarian-style politics (Nastych 2003; Kubicek 2001). However, in 2004, following the fraudulent presidential elections, about a million Ukrainians took to the streets of Kiev, and successfully deposed the old regime.

Both the opposition and the old communist elites emerged highly fragmented following the first multiparty elections. Ukraine’s first president, Leonid Kravchuk rose to power with the help of the nationalist movement who had supported independence from the Soviet Union. However, he was unable to appease the pro-Russian oligarchs based in the Eastern region of Ukraine. As a result, large sections of the eastern state bureaucracy undermined Kravchuk’s campaign for reelection by supporting Leonid Kuchma, who had closer ties to Russia (Way 2005, 256). Although Kuchma won the 1994 presidential elections, he too had difficulty consolidating his power over the fragmented old elites. In his ten years in office, Kuchma never courted the support of one specific party, but instead relied on a loose coalition of often competing oligarchic parties (Way 2005, 256; van Zon 2005, 379). He, too, angered the old communists by increasingly supporting the nationalist movement throughout the mid-1990’s, and had difficulty passing legislation in the communist-dominated parliament.

In this period, genuine opposition parties did not really exist in Ukraine. In the 1998 parliamentary elections, thirty parties, each with only mildly discernable platforms, contested seats (Kubicek 2001, 119). The leftist parties faired particularly well, but even they failed to win a majority. Although both the leftists and the nationalists formed loose coalitions prior to the election, these coalitions remained bitterly divided through both the campaign, and once in office.
Given this high level of party system fragmentation and the inability of party leaders to articulate platforms, it is no wonder that Ukrainian civil society retreated from the political space in the 1990’s. In 2000, there was a spark of civic activism against the Kuchma regime when tapes were leaked indicating that Kuchma was involved in the murder of a journalist and large-scale corruption. However, even then, opposition parties never managed to mobilize more than 30,000-50,000 protesters, and Kuchma remained in power despite widespread unpopularity (van Zon 2005, 377).

By 2000, Kuchma relied more and more on coercive and repressive tactics, censoring the media, buying-off the civil service, and blackmailing parliamentarians to support his regime (Kubicek 2001; van Zon 2005; Nastych 2003). Yet, despite these increasingly authoritarian practices, a campaign movement opposed to regime, Pora, was slowly growing, and would play a key role in overturning the results of the 2004 presidential elections.

In 2004, Kuchma selected his Prime Minister, Viktor Yanukovych, as his successor. Yanukovych represented the eastern oligarchs and sought greater ties to Russia. In a major change to their previous strategy of loose cooperation, the opposition decided to unite behind their own candidate, Viktor Yushchenko. Yushchenko was by far the most popular politician in Ukraine. He had served as Prime Minister in 2000-2001, but had taken economic reform too far, threatening the interests of the oligarchy (van Zon 2005, 381). Both candidates made it through the first round of the elections, despite severe vote fraud and intimidation targeting Yushchenko’s campaign. The government’s electoral manipulation continued into the second round, and resulted in a victory for Yanukovych.

On November 21, immediately after the second round of voting, a crowd of hundreds of thousands gathered in the central square of Kiev to protest the election results (see van
Zon 2005; McFaul 2005). The crowd remained in the square for two weeks, largely due to the organization and aid of Pora. Several days after the protest began, Kuchma’s supporters began to desert him. On November 25, the minister of defense declared that the military would defend the interests of the people, and 300 Ukrainian diplomats signed a declaration denouncing the massive electoral fraud that occurred during the campaign. On November 27, the crowd grew to more than one million protesters and blocked the building of the Presidential Administration. Soon thereafter, Kuchma’s ruling bloc collapsed, the Ukrainian parliament annulled the elections, and the Supreme Court declared the second round of the elections invalid. Finally, on December 26, Yushchenko won the re-run of the presidential elections. Since his ascendancy to office, Ukrainian democratization has continued to improve, and, as of 2006, Ukraine has moved into the Free category in the Freedom House rankings.
Conclusion

The advent of the post-Cold War wave of democratization gave rise to a variety of regimes across the globe. As some countries managed a successful transition to democracy, others stalled mid-process or reverted back to authoritarianism. In some places, such as Congo-Kinshasa, Somalia, Swaziland, and arguably Turkmenistan any regime change at all has yet to occur. Interestingly, certain types of regimes have not become institutionalized in just one place, but have become dispersed equally across several regions. The analysis presented here highlights this phenomenon by comparing patterns of regime change in Sub-Saharan African and in Post-Soviet countries. One of the key findings of this paper is that post-Cold War transitions in ostensibly disparate regions can be and should be compared in concert. This is not to say that all democratic transitions are always suitable for comparison. However, it is important to treat the transitions in each wave of democratization, past and future, as part of the same set of phenomena. Doing so expands our universe of cases, as well as informs us of other possible hypotheses that analyzing just one region might prevent us from seeing clearly.

