DEMOCRATIZATION STUDIES

Democratisation in the 21st Century

Reviving transitology

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ROUTLEDGE

1 Introduction

Turbulent transitions into the 21st century

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The early decades of the twenty-first century will be remembered as a critical period in the long-term trend, characteristic of the twentieth century, towards the increasing spread of democracy worldwide. From the Arab Spring countries of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen to the turbulent yet progressing transition from military rule in Myanmar, social mobilisation against autocratic, corrupt or military regimes has precipitated political transitions that are characteristic of transitions from authoritarian rule, or 'democratisation'.[1] As in the previous century's experiences of countries transitioning from authoritarian rule toward presumably more inclusive democracy, the 2000s' sweeping political and social change is turbulent, unpredictable, fraught with violence and rife with crises, reversals and halting change as old orders are resistant and new social contracts between citizen and state often remain elusive. Not all transitions away from authoritarian rule lead automatically, or quickly, to democracy.

Like earlier 'waves' and country-specific processes of democratisation, such as the short-lived but critical Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Revolution of the Carnations in Portugal in 1974, or the now celebrated (yet quite violent) transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa in 1994, today's transitions are perplexing. Are early twenty-first century countries-in-turmoil in a long and difficult but inexorable transition toward democracy, or are today's experiences somehow unique and different and requiring of new explanations and theories?

A body of scholarly literature and practitioner reflection known as 'transitology' – a literature that explores the factors that lead to *the demise of autocracy*, *the turbulent pathways of change* and *the choice for an eventual consolidation of democracy* – explores precisely these processes. However, its application to current cases seems at best uneasy.[2] Some have argued that the contemporary transitions are not moving in the direction of democracy and that civil war or reversion to authoritarianism is likely across the board, that the 'door is closing'[3] on even the latest moment of democratisation. In our view, in examining political liberalisation attempts that have been taking place in recent years – notably those leading up to and in the wake of the Arab Spring –dominant perspectives have exhibited a conspicuous absence of the literature on transitions to democracy over the past forty or so years. The combined effect of the emphasis on

narrow regional narratives and immediate political dynamics has stripped the understanding of a new generation of political transitions of a deeper background of transitology which carries much relevance, albeit one in need of updating in the light of recent cases.

This book features contributions by scholars of democracy and democratisation processes from around the world that reopen, and revive, transitology theory and its related debates. The chapters in these pages, written by political liberalisation specialists, tackle the series of questions raised by a body of literature that remains highly useful to understanding contemporary political turbulence and transformation. Together, they seek to take the debate on transition into the next generation by establishing a link with past experiences and analyses.

Against the background of the first phase of transitology, a number of interrogations arise today. Can democratisation processes be studied regardless of whether they actually arrive at a consolidated democracy as an outcome? Can political and socio-economic transitions be systematised beyond their own contexts and specificities? What are the implications for international democracy-building assistance? Are transitions universal or area specific? Where do transitions fit in the overall picture of political transformation?

The turbulence that followed the Arab Spring of late 2010 and early 2011 marked a new phase of socio-economic and political transformation in the Middle East and North Africa. The notion of an 'Arab Spring'[4] harkened back both to the 1848 People's Spring and to the Prague Spring reform movement of 1968 – the latter an ultimately ill-fated attempt to use social movement protests to topple an authoritarian regime. The Prague Spring, it should be recalled, was indeed a period of short-lived liberalisation and not full democratisation. Soviet forces invaded to halt the reforms in August 1968 and democracy, now seemingly consolidated, did not fully come to the Czech and Slovak republics until the early 1990s.[5]

The collapse in 2011 of long-standing authoritarian regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, together with social movements, protest and rebellion in Yemen, Bahrain and Syria, further reflected a *zeitgeist* of actual or prospective transitions to democracy in the region. These rapid and largely unanticipated transitions reflected a 'punctuated equilibrium' from the decades of 'neo-patrimonial authoritarianism' that had long characterised regimes in the Middle East and North Africa region. Further from the epicentre of the new transitions in the area, countries such as Guinea, Maldives, Nepal and Zimbabwe have all seen troubled transitions in recent years as autocracies collapse, teeter or endure in the face of uprisings aimed at ending decades of military, traditional and repressive rule.

Reviving transitology

The collective argument of this book is that it is time to bring 'transitology' back in; that is, to reassert, review and revise, and develop further theories, concepts

and approaches to understanding turbulent transitions in countries seeking to emerge from autocracy. The Arab Spring cases are of course each unique, as are the pathways countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Yemen, Libya or Syria followed in the last few years. This was true of earlier waves of democratisation as well; each pathway is unique while at the same time generalisable patterns can be seen. These and other contemporary transitions nonetheless reflect four enduring aspects of *transitology*, or the study of transitions from one regime to the next, and in particular from authoritarian rule to inclusive democracy. Transitology focuses on the common or generalisable attributes of the democratisation process across a wide variety of experiences, including insights about the conditions under which authoritarian regimes are vulnerable to popular challenge, patterns of mass mobilisation and elite pact-making, pivotal or choice moments often stimulated by crises, electoral processes and experiences of rewriting the rules of the political game through constitution-making. Further, generalisations can be found about understandings around the uncertainty, turbulence and volatility of regime-to-regime transitions, which often bring trade-offs between conflict management, transitional justice and democratisation as such. There is also a set of findings that grapple with the centrality of the transnational aspects of these changes, or the strong effects of international–domestic interactions in which outsiders have strong, internal influences in what are mostly endogenous or domestic processes. Finally, there are new dimensions of the transitology debates, particularly the changing role of political communication and participation, largely through social media.

Our objectives in reviving transitology in this book are multiple: we seek to reintroduce and restate findings from comparative politics on political regime transformation, relate this prior work to the contemporary cases, describe how today's transitions differ from or resemble previous experiences and how they present new challenges. Ultimately, the chapters in this book – and particularly the final chapter by esteemed transitology scholar Philippe Schmitter – offer some initial policy-related recommendations and new directions for the study of transitions across regime types.

Policy analysis to assess the nature and lasting consequences of several current waves of social and political upheaval is, in particular, lacking a firm framework of guidance. As a result, the understanding of momentous transformations is impressionistic, formulaic, short-term and unscientific. Moreover, there are – in our view – premature claims that, for instance, the Arab Spring has 'failed'. While area studies scholars have provided insights into the dynamics of these cases, such analysis has been typically devoid of efforts to build broader generalisations that are useful to policymakers seeking to see beyond the day-to-day headlines. Often, improvised analogies or culturalised ('Arabellions'[6]) political jargon categories, such as 'regime change', are resorted to unhelpfully to analyse complex, multifaceted and usually long-term exit strategies from authoritarianism.

Analyses of the Arab Spring have tended to be minimally historical and have often lacked a comparative dimension. In examining political liberalisation

attempts taking place in the early twenty-first century, notably those leading up to and in the wake of the Arab Spring, dominant perspectives have exhibited a conspicuous absence of the literature on transitions to democracy over the past forty or so years. For all its insights and shortcomings, the language of transitology – our term for a body of literature that has comparatively and through case-study analysis examined common patterns, sequences, crises and outcomes of transitional periods – has been largely eschewed.[7] Accordingly, the uprisings, revolts and revolutions that emanate from the Middle East and North Africa region now seem in some ways unrelated to initial efforts aimed at bringing to an end an authoritarian system of rule and renegotiating a new, democratic social contract. Perhaps only Tunisia, where four civil society groups were collectively awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015, has been recognised as having clearly progressed through the various stages of transition and is now possibly embarking on a path to a process of 'consolidology', to use Schmitter's term.

Similarly, when explicitly referred to in this current debate, the notion of 'transition' has been used in relation to short-term political developments, often ongoing,[8] or collapsed into larger development-oriented roadmaps.[9] The wider public and external policy-makers, fearing instability and uncertainty, seek quick solutions and simple outcomes – what some have termed 'instant democracy'.[10] Whereas the process of transition is a lengthy one, in contemporary policy parlance 'transition' is, in effect, being increasingly misleadingly equated with a different sequence, namely that shorter period between the fall of the dictator and a free (or merely trouble-free) election. For example, in seeking to reformulate US policy in the wake of the Egyptian (mostly endogenous) social uprising against the longstanding US-allied regime of President Hosni Mubarak, US President Barack Obama acknowledged it with a rather shorted-sighted perspective on the transition: 'It is my belief that an orderly transition must be meaningful, it must be peaceful, and it must begin now'.[11] Similarly, in May 2013 French President François Hollande demanded ('I insist … these elections must take place')[12] that elections be held in Mali by July of that year following France's military intervention in that country. The combined effect of the emphasis on regional narratives, external interference and immediate political dynamics has stripped the understanding of a new generation of political transitions of a deeper background of transitology which carries much relevance for the contemporary cases.

The neglect of, or resistance to embrace, the transition paradigm in the context of the Arab Spring debate is arresting. Above and beyond the question of whether there exists a universal or even common pattern to the process of transition to democracy, the challenges facing societies undergoing transition have undeniably some commonalities – across time, space and cultures. To be certain, the *process to* (the transition) must be distinguished from the *pursued aim*, namely democracy, which is a value that can everywhere be desired, pursued, resisted, contested, redefined, possibly achieved and then secured, consolidated, hijacked, broken down or reconstructed. Democracy is ultimately elusive and subject to various definitions (and assessments of its 'quality'[13]), a debate which

this book will not be concerned with. Democratisation processes can be studied regardless of whether they actually arrive at a consolidated democracy as an outcome, especially given the difficulty of the consolidation concept in terms of its empirical validity and the reality that 'consolidation' itself is more of a spectrum than a condition as such.[14] Indeed, much can be learned about the conditions for successful transitions from those that are aborted or hijacked.

Notably absent in the analysis of these new transitions has been a close and systematic look at whether the concepts and findings from earlier studies of regime-type transition, ostensibly in the direction of democracy as today's dominant regime-type, can be usefully applied to understanding the often wrenching, convoluted and in some instances violent dynamics of the Middle Eastern and North African early twenty-first century transitions. Can political and socio-economic transitions be systematised beyond their own contexts and specificities?

About this book

The literature on previous waves of democratisation can indeed shed light on contemporary contexts; thus, a close look at how prior research has addressed key questions is essential. This is particularly the case since significant amounts of political change continue to occur around the world but the ongoing era of political change has no dominant directionality.[15] This book explores these questions. Under what conditions do long-standing autocracies collapse, and survive, when there are massive social movements aimed at toppling their rule? What are the conditions under which transitions may be 'hijacked' by capable and wily incumbent elites through the suppression of social movements and the stifling of political opposition? When and why do incumbent and opposition elites agree to a 'pacted transition', by which the vital interests of these regimes and their challengers are addressed in tacit or explicit negotiations of the new rules of the political road? What do we know of the efficacy, and weaknesses, of interim governments and transitional power-sharing outcomes in smoothing the turbulence of transitions? Do transitions stimulate, enable or exacerbate ethnic and religious mobilisation and conflict? What role do various turning points play on the transition road, such as electoral moments, constitutional crises and violent incidents? When, if ever, can new democracies be said to be 'consolidated'?

In answering these questions, the authors in this book present three principal, integrated arguments. First, *there is arguably a common and now increasingly recognisable pattern of democratic transition*, i.e. a sequence that transcends the local set of values beyond cultural idiosyncrasies, contrary to the arguments of some that have portended the 'end' of the transition paradigm. Second, *common patterns, crises and sequences across cases are identifiable but are in need of updating* as recent waves of transitions are expanding the field of study and policy practice. Finally, *the challenges facing the societies, institutions and individuals during these phases can be addressed successfully* as the difficulties of a transition process rest to a large extent on internal leadership, coalition-making

and negotiation and external assistance. Such support can be effective through advocacy of global norms, technical assistance and by way of broader capacity-development engagements in countries experiencing transition. In many cases, there is also a role for much greater involvement by international actors (to both progressive and ill effect), which then must engage in constructive dialogue with national actors about the nature, sequencing, timing and process of decision-making related to the management of transitions.

In Chapter 2, we argue in greater depth that it is time to 'bring transitology back'. That is, we contend that in the present context it is important to restate, re-examine and enrich further theories, concepts and approaches to understanding turbulent transitions in countries seeking to emerge from autocracy. Focusing on the common attributes of the democratisation process across a wide variety of experiences, the transitology perspective emerged from analysis of the transitions that have occurred since 1974 and broadened more extensively in the post-Cold War period. The literature addresses the pathways of transition, including likely triggering events, collective action in social movements and patterns of revolt, regime repression and escalating political violence.

Democratisation theory emphasises the importance of strategic interactions between elites and citizens in complex processes that involve revisiting the basic rules of the political game. The current 2010s post-globalisation wave of transition has introduced new and important qualitative aspects to the transition cycle, in particular the transnational dimension, which must be accounted for more fully in the next phase of conceptual development in transitology studies. Bringing transitology back in to the debates on the Arab Spring, and more broadly in other contexts, focuses attention on fostering more peaceful and enduring transitions to democracy and it offers the possibility of articulating more historically-informed analyses of socio-political and security change.

In Chapter 3, Kateryna Pishchikova and Richard Youngs find that recent years have seen a growing number of partial transitions, in which moments of apparent democratic breakthrough lead not to full consolidation but to hybrid regimes. Many scholars argue that hybrid regimes are a fairly stable regime type in their own right. They are not regimes halfway towards democracy but regimes that have found a way to maintain stability through only a partial degree of political liberalisation. This chapter investigates whether recent evidence from Ukraine and Egypt reinforces or questions this well-established position. Ukraine squandered the potential of the 2004 Orange Revolution and apparently settled into a hybrid status. It may next be on the verge of reinitiating reforms towards better quality democratic transition. Egypt made an apparent breakthrough in 2011, but its putative transition was subsequently aborted. It remains unclear whether the country is en route to wholesale autocracy or to being a more stable hybrid regime. In the light of these events, this chapter asks whether the Ukrainian and Egyptian cases in fact demonstrate that hybrid transitions may not be so enduring – or whether, more subtly, they tell us that hybrid regimes may indeed be both enduring *and* unstable at the same time. In short, by drawing on the two cases of Ukraine and Egypt, Pishchikova and Youngs show how improving our understanding of the hybrid nature of political transformations can provide a valuable addition to democratic transition theory.

Chapter 4 focuses on the electoral moment, a key turning point in all transitions. Pippa Norris argues that contemporary interest in the issue of elections as a mode of transition has been revived during the post-Cold War era by the expansion in the use of elections as a standard part of peace-building and state-building initiatives by the international community, as well as by the contention that, at least in Africa, repeated experience of successive elections (irrespective of their quality) has played an important role in strengthening processes of democratisation, civil liberties and political rights. The applicability of this mix to other world regions, such as Latin America, has been strongly critiqued. Scholars have suggested that what matters in this process are the timing and sequencing of elections, and the design of electoral systems. The debate about the role of elections in achieving stable states and democratic transitions continues within the international community. The core aspect of the debate examined by this chapter is whether it is the *repeated experience* of electoral contests which is critical in processes of transition from absolute autocracy and processes of democratisation, or whether what matters is the *quality of elections* and, in particular, levels of 'contentious' elections. The chapter concludes that the problems of contentious elections can be observed to rise with the transition from absolute autocracy, peaking in hybrid regimes, before falling again in mature democracies.

In Chapter 5, Benjamin Reilly evaluates three distinctive dimensions of East Asia's democratic experience that stand out when analysed from a comparative viewpoint. The first is its mode of democratic transitions, particularly the contrast between the 'pacted' regime transitions advocated in the scholarly literature and the mostly 'people power' revolutions that have prevailed in Southeast Asia in particular. Second is the way in which institutional reforms have played a key part in Asia's democratic evolution experience – leading to a distinctive 'Asian model' which privileges some dimensions of democracy (e.g. concentrated power and majority rule) over others (e.g. broader representation and minority rights). The third touches on issues of geopolitics: the region's genuine democratic transitions have all been concentrated in maritime rather than mainland Asia – the result, it is argued, of a range of international factors centred on the competing spheres of influence of the US and China in the Asia-Pacific region.

When do 'transitions' end and normal democratic politics begin? In Chapter 6 André Liebich finds that the fall of Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe was so unexpected and so sudden that little thought was given, there or elsewhere, to what would follow. As the only default option, former Communist states eagerly adopted capitalist economic models, Western security structures and, superficially, universal values. A quarter of a century later, however, these countries display striking divergences from the norms to which they appeared to adhere thus raising the question of whether the ills they suffer can really be attributed to the discomforts of transition. To move from totalitarianism to democracy one has to change both the grammar and the vocabulary but to move

from totalitarianism to nationalism one only has to change the vocabulary. This has proved to be the easy way out of Communism, with repercussions even in the domain of privatisation and, of course, electoral politics. As the former communist countries have gradually been admitted into the European Union (EU), their political culture has affected that of the EU more than the EU has succeeded in transforming the political culture of its new members.

Since 1989, the political landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa has shifted radically. While multi-party regimes were the exception during the Cold War, few closed authoritarian regimes survived the turn of the twenty-first century. Julien Morency-Laflamme observes in Chapter 7 that a number of electoral democracies in Africa were born before the turn of the century. All transition processes on the continent highlight certain dynamics which allow reconsideration of 'transitology' in regard to the African cases – namely, the extensive impact of the actors' actions on outcomes. Successful democratisation stories in the subcontinent all share a number of characteristics associated with formal and informal pacts, namely restraint in the demands and actions of the main political forces. Inversely, failed transition processes and regressions to authoritarianism were regularly the result of particular actors' attempts to monopolise state resources. Reviewing the 'democratic wave' of the 1990s in order to pinpoint the factors behind the 'success stories' and cases of authoritarian reversals, the chapter analyses contemporary examples of democratic improvements and breakdowns in the light of these older undercurrents.

It has been thirty years since the critical wave of democratisation and 're-democratisation' in the Americas. Diego Abente-Brun and Ignacio González-Bozzolasco start, in Chapter 8, from the premise that the 'Southern Cone' cases in Latin America proffer lessons learned in a historical-structural framework. Their analysis focuses on three distinct stages or *moments*, each with its own logic: the nature of the authoritarian regimes that preceded the transition process; the transitions processes *stricto sensu* and the characteristics of the democratic regimes engendered by them. Transitions from what? The first moment has to do with the nature of the authoritarian regimes but also with the nature of the socio-economic and political cleavages they sought to suppress or overcome. Transitions why? Hence, the second moment, the transitions per se, must be looked at not only in terms of forms, tactics or paths but also of how the democratising forces sought to overcome the very same cleavages that led to the emergence of the authoritarian regimes in the first place. Transitions to what? Finally, the third moment leads us to analyse both the type of democratic regimes that the transitions led to and the new challenges that they generated.

The 'Arab Spring' took many by surprise even as some observers had long contended that there was a gap between the aspirations of an educated, mostly middle-class citizenry and old-style autocratic, Arab nationalist regimes. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had pointed out in a series of *Arab Human Development* reports beginning in 2002 that there were structural imbalances between society and its needs and political orders in the region.[16] Is this another example of the difficulty of forecasting in social analysis, or does it

rather reflect deeper problems about the conceptual geography of Middle East and North African (MENA) studies? In Chapter 9, Bahgat Korany assesses the question of whether the Arab Spring does in fact constitute a regional wave of transitions to democracy, or are the conditions so unusual that there are no historical or regional comparisons to be made? He argues that Middle East and North Africa scholarly studies specifically need to rethink their unit/level of analysis and analytical lenses. Rather than singularising authoritarian durability, MENA experts need to look also at authoritarian fragility. Similarly, instead of over-emphasising 'politics from above', 'politics from below' and street parliaments have to be brought in. Bahgat Korany notes that an emerging polarisation between *deep state* and *deep society* may deviate democratic transition from its objectives of an inclusionary process and coalition-building. The time for a paradigm shift has therefore come. Such a shift not only needs to account for the decline of 'Arab exceptionalism', but also has to address the challenges of transition and the continuing revolutionary process. What are the dynamics of the different groups, their assets and liabilities? How far are issues of religion/identity impacting on the character and evolution of the transition process? To answer these questions and others, conceptual and empirical challenges have to be addressed. Conceptually, though social movement theory is now presented as a relevant alternative lens, its applicability has to be assessed critically and supplemented (rather than supplanted). Empirically, countries of the 'Arab Spring' have also to be classified so that it no longer continues to be perceived as one uniform pattern, a monolithic transition.

The book concludes with a forward-looking chapter from one of the founding scholars of transitology. Philippe Schmitter – a scion of earlier transition work – contends in Chapter 10 that, at least since Plato and Aristotle, political theorists have sought to explain why, under the kaleidoscopic surface of events, stable patterns of authority and privilege manage to survive. While they have rarely devoted much explicit attention to the choices and processes that brought about such institutions in the first place – this would be, strictly speaking, the substantive domain of what we have called *consolidology* – they have accumulated veritable libraries of data and findings about how regimes, especially democratic ones, manage to 'change and yet remain the same'. The apprentice 'consolidologist', therefore, has a lot of 'orthodox' theoretical assumptions and widely accepted empirical material to draw upon when studying the likelihood of the success or failure of 'newly-existing democracies'. On the one hand, the likelihood that practitioners of this embryonic (and possibly pseudo) science can draw more confidently from previous scholarly work should be comforting. On the other hand, there still remains a great deal of work to do before we can understand how the behaviour of political actors can become more predictable: how the rules of democracy can be made more mutually acceptable and how the interactions of power and influence can settle into more stable patterns. This closing chapter explores what might be the fundamental assumptions of this new science. On the basis of what has happened so far in more than sixty countries since April 1974, it advances a number of reflections on this tortuous process of

regime transformation with the hope that such a foray will be useful in orienting future research – and equally in guiding the practice of policy-makers.

In sum, transitology has long contended with the fact that democracy as such is a highly contingent outcome in such processes – as the Prague Spring metaphor evidences – and that there may well be contextualised transition outcomes without significant or lasting democratic advances. Contemporary research also sees this as essentially a separate, yet equally engaging, problem.[17] In sum, the authors in this book argue that bringing transitology back in to the debates on fostering more peaceful and enduring transitions to democracy militates against the exceptionalism erroneously associated with the new transformations, and that such a perspective offers the possibility of articulating more historically-informed analyses of socio-political and security change. In turn, this may offer some insights into formulating improved policy at international, regional and local levels.

Notes

1 For the latest data analysis of long-term trends in governance and regime type, including forecasting models and projects to 2050, see Hughes *et al.*, *Strengthening Governance Globally*, p. 8. Forecasts based on futures modelling of core indicators of security, capacity and inclusion in governance lead to estimates of more countries experiencing transitions away from partial regimes (anocracy) and autocracy as putative underlying causal drivers of democratisation, particularly education and incomes, rise around the world.

2 See, for example, the debate in the January 2014 edition of the *Journal of Democracy* (Volume 25, 1), Diamond *et al.*, 'Reconsidering the "Transition Paradigm" ', and that in the January 2015 edition of the same journal (Volume 26, 1), Plattner, 'Is Democracy in Decline?', as examples of the issues ('decline', 'recession', 'poor performance', 'splintering', 'waning', 'decay') in the current debate.

3 Masoud, 'Has the Door Closed on Arab Democracy?'.

4 Several terms have been used to refer to the series of regional uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa that followed the popular movement initiated against President Zine Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia in December 2010 in the wake of the self-immolation of street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi: i.e. 'Arab Spring', 'Arab Awakening', 'Arab Uprisings', 'Arab Renaissance' and 'Arab Revolutions'. Each term is imperfect and carries limits in its analogy or imagery. Avoiding this semantic discussion, this book will use the common term 'Arab Spring' while taking note of important reservations concerning its use.