This analysis reveals that the transition period, and the events surrounding it, are a significant determinant of a country’s trajectory towards or away from successful democratization. In particular, the success of the democratic transition depends largely on the level of cohesion among the various opposition parties contesting elections. Only by presenting a united front during election time does the opposition movement stand a chance
of ousting the authoritarian incumbent. Furthermore, for democratization to become institutionalized, the incumbent must be ousted, even if only temporarily. This analysis also indicates that civic protest does drive the democratization process. A vibrant civil society is equally important for building and consolidating democracy, and political protest and participation in civic groups does create impetus for regime change.

These findings have significant policy implications. Foreign aid directed at democracy building should target opposition groups. Western donors must encourage diverse opposition parties to work together and construct political platforms that appeal to the whole national electorate, rather than regional segments of the population. Furthermore, if possible, donors must assist the opposition in the dissemination of factual information that highlights the benefits of democracy. Only in this way can the opposition hope to overcome the information asymmetry problem that benefits authoritarian regimes. Foreign aid should also support the development of a healthy civil society. The greatest challenge facing the revitalization of civic groups is lack of financial resources and organizational know-how. In authoritarian and hybrid regimes, most of the state’s resources remain in the hands of the old elite, who will not finance organizations that are potential sites of dissent. In the meantime, many of these countries have poor economies, and their citizens struggle from day to day to make a living. Thus, without foreign aid, it is questionable whether civil society will ever become vibrant on its own.
### Table 1. Freedom House Scores 1 Year Before Transition-Africa

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Table 2. Freedom House Scores 1 Year Before Transition-Post-Communist States

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Table 3. Freedom House Scores Year of Transition-Africa

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### Table 4. Freedom House Scores Year of Transition-Post-Communist

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### Table 5. Freedom House Scores 2002-Africa

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<td>Gabon</td>
<td>Cote D’Ivoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>Guinea-Bissou</td>
<td>Eq. Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome &amp; Principe</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Togo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Freedom House Scores 2002-Post-Communist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free</th>
<th>Partly Free</th>
<th>Not Free</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total | 11 | 8  | 6   |
Table 7. Regime Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Opposition Wins</th>
<th>Opposition Loses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohesive</td>
<td>Fragmented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho* (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST&amp;P (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authoritarian</th>
<th>Opposition Wins</th>
<th>Opposition Loses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi (.)</td>
<td>Belarus (1)</td>
<td>Angola (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azerbaijan* (2)</td>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire* (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hybrid Regimes</th>
<th>Opposition Wins</th>
<th>Opposition Loses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niger (1)</td>
<td>C.A.R (0)</td>
<td>Burkina Faso (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia (2)</td>
<td>Congo-Brazz (1)</td>
<td>Djibouti (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia (1)</td>
<td>Madagascar (2)</td>
<td>Mozambique (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malawi (2)</td>
<td>Seychelles (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia (1)</td>
<td>Albania (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moldova (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table shows state of the opposition during the founding elections, with strength of civil society scores in parentheses. Country ratings are based on the Freedom House Scores for 2006.  
* Indicates a recent change in Freedom House scores.
Table 8. Explaining Regime Outcome in the Post-Cold War Wave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elite Capacity</td>
<td>-0.527</td>
<td>-2.189</td>
<td>-1.935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.487)</td>
<td>(2.612)</td>
<td>(3.191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition Cohesion</td>
<td>3.786**</td>
<td>3.435**</td>
<td>1.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.396)</td>
<td>(1.371)</td>
<td>2.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society Strength</td>
<td>3.108**</td>
<td>1.495</td>
<td>2.534*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.805)</td>
<td>(.830)</td>
<td>(1.165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.476</td>
<td>1.823</td>
<td>-2.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.962)</td>
<td>(1.146)</td>
<td>(1.094)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table entries are regression coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is the Polity IV score for 2002 that measures the prevalence of democratic and authoritarian practices in a regime. Model 1 is the full model that incorporates all of the countries in the analysis. Model 2 is a restricted model that measures the extent of democratization among Free and Partly Free countries, while Model 3 measures the extent of democratization between Partly Free and Not Free countries. *p < .05; **p = .01
References