5 Olson, 'Democratisation and Political Participation'.

6 Börzel *et al.*, 'Responses to the "Arabellions" '.

7 Exceptions include Brookings Doha Centre, *The Beginnings of Transition*; Liu, *Transition Challenges in the Arab World*; Aly and Elkady, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*; Hachemaoui, *La Tunisie à la Croisée des Chemins*; Najšlová, *Foreign Democracy Assistance in the Czech and Slovak Transitions*; and Foran, 'Beyond Insurgency to Radical Social Change'.

8 See, for instance, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 'Arab States Transitions Must be Locally Led and Driven, Says UNDP Chief', 22 June 2011.

9 For example, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), '*Feuille de Route: Démocratie et Renouveau dans le Monde Arabe – L'UNESCO accompagne les Transitions vers la Démocratie*', report on a roundtable, 21 June 2011.

10 See W. Pal Sidhu, 'The Perils of Instant Democracy', *Mint* (Delhi), 30 July 2013.

11 Barack H. Obama, 'Remarks by the President on the Situation in Egypt', White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 1 February 2011.

12 François Hollande, 'Point de Presse Conjoint du Président de la République et de Mahamadou Issoufou, Président de la République du Niger', Élysée Présidence de la République, 10 May 2013.

13 See Diamond and Morlino, *Assessing the Quality of Democracy* and the 'State of Democracy' approach employed by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), www.idea.int/sod.

14 Schedler, 'What is Democratic Consolidation?'.

15 Carothers and Samet-Marram, 'The New Global Marketplace', p. 6. See also Carothers and Youngs, 'The Complexities of Global Protest'.

16 See the summary of the evolution of these reports, and links to them, at www.arab-hdr.org/about/intro.aspx.

17 In their analysis of international–domestic transitions to democracy Stoner *et al.* also argue that 'the domestic and international causes of successful [democracy] ... are often different than those of the initial time of transition'. See Kathryn Stoner, Larry Diamond, Desha Girod and Michael McFaul, 'Transitional Successes and Failures: The International-Domestic Nexus', in Stoner and McFaul, eds., *Transitions to Democracy*, p. 5.

2 Reviving transitology

Democratisation then and now

Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou and Timothy D. Sisk

Since the Revolution of the Carnations in Portugal in 1974 which overthrew the Second Republic *Estado Novo* regime (1933–1974) – much despised for its internal 'dirty war' and violations in colonial contexts abroad (notably in Angola and Mozambique) – a pattern of generally increasing democratisation globally seems well-supported in comparative analysis. The Polity regime type data project, managed at the Centre for Systemic Peace, has become the most consistent dataset for comparative, quantitative analysis of regime types since the mid-1970s. The project scores regimes over time on a 21-point scale that ranges from 'fully-institutionalised' autocracies through to 'fully-institutionalised' democracies. The long-term results are informative, and they have a direct bearing on our argument that the transitions literature has high salience to contemporary cases. Figure 2.1

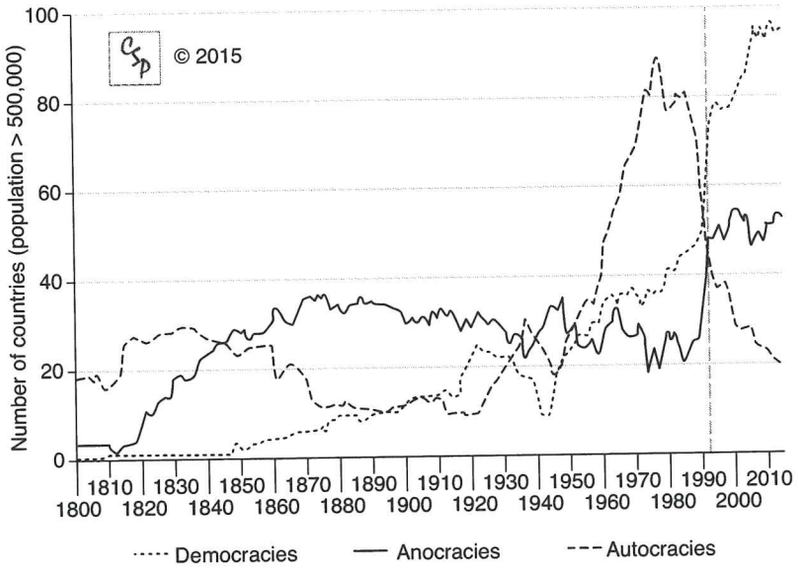

Figure 2.1 The global rise of democracies and 'partial' democracies (source: Centre for Systemic Peace, www.systemicpeace.org).

shows the long-term trajectories dramatically: over time, the number of democracies in the international system has grown considerably, especially since the end of the Cold War in 1989 following already steady growth in democratisation since the Portuguese transition kicked off the present trend in the mid-1970s. The number of partial 'semi-democratic' or 'semi-authoritarian regimes' – 'anocracies' in the Polity nomenclature – has also risen as the number of fully autocratic regimes has declined.

It is in the nature of periods of transition in the international system to be defined by what came before and after them: bipolarity and unipolarity for the Cold War, nonchalance and insecurity for 9/11 and order (albeit authoritarian) and disorder (albeit democratising) for the Arab Spring. The coincidence of these three successive moments is also, importantly, taking place at the same time as the information and technology revolution. This transition and globalisation context has resulted in a number of fluid[1] and on-going global turbulences in the grammar of international relations, which, it is submitted, can be charted through a framework that deciphers the process that underwrites the passage from one condition to another.

Origins of the transitology concepts

Earlier contemporary eras were dominated by colonialism (the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), wars (the two world wars and the decolonisation wars for most of the first half of the twentieth century) or ideological competition (the second half of the twentieth century with the Cold War). Whether democratisation evolves in waves or causally-related sets of transitions is debatable, primarily because it is difficult to discern one wave from the next. Is there a contagion effect that spreads ideas across borders? For example, the Arab Spring had been preceded regionally by the collapse of the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq by force in 2003 (again, to better or ill effect[2]), and major countries such as Indonesia witnessed transitions from authoritarian to democratic regime type in the late 1990s following the collapse of the Suharto 'New Order' regime in 1998.

Since 1989, the world has arguably been experiencing one large and extended moment of global transition unpacked in three different, yet equally consequential, moments generating transitions: post-Cold War in the 1990s, post 11 September in the 2000s and post-Arab Spring in the 2010s. Indeed, these three phases were preceded by 're-democratisation' in the Americas, notably Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru. It was in these cases that now common concerns with issues of transitional justice (which in turn had precedence in early cases, notably in post-World War II Germany and Japan) in particular emerged together with mechanisms that proliferated globally such as truth and reconciliation commissions. It was also in the study of these phases that crucial insights were gained into the role of social movements in toppling control by military-led 'bureaucratic–authoritarian' regimes, and aspects of the transition such as the role that pacts between the military and the opposition played in the course of transition.

Moreover, one of the most engaging elements of these early transitions was the strong role played by 'founding' elections – those first held in the course of democratisation (or in some cases, re-democratisation, as there had been earlier, failed attempts at democracy in Argentina and Brazil especially). Finally, the celebrated case of 'people power' in the Philippines, which saw the ousting of General Ferdinand Marcos in 1996, was a touchstone in the literature on regime change and democratisation; so, too, was the counterpoint of Tiananmen Square in 1989 and the failure of a student-led, putatively democratic movement against the Communist Party of China in Beijing.

In the immediate post-Cold war period, democratisation was aided by a 'unipolar' moment globally and 'turbulence' in the international system more broadly, which rearranged the nature of external (i.e. Cold War-focused) global alliances. At the same time, in 1989 the focus shifted away from Communist or capitalist global alliances to 'good governance' and the emergence of other norms such as 'humanitarian intervention' (which would evolve into the global Responsibility to Protect by 2005) that further chipped away state sovereignty, much as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and agreements such as the Helsinki Charter had done during the Cold War. The transitions of the late 1980s and early 1990s were dramatic: countries such as Poland saw non-violent social movements topple Communist party dictatorships; South Africa came through from apartheid as a stable, non-racial democracy by 1996; and other countries such as El Salvador and Nicaragua also emerged from conflict to witness progress in democratisation.

Research on the causes, pathways and outcomes of democratic transition also surged during this period, from large-N quantitative studies of transitional processes to deeply described analytical case studies.[3] In such analyses, there is support for the original thesis of Seymour Martin Lipset in 1960 that modernisation, or increasing incomes, education and diversity of economies is closely associated with popular demands for democracy.[4] In some ways, the modernisation thesis was seen in the most recent cases of the Arab Spring, as the *Arab Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had long noted that the Middle East and North Africa region had lower levels of inclusivity and democracy (particularly for women) than its overall level of socio-economic development – especially levels of education – would predict.[5] The advent of the middle class in developing countries has also arguably been an underlying driver of many transitions in the contemporary period.

In summary, the transitology perspective emerged from analysis of the transitions since 1974 and broadened more extensively in the post-Cold War period. In it, one finds a focus first on the *causes of collapse* of the authoritarian region. In the long view, modernisation does matter – it is much harder to coerce a more wealthy, educated and informed society – and thus human development is critical to setting the conditions for popular challenges to authoritarian regimes.[6] At the same time, countries that have natural resource rents, such as Libya, have seen more enduring authoritarian regimes that have ruled mostly through patronage and clientelistic networks, which in effect offset the broader development of middle-class, democracy-seeking spectrums of society.

The literature also addresses the *pathways of transition*, including likely triggering events, collective action in social movements, patterns of revolt, regime repression and escalating political violence. Studies on South Africa's transition, for example, showed that over time the regime was unable to repress a massive and internationally supported social movement. Instead, the apartheid regime gradually negotiated its way out of power in a series of pacts or elite agreements, followed by a more fully inclusive constitutional assembly to draft a new social contract.[7]

Thus, democratisation theory emphasises the importance of strategic interactions between elites and citizens in complex processes that involve revisiting the basic rules of the political game. Such processes are fraught with uncertainty, and are often accompanied by violent conflict as the old order collapses and the new order has not yet fully emerged.[8] However, given the right conditions the period of transition is a strategic moment for substantial gains in, e.g. women's rights and representation, particularly when conditions are favourable for women to organise in civil society associations across lines of contention, whether these are in terms of supporters of the former or new regime, class or identity.[9] Moreover, when new institutions are chosen there may be the opportunity, often through a combination of external and internal pressures, to create institutions that include women's quotas in electoral processes and within political parties. In Latin America, representation quotas for women have become a strategically gender-sensitive way to institutionalise norms of more equal gender participation in political parties and governance, even if they are differentially effective in implementation.[10]

In the late 1990s and into the early 2000s, Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Serbia (among others) experienced the so-called 'colour revolutions' in which large social movements led by civil society organisations and students sought to bring democracy drawing on the principles and tactics of nonviolent civil resistance. Yet, in these varied cases, the revolutions themselves were followed by disputed elections, reversals or democratic decline. However, these cases suggest that democracy does come in waves and that there are 'diffusion' or transnational effects. The often ambiguous outcome of so many colour-revolution transitions has led critics to suggest that the transition paradigm is too teleological and that it is unable to effectively account for countries that start celebrated transitions, but end up in a political limbo – much like the cases of the contemporary Arab Spring.

Critiques of transitology

The lapse in visibility of transitology is a result of the mid-to-late 1990s and 2000s transition fatigue whereby the 'end of the transition paradigm' had, for instance, been forcefully and capably argued.[11] That many of the prior celebrated efforts at regime change had ended up with anocratic or 'grey zone' regimes,

and that there were so many concerns about the inability of democracy building aid – often channelled to nascent civil society – to tip the balance in such contexts, soured many analysts to the democratisation perspective. Moreover, the misuse of democratisation as a justification for regime change by force by the neo-conservatives in the United States, in the early years of the George W. Bush administration, led to the ill-considered invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003. This further raised concerns that democratisation was a code word for a realist pursuit of regional power by an ideologically driven unipolar global hegemon, the United States.

The main critique levelled against transitology is that it is excessively teleological. Thomas Carothers argued: 'the transition paradigm has been somewhat useful during a time of momentous and often surprising political upheaval in the world. But it is increasingly clear that reality is no longer conforming to the model'.[12] It is also argued that the paradigm is geographically narrow in scope and that it is inapplicable to specific (new) situations, whose alleged exceptionalism escapes the boundaries (whatever these may be) of transitology. Yet at the very time that the obsolescence argument was put forward, rebellion was brewing in the Middle East and North Africa leading a few years later to the 2011 uprisings which immediately raised precisely the issue of ... transitions.

Another limitation is that there has not been enough demarcation in the study of the establishment of democracy *ex nihilo*, i.e. where it was altogether absent as distinguished from a situation where some attempts have been made and where the norm needs to be more formally adopted. Admittedly, part of the problem is the vagueness that can be attributed to all three dimensions: 'transition', 'process' and 'democracy'. In particular, the consolidation phase was too often addressed together with the transition phase (and indeed the term 'consolidology'[13] at times used interchangeably with 'transitology'). Experiences in the 2010s have indicated that the *rupture* moment – the momentous events associated with a break from the past – can be extended, substantially highlighting the need to devote more attention to the break moment rather than the more elusive phase of consolidation (see, for example, Putnam *et al. Making Democracy Work* and Linz and Stepan *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*). What is then needed is more nuance and complexity in the charting of variegated trajectories away from the rupture moment. The conflation of experiences can be reductionist if the points of departure and arrival are not precisely circumscribed.

Yet another limitation is that transitology has also, to some extent, taken for granted the inevitability of transitions. Yet it may well be that some post-revolutionary situations do not actually initiate, however haphazardly, a transition process, ever lingering for an extended period in the (active or frozen) conflict-ridden aftermath of the uprising. Such a non-transition state may well be what Libya is in today in the aftermath of the NATO intervention and the fall of Muammar Gaddafi, or what Algeria experienced in most of the 2010s in terms of socio-political stasis running parallel to the Arab Spring. Witnessing the debate on the uprisings that have shaken the Arab world since 2011, one is struck by the

minimal comparative attention given by analysts and actors alike to the experience of other democratisation processes.

The scant concern with what took place *earlier* and *elsewhere* in terms of attempts at introducing or reintroducing democratic dynamics partakes of a practice that both questions the universality of these challenges and which proceeds with a region's political culture as the main explanatory starting point.[14] Yet the experiences of Western Europe from the post-Medieval state formation period to World War II,[15] of Latin America's social movements and 'pacted rupture' (*ruptura pactada*), of Eastern Europe's civil society activism and of Sub-Saharan Africa's national conferences[16] are all directly related to the efforts underway in the Middle East and North Africa. Indeed, the strife which, for instance, rapidly overtook Yugoslavia after the optimism of 1990 helps put in perspective the post-Arab Spring evolution of Libya or Syria. The latter-day transformations do not take place in a vacuum, and comparative thinking and practice that learns from other settings has value and merit in that regard. Indeed, research has shown that demands for democracy through mass social mobilisation are often driven by 'pocketbook protests', in which everyday quotidian life is inhibited by poor governance of autocratic, often deeply corrupt, regimes.[17]

As noted, up until now few Arab Spring studies have been concerned with transition per se. Some attempts have been made to go beyond the specifics of the region, but they remain concerned with the revolutionary phase[18] or with rear-view approaches on the impact of authoritarianism.[19] The minimising of the relevance of earlier transitions betrays, however, a certain self-centeredness, if not a type of neo-Orientalism, on the part of Arabists and other Middle East and North Africa ('MENA') experts.[20] Arguably, close examination would reveal that all the related developments so far in the Middle East and North Africa since the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia in December 2010 can be accounted for under the transition paradigm (political and constitutional reform, power competition, disorder and strife, ethnic and religious mobilisation and polarisation, power vacuum, disenchantment, old order nostalgia, military takeover and international influence or a lack thereof).

Finally, transition has brought together political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists but not security experts. Yet, if anything, the post-Arab Spring debate reveals the need to factor in the security dimension in transitions beyond existing general consideration of whether democratisation leads to disorder, strife or civil war. What kind of transition can there be if a prolonged period materialises – years in post-Ba'athi Hussein Iraq, for instance – where violence dominates the daily lives of citizens? The contemporary resistance within the Arab World to analogies with previous transitions is reminiscent of the earlier similar rejection of parallels between Eastern Europe and Latin America, or from Latin America to African contexts. In the same manner that transitologists were shunned away from post-Communism studies, today's students of transitions are kept at bay by Arabists. Yet what might matter more in the next phase of understanding the 'MENA' is not necessarily so much familiarity with the Sykes-Picot treaty but rather with pact-making, constitution-drafting and institution-building.

Investigating comparatively[21] corporatist arrangements, state retreat from its functions, societal alternatives for political expression, and exclusionary politics enables the sharpening of analytical tools to understand contemporary transformation in that part of the world.

Such invalidating of transitology – as well as the complex empirical challenges its introduction or reactivation has been generating in large parts of the South[22] – was also a sign of the times with the combined post-9/11 neo-authoritarian dynamics in many parts round the world[23] merging with an excessive association of the transition framework with the recent experiences of post-Soviet Union countries.[24] With good reason, the hybridity that came to materialise at that juncture gave pause to some, generating the coinage of new terms such as 'uncertain regimes', 'semi-democratic regimes', 'competitive authoritarianism', 'facade democracy' or 'illiberal democracies'.[25] Moreover, it is clear from research that countries with mixed or semi-authoritarian regime types may be particularly vulnerable to debilitating social violence: autocracies tend to be stable through effective repression, and democracies through participation and compromise, while semi-democratic or semi-authoritarian regimes tend to generate their own violent challengers to the state.

In such contexts, electoral moments in particular are windows of vulnerability to violence as a pattern of opposition mobilisation and repression by the regime threatens to escalate. To be sure, doubts had been expressed earlier as to whether 'democracy was just a moment'[26] and such 'pessimism'[27] was largely the result of admittedly excessive optimism in the wake of the end of the Cold War (a revealing fact is that the *Journal of Democracy* was founded in 1990). In point of fact, the issue of transition to democracy is at once a constant twofold question (how to get there and which means to use?) – made up of cumulative attempts at approximating to a universal process of transition whose components would be identified clinically – and the sum total of different and specific experiences in Western Europe, Latin America, Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and, more recently, the Middle East and North Africa. In such a context, it is then particularly important to revisit democratic transition theory and uncover what it has to offer to the understanding and management of contemporary transitions. In so doing, it is here understood that:

1. What is imperfectly referred to for shorthand purposes as 'transitology', and which can also be termed 'democratisation literature', is a young, vast and still tentative work in progress.
2. Democracy is a complex concept with no consensus on any particular set of institutional manifestations.
3. The multiplicity of experiences of seeking to break away from authoritarianism render the attempt at systematising those journeys arduous but not altogether impossible.

Many critics of transitology have focused on the problem of electoral processes in societies emerging from autocracy or from civil war. Some scholars such as

Jack Snyder, for example, have highlighted the motivation of political elites in electoral processes in societies divided along ethnic, sectarian or religious lines to 'play the ethnic card' as a way to induce fear among the population and to manipulate a fearful population into supporting more extreme positions on issues such as territorial autonomy or secession. This in turn generates a 'security dilemma' among other groups, who counter such mobilisation with their own claims, thereby generating a centrifugal or outward spin to the political system. Under such conditions of deep social division elections become nothing more than an 'ethnic census'.[28]

The problem of elections as conflict-inducing is directly related to three additional factors. The first of these is the incredibly high stakes of winning and losing in a context in which losing the election may jeopardize personal or group security (there is no sense that one could live to fight a future election). This problem seems particularly acute in presidential elections (as in Côte d'Ivoire in 2010) when the election is perceived by the protagonists as a zero-sum game with a winner-takes-all outcome. Similarly, in Iraq, insurgents who expected – with good reason in this context – to be systematically excluded from power mobilised to disrupt governorate or provincial elections in 2013. Indeed, sectarian violence increased in Iraq as the process of democratisation has not been sufficiently inclusive of elements of the *ancien régime*, and in 2014 pushed some Sunni segments into the hands of the organisation of the Islamic State (IS).

The second additional factor is the allure to some parties of using strategic violence as a way to influence either the process or the outcome (or both) of the balloting. In parliamentary elections in Afghanistan in 2005, and again in 2010, insurgents targeted election workers (both international and Afghan) and sought to disrupt balloting as a way of undermining the legitimacy of the process and of the regime of President Hamid Karzai. The third factor is that when the capture of state power leads to access to natural resource export derived rents or revenue, there may well be an incentive to use violence, intimidation and electoral fraud as a route to enrichment. Sudan's elections in 2010 are a case in point: the Khartoum regime used a wide array of tactics to ensure beyond doubt that the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) would stay in power and indeed retain access to the revenue derived from exports of crude oil from South Sudan that is pumped northward through to the oil tanker terminal at Port Sudan.

Finally, the detractors of elections in democratising contexts also see them as sometimes serving to legitimise governments that have won militarily on the battlefield and are able to use the position of state incumbency as a way to cloak the regime in legitimacy while not allowing for open opposition. This is the case with those who view parliamentary elections in Rwanda in 2013 as legitimising the rule of the Rwandan Patriotic Front and President Paul Kagamé in a poll in which opposition forces had been imprisoned or otherwise suppressed for fostering ethnic 'divisionism'.[29] The 2015 extension of a 'third term' for the Rwandan president demonstrates that institutions alone do not make for sustainability of the democratic 'rules of the game'; in this instance, internal norms of what constitutes legitimacy and democratic popular support appear to trump global

norms. Thus, much of the recent scholarship on transitology has focused on the question of electoral processes and the problem of managing election-related violence in contexts where democracy is not yet fully institutionalised, or where the necessary conditions for a sustainable democracy appear to be absent.[30]

With these important caveats – and noting that the question of the pertinence or the lack thereof of the transition paradigm has been asked before[31] – it can be said that transitology is not therefore a body of research limited to the historically confined study of 1970s, 1980s and 1990s transitions to democracy in Southern Europe, Latin America, Eastern Europe or Africa. Such forays marked the inception of a crucial field of study concerned with the processes of democratisation that is highly relevant to a new generation of transitions now unfolding, notably in the Middle East and North Africa and in globally significant cases such as Myanmar, raising both conceptual and practical issues.

We argue in this book, first, that the literature already features a measure of consensus on some key elements of the method of transitioning as it relates in particular to the sequence of the transition and its requirements; second, that the current post-globalisation wave of transition has introduced new and important qualitative aspects to the transition cycle, in particular the transnational dimension which was present in prior contexts but must be accounted for more fully in the next phase.

Democratic transition: founding moment and forward movement

What, ultimately, is 'transition'? The shift from a system built on coercion, fear and imposition (and conflict) to one based on consent, compromise and coalition-building (and peace) is no easy task. Nor is it a quick or linear process. In effect, such a transition in the underlying rules of politics implies a set of transformative tasks towards a form of government where leaders are selected through competitive elections. This has been described as a process of 'transforming the accidental arrangements, prudential norms and contingent solutions that have emerged (during transitions) into structures, i.e. into relationships that are reliably known, regularly practiced and habitually accepted'.[32] Democratic transition is, then, centrally about political *transformation* and re-negotiating the underlying rules of the political game. The nature of the transformation is at the heart of this exercise; not solely the replacement of political regimes, but the creation of a new order aimed at democratisation that gives representation and political voice. As Klaus Müller and Andreas Pickel note when commenting on the different dimensions of a paradigm: '*it informs social scientific work* by demarcating fundamental problems ... *it informs policy-making*, especially in terms of fundamental reform approaches [and] ... *it informs ideology and political action* by embodying fundamental values and visions of social order'.[33]

Transformation towards what? Democracy is the end result of a process of democratisation and political liberalisation. Specifically, transitions are an open-ended attempt at the realisation of democracy. To the extent that, as noted, the

process to is qualitatively different from the *aimed at* goal, an important dimension arises as it relates to transitions, namely the centrality of performance. Although, 'transition' or 'political transition' can be found to refer to the passage towards modernity, development, economic viability or democracy, the term and phrase are commonly used to refer to the latter. Democratisation can therefore be defined as (i) a political and socio-economic process characterised by (ii) the gradual evolution/movement/progress/march towards (iii) a system of government anchored in democratic principles, namely and chiefly representation, inclusivity, accountability and civil and political rights. In particular, this implies a process away from an earlier system – an *ancien régime* – which generally took the form of authoritarianism or dictatorship. In turn, it implies a key moment in that sequence of rupture, i.e. a break from the old (non-democratic order) to the new (rights-accommodating) political environment.

Against that background, transitology is not transition. One is the science, the other the object of study. It is important to note that not all insights gathered in the study of the political transformation of a given country away from authoritarianism will apply elsewhere, including in the same region. However, transitology is by nature an eminently comparative exercise, aimed at producing contingent generalisations about the nature and process of political change. Transitology is therefore a specialisation in social sciences continuously concerned with transformation. Though open-ended in the manner in which the sequence comes into play and is unpacked, change is not altogether value free. It is teleological in the sense that the norm pursued is the one of democracy. Even when the phrase is limited to 'political transition', the assumption is that such transition is towards democracy.

The literature on transitions to democracy is varied and rich. It is composed of several important contributions[34] which do not represent a single, overarching body but rather several strands that meet at key points constitutive of the markers of transition theory. Dankwart Rustow's April 1970 'Transitions to Democracy'[35] article is arguably the founding text of democratic transition theory. Writing in *Comparative Politics*, Rustow insightfully argued that transitions do not usually emerge from high levels of modernisation and development but more often from contingent choices and specific local factors. That said, there are typical background conditions for successful transitions, first among which is a shared understanding of national unity: if some sense of who constitutes 'the people' is absent, transitions can devolve into competing claims for separate projects and sovereignty. Rustow also argued that transition can be conceptualised as two distinct phases: the 'preparatory phase' which involves a long struggle between political factions over the state, and a 'decision phase' after the outcome of such a struggle in which political factions (led mostly by elites) agree to democratise in a mutual security pact. The Rustow perspective is echoed in the work of political sociologists John Higley and Michael Burton who, in evaluating cases such as Sweden's transition to democracy in the 1920s, also argued for a close focus on the contingent choices of elites within democratisation processes.[36]

Importantly, Rustow argued that the development of democracy depends on the presence of one key requirement, namely national unity. This dimension was then the inevitable basis for the institutionalisation of rule-based political contest. In other words, Rustow proposed a theory revolving around the process and the actor wherein the actors come in equally as regards the struggle, leadership and choice. Following this pioneering work, subsequent authors also explored the essential notion that democratisation is the outcome of contingency and choice, based on actor decisions as they seek to navigate the uncertainty between the old regime and the newly-negotiated order.

Perhaps the most influential of these is the work of Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead who together produced a four-volume work on *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* in 1986. They, too, emphasised the key role of elite contingency and choice within transition processes as the critical factor in democratisation, arguing that it becomes possible when there are splits within the dominant regime over how to handle protests and, when faced with the inevitability of change, the military switches allegiance from the old governing elites to the newly-legitimated elites. Engagingly, this volume closes with Schmitter's lifelong reflections on observing what appears as a trend line in Figure 2.1 (see Chapter 10).

A final aspect of transitology is the importance of understanding that transitions involve renegotiation of the basic rules of the game of politics. Many of the issues that arise are on the sequencing of such processes of institutional change, particularly in electoral processes that lead to the election of constitution-making bodies, as has been the case in Tunisia and Libya with the constituent assemblies in 2011 and 2012 respectively. Central among the questions that are left open are the territorial bases of the state and the degree of federal or decentralised rule (a key question in Nepal, for example, which has transitioned from Hindu monarchy into a new constitution that federalises, and secularises, the state) and the basis or political economy of wealth sharing in cases where natural resources are coincident with claims for autonomy (as in the Kurdish region of Iraq). In societies divided by deep ethnic, sectarian or religious social cleavages – many of which are emerging from civil war or widespread political violence such as in Nepal – much of the debate over institutional choice involves a delicate balance among institutions designed to share power and lead to inclusive, yet capable, ruling coalitions.[37]

What summary lessons does transitology give us? We suggest the following twelve key insights from the transitology literature are most pertinent to today's cases of democratic transitions.

1 *Transitions can occur in any structural context*. They represent an explicit choice by a community to try and proceed towards democracy. Mechanisms are necessary to flesh out democracy while institutional controls can vary. The issue of transition raises the question of what specific means are selected to achieve the democratic goal.

2 *Transitions tend to congregate in waves*. Materialising sporadically, such cycles are an indication of moments whereby conditions conducive to a demand for democratisation reach a fulcrum point initiating a visible phase. The 'wave' analogy was put forward by Samuel Huntington in his 1993 book, *The Third Wave*. This construct implies that democracy follows a 'global advance'[38] logic.
3 *Transitions take time*, and there is no uniformly similar end result. Transitions have an unpredictable end result, an 'uncertain "something else" ... which can be the instauration of a political democracy'.[39] The rule-bounded nature of democracy is tested by the open-ended nature of democratisation. Transitions are uncertain because they seek to introduce predictability (of rule, political behaviour, institutional structures and commitment to outcomes). The common project is from a disorderly (violent) system to one that is rule-bounded (peaceful).
4 *There is no single path to democracy* but there are requirements and there are necessary dynamics, notably inclusion and redistribution. The values of democracy are similar but their expression can differ in specific contexts. Some struggles to achieve democracy have been motivated by the pursuit of 'justice', others have occurred in the name of '*égalité*' (equality) or '*libertad*' (freedom) and yet again others with a view to securing '*utumwa*' (liberation) or '*karama*' (dignity).
5 *Transitions represent a founding moment and a forward movement*. This interlinked two-part process is anchored in a rupture from or abandonment of earlier ways of doing politics and the gradual adoption of new ones. If democracy rests on the practice of its components (respect of freedoms, enactment of civic responsibility, tolerance of difference and sharing of communal burden), then similarly democratisation rests on the ideally conscientious acting out of its multiple commitments.
6 *Transitions are reversible*. Democratic legitimation is a complex process and authoritarian regression can occur. Regimes can aim to pre-empt crises by appearing to democratise or can seek to maintain a system through a controlled transition that gives the appearance of opening up. Cosmetic, façade or virtual processes that are meant to give an appearance of democracy are particularly detrimental to the securing of democracy in a context where it needs to advance tangibly. Similarly, an increase in undemocratic behaviour in an already democratic setting can lead to a retreat of democracy.[40]
7 *Transitions are almost invariably conflictual* and can often lead to violence. While some analysts have perhaps oversold this point, there is good reason to suggest that in the course of transition there is a mobilisation – often along identity lines – that can induce a 'security dilemma' and which can lead to transition-related violence. Pre-existing conflicts are collapsed into a new structure which at once inherits them and seeks to solve them in novel ways. In particular, previously repressed voices can find space for expression and empowerment. The challenge of addressing violence is therefore

present before, during and after a political transition. It is both an incipient and a continuing problem.

8 *Transitions can unleash new vulnerabilities to social conflict*, particularly in cases of ethnic or narrow minority regimes. Violence can emerge because transitions are inherently uncertain, crisis prone and are typically periods of deep economic and social turbulence. Specifically, this issue comes to the fore because during transitions, the state (*primus inter pares* and holder of the official monopoly of violence) suffers a loss of legitimacy which it has to re-establish on new, representative grounds; regaining the legitimacy of the state to rule is essential if violence is to be managed – as the war riven post-2011 pathway to transition in Libya attests.

9 *The economy occupies a central place during transitions*. Economic malaise and popular frustration often precede the collapse of autocratic regimes. Yet the pursuit of political change concomitantly with economic reform creates the reality of a dual process which can yield 'transitional incompatibility',[41] bringing the crucial question of sequencing back to the fore.

10 *Transitions are a comprehensive process* with ramifications for most dimensions of the social, economic and political environment. In time, a successful transition widens to generate a 'democratic culture' and, over time, to 'habituation' to the new rules of the political game. Constitutional processes are central to this activity with a constitution representing more than just a text or a narrative; it is the expression of a new social contract.

11 *Transition occurs in a sequence of stages*. There exists much 'uncertainty'[42] as to the temporal delimitation of the phases, notably as regards the consolidation phase. Sequencing is crucial, particularly with regard to elections. The choice of sequence involves a trade-off between the stability offered by early elections on the one hand, and the political and legal vacuum caused by establishing a new political order without a basic legal consensus on the other. Early elections legitimise the transitional regime, but disadvantage new political parties by depriving them of the necessary time to organise.[43]

12 *Actors are key to the process of transition*. Among these, the leadership piloting the transition and civil society are eminently central to the process. The strategic capacity of these groups is fundamental, as is the dynamic of appearance of new actors. The opening of the system featuring demanding actors (often previously repressed) is a difficult and contentious exercise. Hence, agency is particularly central to the process of transition. It is no surprise that efforts to mediate the Libya transition, following the then successful but ultimately ill-fated transitional elections of 2012, has been a repeated strategic objective of the United Nations' effort to restore a unified pathway of transition toward stability for Libyan elites.

Conclusions: promises and limits of transitology

The conceptual foundations of this book offer an approach to reviving an important perspective for understanding dramatic political changes in a manner

better informed by experiences of the past. We do assert that even though there is imprecision in the transitology concept – as many of the contributors to this volume note – the notion offers a compelling framework for evaluating in a more contingent and systematic way the opportunity to see both progress and regression in contemporary transitions. The principal utility of the construct is that it illuminates well the vulnerability of the phase(s) during which the development of a democratic ethos and the establishment of democratic institutions are pursued.

Hence, the stripped-down statement of transitology is fourfold:

> (i) an aim to create a generalisable theory of democratisation and the ability to explain processes of democratisation in different social contexts; (ii) the conviction that democratisation is a one-way and gradual process of several phases; (iii) an emphasis that the single crucial factor for democratic transition is a decision by the political elite and not structural features; and (iv) the normative belief of neoliberal nature, that the consolidation of the institution of democratic elections and other reforms of its own accord establish effectively functioning states.[44]

Against this, the primary usefulness of transitology is that it points to a process which carries a measure of universality. In spite of the diversity of authoritarian situations – which include dynamic reconfigurations such as those of the so-called 'deep state'[45] – with each new wave, analysts insisted on the novelty or uniqueness of the new situations only to wake up a few years later to realise how little had changed in the basic requirements of the steps needed to generate or regenerate[46] democracy.

Among the promises of transitology, the following dimensions can be further identified:

- understanding better the conditions under which autocratic regimes are vulnerable to challenge and collapse;
- deciphering the context in which elites choose to negotiate rather than fight;
- contributing to assessment instruments that seek to discern vulnerability to election-related violence and associated conflict-prevention activities;
- identifying the most vexatious choices and sequencing problems on which to focus facilitative international assistance;
- determining which specific institutional manifestations of democracy are appropriate for any given context, consistent with a consensus that arises from internal bargaining and not international imposition;
- seeing contexts in a long-term, appreciative perspective on the nature, pace, scope and end-state of change.

The contributions that follow in this volume achieve these aims in their analysis of contemporary regions, contexts and cases. While we have reserved the final words for an esteemed colleague, Philippe Schmitter, we conclude the

conceptual chapter of this volume with some additional findings on both the promises and weaknesses of the transitology lens. It is clear, by way of immediate admission, that the absence of any single 'ideal type' transition process is not in and of itself a weakness. What may be more important is the indication of progress. The overarching value of transitology is, therefore, that it introduces universal categories in order to understand layered developments and the rebuilding of politics. It seeks to understand systematically the journey about societal maturation beyond community defiance and the limitations of the 'place' moment (Tahrir Square, Pearl Square, Plaza de Mayo, Puerta del Sol, La Bastille, Umbrella Square, Taksim Square, Euromaidan and so forth) towards the institutionalisation of systemic processes.

In the wake of the Arab Spring, three aspects are emerging as key dimensions of latter-day transitions: the role of *social media*, the question of *transnationalism* and the *security* dimension. First, the long-term impact of the widely acclaimed social media that contributed to the downfall of the autocratic Middle East and North African regimes must be examined further. To be sure, the role of technology will remain intrinsically ambivalent. Social networks may contribute to empowering citizens, but the same technology may also be used against them for control and repression.[47] Whether virtual groups can ensure democratic or civic compliance is among the questions that need to be explored further as the new transition processes mature. Similarly, the current sociopolitical transformations are being altered by transnational dynamics which were previously less important or altogether absent. Here again, the transnational dimension of transitions has been noted before.[48]

Second, in the early twenty-first century the transnationalism dimension has overtaken the grammar of international relations. The post-Arab Spring has illustrated the dynamic further taking it into new uncharted territories both of transition and of conflict. The overflowing of the impact of the Libyan revolution onto the Sahel and the engulfing of the Syrian civil war by regional actors – notably from the Levant, the Gulf and the Maghreb as well as foreign fighters coming from the Americas, Europe and Asia, and proxy support for the different protagonists from global powers such as Russia and the United States – indicate how important this new dimension has become.

Finally, developments around the Arab Spring are also shedding light on the importance of successful breakthroughs as preconditions for additional democratic development. A contribution in relation to this question was made by Ray Salvatore Jennings in a 2012 report issued by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). Calling for 'the need to identify a breakthrough paradigm', Jennings identified an important dimension of the gathering discontent storm before the rupture: 'As revolutionary potential builds in breakthrough venues, "irregular" communities of dissent increasingly test the political waters, some for the first time'.[49]

Transitology is especially useful in looking beyond the immediacy and intricacy of the moment towards a longer-term view that identifies the markers of progress on the road map of democratisation. The road to democracy is indeed

arduous. Change is engineered with difficulty beyond the battle cries (*ruptura*, *solidarność*, *perestroika*, *irhal*, *dégage*) and political transformation generates uncertainty. Transitions involve struggles for power and the pacification of the political process is no easy task. Transitology's task is then undeniably ambitious and at the same time elegantly simple. It seeks to elucidate the spatio–temporal logic of *a path which is also a moment*. Societies in flux and states in mutation awaken from 'the fairest dawn' to try and morph into a new, more legitimate and responsive political system. Transitions are indeed about a founding moment and a forward movement. Yet the mainstay of the exercise is the explication, which is still an investigation, of the resulting passage. Ultimately, transitology offers the promise of a general theory of political transformation and it appears to stand the test of time in looking forward to perhaps further such moments well into the twenty-first century.

Notes

1 On the value of 'fluidity' as a focus for understanding the 'how' of transitions, see Banegas, 'Les Transitions Démocratiques'.
2 See Claire Spencer *et al.*, *Iraq*.
3 For an overview of this literature, see Geddes, 'What Causes Democratization?'.
4 Lipset, *Political Man*.
5 See Kuhn, 'On the Role of Human Development'.
6 Geddes, 'What Causes Democratization?'.
7 Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa*.
8 For an examination of this aspect building on Samuel Huntington's 1968 inaugural *Political Order in Changing Societies*, see Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*.
9 Baldez, 'Women's Movements and Democratic Transitions'.
10 Jones, 'Gender Quotas, Electoral Laws and the Election of Women'.
11 Carothers, 'End of Transition Paradigm'. See, similarly, the special issue of *Esprit*: 'Transition Démocratique: La Fin d'un Modèle', *Esprit*, January 2008.
12 Carothers, 'End of Transition Paradigm', p. 6.
13 See the analysis of Philippe C. Schmitter in Chapter 10.
14 Barrington Moore notes that 'to explain behaviour in terms of cultural values is to engage in circular reasoning' (Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, p. 486). He adds: 'The assumption of inertia, that cultural and social continuity do not require explanation, obliterates the fact that both have to be recreated anew in each generation, often with great pain and suffering'.
15 See Lowe, *Savage Continent*.
16 See, for instance, Daloz, *Transitions Démocratiques Africaines*.
17 Bracati, 'Pocketbook Protests'.
18 See, notably, Bennani-Chraïbi and Fillieule, 'Pour Une Sociologie des Situations Révolutionnaires'.
19 See, for instance, Nayed, 'Beyond Fascism'.
20 See Mohamedou, 'Neo-Orientalism and the e-Revolutionary'.
21 Kamrava and Mora, 'Civil Society and Democratisation in Comparative Perspective'.
22 Among these challenges, Jochen Hippler notes: 'Weak and poorly functioning state apparatuses are not made more efficient but are in fact made devoid of any function whatsoever ... A 'democratisation' of these structures is then purely a matter of form ... One result is that the citizens in the South become disillusioned with their democracy'. See Hippler, *The Democratisation of Disempowerment*, pp. 24–25.

23 Notably in the Middle East and North Africa. See, for instance, Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism* and King, *The New Authoritarianism*.
24 See, for example, Gans-Morse, 'Searching for Transitologists' and Holzer, 'The End of the Transitological Paradigm?'.
25 See Diamond, 'Elections Without Democracy'; Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*; and Zakaria, 'The Rise of Illiberal Democracy'.
26 Kaplan, 'Was Democracy Just a Moment?'. Kaplan writes: 'I submit that the democracy we are encouraging in many poor parts of the world is an integral part of a transformation towards new forms of authoritarianism'.
27 Carothers, 'Stepping Back from Democratic Pessimism'; and Gilley, 'Democratic Triumph, Scholarly Pessimism'.
28 Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*.
29 'Rwandan Elections: Safe and Sorry', *The Economist*, 21 September 2013.
30 See, for example, Bekoe, *Voting in Fear*.
31 See, notably, Karl, 'From Democracy to Democratization and Back'; and Jankauskas and Gudžinskas, 'Reconceptualising Transitology'.
32 Schmitter, 'Some Propositions about Civil Society', p. 4.
33 Müller and Pickel, 'Transition, Transformation and the Social Sciences', p. 29, emphasis added.
34 Of particular note, among numerous others, is the work of Lisa Anderson, Richard Banegas, Sheri Berman, Carles Boix, Valerie Bunce, Thomas Carothers, Ruth Berins Collier, Robert Dahl, Larry Diamond, Giuseppe Di Palma, John Entelis, Steven M. Fish, Barbara Geddes, Stephen Haggard, David Held, Guy Hermet, Samuel P. Huntington, Ken Jowitt, Robert Kaufman, Bahgat Korany, Steven Levitsky, Juan J. Linz, Arend Lijphart, Seymour Martin Lipset, Cynthia McClintock, Michael McFaul, Barrington Moore Jr., John Mueller, Guillermo O'Donnell, Marina Ottaway, Robert D. Putnam, Lucian W. Pye, Geoffrey Pridham, Adam Przeworski, Benjamin Reilly, Dankwart A. Rustow, Ghassan Salamé, Andreas Schedler, Philippe C. Schmitter, Amartya Sen, Alfred Stepan, Susan Stokes, Crawford Young, Richard Youngs, Lucan A. Way, Laurence Whitehead and Howard J. Wiarda.
35 Rustow, 'Transitions to Democracy'.
36 Higley and Burton, 'The Elite Variable in Democratic Transitions and Breakdowns'.
37 Roeder and Rothchild, *Sustainable Peace*.
38 Liu, *Transition Challenges in the Arab World*, p. 2.
39 O'Donnell *et al.*, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, p. 3.
40 See Todorov, *Les Ennemis Intimes de la Démocratie*.
41 Armijo *et al.*, 'The Problems of Simultaneous Transitions'. See also Haggard and Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*.
42 Schedler, 'Taking Uncertainty Seriously'.
43 Liu, *Transition Challenges in the Arab World*, p. 2.
44 Jankauskas and Gudžinskas, 'Reconceptualising Transitology', p. 181.
45 For an insightful attempt at conceptualising the deep state, see O'Neil, 'The Deep State'.
46 Slater, 'The Architecture of Authoritarianism'.
47 Benkirane, 'The Alchemy of Revolution'.
48 See, for instance, Cichok, 'Transitionalism vs. Transnationalism'.
49 Jennings, 'Democratic Breakthroughs', p. 34. Examples of novel 'irregular community' are the civil society movement known as *le balai citoyen* (citizen's broom or civic broom) which led the campaign to unseat Burkina Faso's president, Blaise Compaoré, in October 2014, or the *ça suffit* (enough) campaign launched in February 2016 by Chadian organisations against President Idriss Déby.

3 Divergent and partial transitions

Lessons from Ukraine and Egypt

Kateryna Pishchikova and Richard Youngs

A core challenge to the study of democratic transitions is that countries increasingly follow very different paths of political reform. It is now a well-established observation that there is no standard or uniform template of democratisation. In recent years, the variation in reform experiences has become even more marked and self-evident. Revisiting transitions theory must involve a close look at this question of democratisation's contrasting fates. As noted throughout this book, the analytical debate has shifted in the direction of questioning the significance of overarching patterns and of emphasising how states are subject to their own unique set of contingent political trends.

The comparison between events in the 2010s in Ukraine and Egypt demonstrates in dramatic form such variation in transitions experiences; it also shows that divergent outcomes depend on a combination of mutually constitutive structural and agency factors. Since the popular protests that overthrew the regime of President Viktor Yanukovych early in 2014, Ukraine has begun implementing many democratic reforms. It is far from being a democracy of good quality and many vestiges of predatory and autocratic power dynamics remain within the country's political system. Yet, Ukraine is more democratic than it was a few years ago and a freely elected coalition government came to power and committed formally to extending the reach of democratic norms. This stands in sharp contrast to the situation in Egypt. Egypt made a dramatic breakthrough in 2011 when a popular uprising removed President Hosni Mubarak from power. After many twists and turns, the country's putative transition stands aborted. In many respects, Egypt has become more authoritarian than it was before 2011.

How is it that two of the most inspiring and often cited democratic uprisings of recent years have ended up taking such different paths? At first sight, the overthrow of largely authoritarian regimes in Egypt and Ukraine appeared to be similar phenomena. Popular uprisings triggered brutal regime crackdowns before disgraced leaders ignominiously fled the scene. In both countries, largely free and fair democratic elections followed, in each case bringing key sectors of the erstwhile opposition to power. In each case, the newly-enfranchised administrations committed to democratic reforms and launched processes to reform the constitution. Yet, beyond these similarities the two experiences diverged. In Egypt, popular frustration with the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood

government grew to the point that the military intervened to take back power, with the support of a large part of the population. The military's promise to follow a road map back to democracy was soon jettisoned and its authoritarian grip on power incrementally tightened. In Ukraine, powerful vested interests, political rivalries and conflict in the Donbas region combined to slow down promised reforms, but for now the country remains on a track of meaningful 'transition'.

In this chapter, we examine what broader lessons can be gleaned from comparing the cases of Ukraine and Egypt, and in particular their divergent paths after apparently promising regime removal in 2014 and 2011, respectively. We make this comparison here partly in an attempt to go beyond regionalist perspectives on political change that have dominated the study of transitions over the past two decades; by comparing these two cases we can ask whether there are patterns that extend beyond regional specificities.[1] We focus on several factors that are pertinent to accounting for the two countries' divergent reform paths. These include: the possibility or absence of lesson-learning from previous reform experiences; the different roles played by the army and security forces; the potential for consensus-building; the different ways in which incipient democratisation related to embedded liberal or illiberal social identities; differences in the post-revolution evolution of civic mobilisation; variations in political economy structures; and the contrasting influence of external factors.

In tune with this book's overarching theme, the chapter concludes that Ukraine and Egypt are two of the most high-profile cases calling for a reopening of transitions debates; we point to the need to conceptualise more deeply the variability of transition outcomes across geographic regions and moments of transition.

Variety of transition outcomes

The literature on the so-called 'Third Wave' of democratisation[2] defines transition as a period between the fall of the old autocratic regime and the installing of a new one, whatever that might be. The focus of the literature on transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe was mostly on the actions of key actors that come together to manage transition, for example through elite pacts. As transitions took place in other parts of the world and at different historical moments, the scenarios of transition changed and so did the crucial variables: the fall of the Soviet Union[3] was very different from the subsequent colour revolutions[4] and from the uprisings in the Arab world.[5] Criticism focused[6] on the fact that both in scholarly work and policy practice, the term 'transition' became a short hand for democratisation – an outcome that the original analyses of transitions in fact never took for granted. Indeed, the seminal work on transitions talks about four possible outcomes of transition: democracy, authoritarianism, unstable shifts between regime types and violent revolution.[7] Recognising and focusing on the multiplicity of transition scenarios and outcomes is one area in which this field of inquiry needs to develop, both in terms of empirical knowledge and theory building.

One stream of literature that tried to address the varied and uncertain nature of transition outcomes is the one that focuses on so-called hybrid regimes.[8] This conceptually blurred and broad category comprises otherwise very different countries that are neither fully democratic nor completely authoritarian.[9] Within democratisation literature, a hybrid regime is a regime that lacks crucial institutional components – e.g. a multi-party system where elections are not free or fair, protection of some civil liberties but not others or deficient rule of law. For example, Larry Diamond's typology of hybrid regimes focuses on election abuse.[10] He defines four types of hybrid regime, according to the criterion of electoral competitiveness: competitive or 'electoral' authoritarian, uncompetitive 'hegemonic' authoritarian, electoral (illiberal or minimal) democracy and 'ambiguous' regimes on the border between electoral authoritarian and electoral democratic. Following a similar rationale, Guillermo O'Donnell argued that what is missing from non-consolidated democracies is the rule of law, including public accountability and control of corruption.[11]

The hybrid regime literature helps underscore the idea that transition outcomes that may seem indeterminate and incomplete are in fact very common and persistent. It points us to the likelihood of varied outcomes resulting from what in their early stages may appear to be very similar transition experiences. Once we acknowledge that the most common result of transition is not a permanent end state of perfect liberal democracy but one of many possible varieties of hybridity, then explaining variation in political outcomes becomes more pertinent. How variation in outcomes relates to underlying structural conditions is also a question that requires greater investigation. This linkage refers to the question of what factors or pre-existing structural features set transitions on a particular course and of the ingredients for success or failure. Systematically linking these factors to particular transition outcomes remains an underexplored area of research, even though each has received a degree of attention in the literature.

The socio-economic 'preconditions' argument goes back as far as the 1960s with works by Seymour Martin Lipset and W.W. Rostow that see democracy as a by-product of industrialisation and economic growth.[12] The central idea is that citizens in wealthier countries are more likely to demand democracy, both because they see it as conducive to better economics[13] and because affluence brings a shift to post-materialist values.[14] The 'third wave' literature, with its focus on agency, paid limited attention to cultural, historical and socio-economic legacies that shape the process of regime change as well as subsequent developments in each country.[15] After the end of the Cold War, when transitions seemed to be happening anywhere and everywhere, the 'preconditions' school seemed to have fallen into oblivion. Yet, as some transitions have evidently failed while others have succeeded, the question of whether deep political reform requires certain preconditions once again seems relevant. Recent trends suggest that this remains an important component of what enables democratisation to dig deep roots: though hardly a guarantee of success, certain socio-economic structures are more conducive to democratic consolidation than others. These include a sizeable middle class and dispersed ownership of key economic assets. Indeed,

more recent research redeems the importance of underlying structural factors as it shows that some democratic institutions, such as elections, come about quicker and with more ease than others, such as the rule of law.[16] Such hierarchy, according to the authors of that research, explains the most common sequencing of democratisation in which competitive elections come before other democratic components. Aiming at 'thicker' definitions of democracy, scholars working in this tradition argue that structural factors pertaining to political culture rooted in the legacies of the past represent the most influential factor in explaining long-term success or failure of democratisation.[17]

The importance of elite pacts during the transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe[18] produced a certain blindness towards the role of mass mobilisations during the transition. Although there was rich research on civic action in authoritarian regimes,[19] these were often seen as cultural–historical accounts and overlooked by comparative political science and international relations literature. Conceptually, links between civil society and political change run through a number of influential studies in social sciences.[20] Several works have argued in favour of a greater focus on contentious action in the studies of democratisation.[21] Making a more systematic link between democratisation theory and social movement studies can help account for different kinds of outcomes. Different forms and degrees of social mobilisation have become an important variable in explaining different forms and degrees of political transition.[22]

In addition, there has been insufficient attention to the role of social, religious and cultural identities in transitions. It is often assumed that those who oppose an autocrat are democrats by default, when the reality of political alliances that emerge is often more complex. Civil society is often seen as an unequivocally benign force. Although the dominant vision of mass protests tends to be skewed towards beautiful images of squares lit by hundreds of thousands of flashlights or coloured by a sea of open umbrellas, the empirical reality of mass mobilisation is complex and diverse. Protests tend to be heterogeneous in terms of their ideologies and the degree of institutionalisation of their different elements. They can include the 'bad' elements of civil society, radical groups or paramilitary organisations. Their civility, legitimacy and accountability cannot be taken for granted.[23] While there may be unity of cause among the protesters before the ousting of an autocrat, clashing identities and illiberal agendas are a hindrance to the ensuing democratisation.

By comparing two landmark cases – Ukraine and Egypt – that belong to two different geographic regions and moments of transition, we highlight here how a number of structural factors pertaining to political institutions, social and cultural identities and political economy interact in complex ways with the agency of key elites as well as that of street protesters and civic actors, leading to highly divergent transition outcomes.

Democratisation in Ukraine: fits and starts

Post-Soviet Ukraine, unlike some of its neighbours, has never fully consolidated into an authoritarian regime, yet its democratisation over the last quarter of a century has been half-hearted, democratic breakthroughs alternating with authoritarian turns. Observing some of the key elements of this process is useful for gaining an understanding of the factors that foster or hinder democratisation. The dramatic EuroMaidan protests and the transition that followed bring to light some of these elements.

Ukraine has a number of democratic institutions in place; however, their quality remains low. A number of reforms were planned in the mid-2010s, yet by most accounts the process has remained slow and superficial.[24] The country has a multi-party system and regular elections, yet political parties remain underdeveloped and serve most often as a front for personal politics. There have been several attempts to implement a constitutional reform that would establish a mixed presidential–parliamentary system to decentralise power. Yet, constitution-making in Ukraine since its independence in 1991 is more illustrative of elite struggles to (re)distribute political power than of a genuine reform process. Ukraine went from a powerful 'super-presidential' system in the 1990s to an imperfect attempt to introduce a presidential–parliamentary system in 2005 that was repealed in 2010 by President Yanukovych but reinstated in 2014 following the EuroMaidan revolution.[25] This process remains incomplete.

The so-called EuroMaidan protests, which lasted for three months in late 2013–early 2014, were initially provoked by the government's decision not to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union. Yet the uprisings quickly developed into a large-scale movement against the authoritarian and corrupt politics of President Yanukovych. Elected in a clean but tight election in 2010, Yanukovych quickly moved to centralise his power. In addition to repealing the constitutional amendments and bringing back the presidential system, he passed a number of by-laws that gave him wide unilateral powers to hire and fire executive branch officials, as well as appoint to law enforcement posts without the parliament's approval and indirectly influence judicial appointments. He strengthened his Party of Regions that came to dominate the majority of central and regional posts and the executive agencies. In fact, he became the first Ukrainian president to be backed by a strong political party: his control over the legislature – unlike that of his predecessors – was not based on bargaining and coalition-building but on his party's outright dominance.[26] Yanukovych's grip on the parliament was indeed remarkable. During the 3 months of the EuroMaidan protests, attempts at reaching a compromise through parliamentary voting were consistently blocked by the pro-President's majority. Moreover, a series of undemocratic laws that were to criminalise the ongoing protests were voted for despite the opposition's attempts at blocking them. The President retained control over his MPs until only a few hours before his hasty departure late on 21 February 2014.

Here lies an important difference between the Orange Revolution of 2004 and the EuroMaidan revolution. While the former produced a political bargain that was agreed by all key players under pressure from the protesters, the latter escalated into a violent stand-off that came to an abrupt end when the President secretly fled the country – reportedly after realising that the police were no longer going to protect him from the protesters' rage. This meant that no political force, in or outside of the parliament, could claim to have contributed to resolving the crisis. While the pro-Presidential forces – despite jumping ship the morning after and putting the blame for the violence squarely on the fugitive President's shoulders – were fully implicated in the crisis, the opposition parties were discredited for not having been able to effectively represent the protesters in the parliament and to bring about change through political means. The parliament was delegitimised and needed a fresh start, something that the parliamentary election in October 2014 delivered only in part.

Paradoxically, Yanukovych's departure gave a boost to the country's oligarchs who could re-engage with the well-tried strategy of safeguarding their economic interests through the corrupt allocation of administrative posts in exchange for political support.[27] Political parties in Ukraine remain relatively underdeveloped and highly personalised. While electoral politics may be polarised, the behind-the-scenes alliances are not. Although electoral turnover is common in Ukraine, the personalities and interests represented in parliament have remained the same over the past two decades.[28] Indeed, the majority in the post-EuroMaidan parliament are veterans of post-Soviet politics and there are only a few new faces.[29] The reform-minded 'fresh blood' MPs report feeling a besieged minority and frustrations over not being able to deliver significant change.

After the EuroMaidan, there was a partial leadership change with the new president and a number of new appointments to top positions. None of these figures were new to politics, however. The subsequent president Petro Poroshenko had been in politics since the late 1990s, and was in fact one of the co-founders of the Party of Regions (the party of the ousted president Yanukovych). Other younger faces, like the head of the National Defence and Security Council Oleksandr Turchynov or Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, arguably represented a different generation but were nonetheless well-embedded in the old party structures. It remains to be seen whether in the medium- to long-term the pressure for change from society will be strong enough to push the political elite towards different ways of conducting politics. The governing coalition in the post-EuroMaidan parliament remained fragile. It comprised several competing parties and voting was often an occasion for intra-faction bargaining, the outcome of which seemed to be the continued impunity promised in exchange for political loyalty.[30] Anti-corruption cases continued to be used for elite infighting and not for an impartial cleansing of politics. In the context of secret pacts and impunity concessions, no leader had the credibility or the freedom to pursue genuine reform. In this sense, pluralism and competition become a hindrance rather than an enabling factor, a curse not a blessing.[31]

What was new according to some accounts, however, was the nature of citizen mobilisation, both during and after the EuroMaidan.[32] Civil society in Ukraine has come a long way since the early 1990s, and especially in the aftermath of the EuroMaidan. Although both the Orange Revolution of 2004 and the EuroMaidan of 2014 have been central to ousting corrupt and increasingly authoritarian leaders, there are crucial differences between these two mobilisation cycles. The so-called EuroMaidan followed a different pattern of mobilisation, had much larger numbers of protesters and lasted longer. It was characterised by an unprecedented persistence and remarkable self-organisation, quite uncommon for a post-Soviet mass mobilisation. Subsequently a lively volunteer movement has emerged throughout the country that is active in dealing with the consequences of state violence during the Euromaidan, and in providing assistance to the military and civilians engaged in and affected by the ongoing conflict in Donbas.

Opposition parties were following the protesters rather than leading them; in fact, the protests came at a time when opposition parties were failing to mobilise the electorate. During the parliamentary election in 2012, opposition organised protests did not attract a large following. Indeed, as many as ninety-two per cent of the EuroMaidan protesters were not affiliated to or mobilised by any political organisation.[33] This is in stark contrast to the Orange Revolution that was planned well ahead of time and with the close involvement of the opposition candidate Victor Yushchenko.

A single, most reported sentiment after the EuroMaidan was the fear that the mistakes of the Orange Revolution would be repeated.[34] This awareness in civil society of the need to invest in the post-revolutionary phase meant that civic initiatives have had much more follow through than during the previous protests. By way of comparison, the much-heralded *Pora* youth movement that had done the bulk of the mobilisation and organisation during the Orange Revolution split up not long after the events and has played no significant role either as a movement or as a political force in the past decade. The EuroMaidan, on the other hand, produced or helped consolidate a number of initiatives that have become even more active since, from independent media projects, to volunteer initiatives and pro-reform civic platforms. It is too early to tell whether any of these will have a tangible impact on Ukraine's politics but it is already clear that civil society actors are working harder than ever to institutionalise their activities and make them sustainable over time. Civil society organisations have certainly received a boost from the EuroMaidan experience and their learning curve has been impressive.

New coalitions for reform emerged in the aftermath of the protests and there were experiments in new mechanisms for cooperation between civil and political society. The protest mood remained high in the country. Again, this is different from the Orange Revolution, which produced no substantive follow-up either by civil society or by political groups. In addition, unlike the Orange Revolution, EuroMaidan was not confined to the capital but spread to become a nationwide phenomenon. In mid-January 2014, after another round of police violence and

the failure of the opposition to pass an amnesty law for those detained during earlier clashes with the police, the protests spread to the regions. A number of smaller 'Maidans' sprang up. The buildings of regional authorities were occupied throughout the country.[35] Disillusionment with Yanukovych's rule, his refusal to open a real dialogue with society and the violence against the protesters all contributed to the spread of protests. The scale of violence and intimidation and the number of victims were unprecedented in Ukraine's recent history. The high human cost put an end to any remaining apathy and cynicism on the part of Ukrainian citizens, forging an understanding that things could not go back to 'business as usual'.

The EuroMaidan agenda evolved during the three months of protests from being a narrow foreign policy issue (Association Agreement with the European Union) to include domestic grievances, most importantly discontent with corruption and the lack of the rule of law. Although President Yanukovych's departure became one of the key demands after he went too far in trying to quash the protests, the overall EuroMaidan agenda was about deep systemic transformation rather than simply a change of leadership. This was a precious development given the risk of cultural and regional identities and agendas hijacking the scene. It emerged as a basis for coalition-building and reconciliation politics but it also remains very fragile. The subsequent socio-economic crisis[36] and the ongoing armed conflict in parts of Donbas gave a boost to identity politics and sidelined the debates on structural reform. This raises concerns about further radicalisation of society and heightens the risk of people taking to the streets again but in a more confrontational fashion this time. It also privileges more radical and populist parties.

Violence during the revolutionary phase coupled with armed conflict gave space and purpose to civic groups that are neither civil nor liberal. The results of both the presidential election in May 2014 and the parliamentary vote in October of the same year show that radical parties do not have a large following. The poster child of the anti-Kyiv propaganda, the ultra-right wing Right Sector, never made the threshold for entering parliament, taking less than one per cent of the votes. The more moderate nationalist *Svoboda* party, despite its high visibility during the EuroMaidan, got fewer votes (below 5 per cent) than it had done during the previous election in 2012. These are good counter-arguments to rebut those who portray the 2014–2016 years of Ukraine's politics as a 'fascist' or 'radical nationalist' coup. They are no guarantee, however, against centrifugal forces taking over Ukraine's politics in the future.

An important element that may help load the dice in favour of further democratisation is the cumulative effect of external democracy support activities in Ukraine that have been generous[37] and continuous, as they have never faced any political resistance from the country's power holders. Numerous criticisms of these efforts notwithstanding,[38] they helped create a constituency and a set of policy frameworks that are important to further democratisation. At the same time, however, the growing 'Ukraine fatigue' within United States' policy circles and disagreements within the European Union over an appropriate Ukraine policy risk undermining these modest achievements. Ironically, while the change

in the region's geopolitics requires an upgraded and clear strategy on the part of Western countries, they seem to be moving towards a less ambitious low-common-denominator approach. Therefore, while a number of domestic features may be favourable to further democratisation, international factors may be producing the opposite effect.

It is too early to say whether post-EuroMaidan Ukraine will make any progress in strengthening and democratising its institutions, improving their accountability and establishing the rule of law. What is important for our discussion here is the evolutionary component and the mutually constitutive relationship between state and society, between political elites and civic activists. The early lesson from Euromaidan is that Ukrainian society may be becoming a force and an actor in its own right. This will certainly lead to further transformations in the underlying 'hybrid' political structure. Whether these will come about in response to more protest events or through gradual reform, or both, remains to be seen.

Egypt: back to square one?

Egypt's 2011 revolution has not led to democratisation. For the moment, it is clear that powerful dynamics of authoritarianism have reasserted themselves. Transition appears to have been aborted. Egypt provides a sobering lesson in how precipitously an apparent democratic breakthrough can be squandered. It requires updated analytical explanations for failed transition. Yet, many observers insist that today's Egypt is not the same as it was pre-2011. Politics, social demands, civic organisation and identities have all shifted. Consequently, Egypt's future trajectory remains difficult to predict. Popular pressure for democratisation has not completely abated, even if a climate of fear and intimidation currently discourages civic activism. The military backed regime that took power in July 2013 has taken Egypt back to a more absolute form of authoritarianism than existed under Hosni Mubarak's final years.

In the years before the 2011 revolution, the Mubarak regime had allowed a degree of political space to emerge. Semi-competitive elections were held. The Muslim Brotherhood became more prominent and embedded sociologically at community level. Civil society organisations mushroomed. A number of governance and economic reforms were tentatively implemented. Egypt was not on its way to democratic transition, but it was seen as fitting the mould of a new Arab 'liberalised autocracy'. Analysts argued that, like other Arab governments, the Mubarak regime had opened up sufficiently to depressurise social discontent without fundamentally compromising its own grip on power or dominance over decision-making. This appeared to constitute a sophisticated 'upgrading' of authoritarianism.[39] The popular revolution that ousted Mubarak in January 2011 demonstrated that this partial liberalisation had not found the key to stability and regime durability. The story of the hugely impressive social mobilisation of early 2011 is well known. What interests us here is why this failed to produce democratisation in line with so much of the transition literature.

It soon became apparent that, from Cairo, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) was able to control and shape the terms of its own retreat after the ousting of Hosni Mubarak. Throughout 2011, the army enhanced its own executive powers. While it formally retained a commitment to democratisation, the military piloted the transition in an increasingly opaque fashion. Many concluded that Egypt had suffered a soft coup, the army gaining power in return for pushing Mubarak out. They feared an encroaching 'Mubarakism without Mubarak'. Over 10,000 people were sent to military tribunals in the months following Mubarak's toppling. Extra-judicial killings dramatically increased in number. The SCAF seemed keen to extract itself from everyday politics but would not fully subordinate itself to a civilian administration. In a complex, three-player game between the army, the Islamists and the liberals, no single player was able to visibly advance the agenda in their desired direction against the combination of the other two.

Mounting frustration with SCAF restrictions and reform delays led to street protests and violent reprisals. As the dust cleared from these, the Muslim Brotherhood's political party, Freedom and Justice (FJP), gained a clear victory in the first round of parliamentary elections. It was followed by the Salafi al-Nour party in a strong second position. As a result of another bout of protests, presidential elections were brought forward to May 2012. The SCAF had opted for the route of completing a constitution before elections, but now the poll was held prior to the constitution being finished, leaving it uncertain what people were actually voting for. However, the elections produced a major breakthrough. After days of high drama, during which the SCAF withheld election results in an effort to shoehorn in its own candidate, the Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi was declared victor. The SCAF handed power to the country's first freely elected civilian leader. Morsi sacked the senior SCAF leadership and reduced the army's powers over parliament and the executive.

While transition was back on track, divisions ran deep. The SCAF had suspended parliament before the elections; now there was the question of when new parliamentary polls would be held and whether the Muslim Brotherhood would regain its majority. Former regime personnel of the 'deep state' remained in place, deliberating on how far to accept the remit of the new president. Morsi appointed a largely technocratic government, with few party militants. One expert has labelled the new Egypt an 'officers' republic' as senior army officials in practice retained the 'guardianship' over the deep state and economy that they had enjoyed under Mubarak.[40]

In a battle with these forces, Morsi availed himself of draconian, centralised powers. Liberals walked out of constitutional talks as religious clauses were discussed. Ironically, it was now the liberals who were not fully engaged in the democratic process. Morsi gave himself sweeping new powers over judicial review at the end of 2012. The constitution was then finalised in a matter of days and put quickly to the vote. The document centralised presidential powers and protected the army's position. Liberals opposed the document, and polarisation deepened after its approval. The Muslim Brotherhood insisted it would accept

the full range of citizenship and minority rights; doubts remained among liberals as to whether it would indeed do so in practice. The National Salvation Front formed in November 2012 to coalesce opposition forces; it decided to boycott parliamentary elections. Morsi initiated a national dialogue to bring the constitution's opponents back on board through concessions. However, after further lethal protests in early 2013 Morsi moved closer to the army, to the chagrin of protestors, who were now even less willing to accept the new constitution. Notable experts saw Egypt's danger not so much in Islamist illiberalism as a familiar 'dominant party over-reach' that had blighted transitions around the world.[41]

Indeed, in a dramatic turnaround of alliances, it was popular outrage at Morsi's appropriation of new powers that pushed the army to oust the president and reassume control of the government in July 2013 – a move that provided the most potent symbol of how far the Arab spring had struggled to meet initial expectations. Liberals were now strikingly supportive of the military intervention. The coup was the result of strong democratic checks and balances not having been created prior to elections and the adoption of a new constitution. Salafists emerged as key players as they distanced themselves from the Muslim Brotherhood and engaged with the army.

During the autumn of 2013, the army-controlled interim government gained in popularity, gradually tightened political space and pushed the Brotherhood once more to the margins, using even more repressive violence than during the Mubarak years. Liberals in the interim cabinet began to criticise more strongly draconian security provisions and new laws restricting both the right of assembly and civil society support. The United States and European governments criticised these measures yet also intensified their security cooperation with Egypt, signed new investment and energy contracts, released economic and military aid to the regime and pulled back from their engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood. Western governments had over-indulged Morsi, and were now over-indulging the new ruler, General Abdelfattah al Sisi. Western powers insisted their engagement was aimed at building bridges in order to keep the transition on track; but by now any meaningful democracy support had dried up. Saudi Arabia pumped in over twenty billion dollars, with other Gulf nations also supporting al Sisi generously.

The new constitution that was adopted by way of a referendum held in January 2014 gave increased powers to the army and elements of the judiciary that supported the coup, but reduced the role of parliament. Conversely, the document removed restrictions on personal status rights introduced by the Muslim Brotherhood in the 2012 constitution and enhanced human and especially gender rights protection. It also banned religion-based political activity, to the detriment even of the Salafists who supported the military's removal of President Morsi.

In May 2014, General al Sisi was elected with ninety-six per cent of the vote in a virtually uncontested presidential election. After he assumed the presidency, the new regime clamped down brutally with tragic loss of life against opposition

protests and then moved to outlaw more comprehensively the Muslim Brotherhood. While the new constitution contained formal advances in rights, critics noted that in practice the state was by now using less restrained repression. Prominent human rights activists were arrested in December 2014. There was an increase in violent attacks, attributed to jihadists. For a while it remained uncertain whether Egypt was witnessing a reconstitution of the old authoritarianism or the painful embedding of a semi-competitive polity. The army and al Sisi talked of a 'road map' back to democracy and insisted they had intervened to safeguard the spirit of the 2011 revolution from the Muslim Brotherhood's usurping of liberalism. However, during 2014 and 2015 al Sisi incrementally narrowed the political space through draconian new laws restricting protests and civil society activities. The regime imprisoned thousands of Muslim Brotherhood members. Over 10,000 people were arrested on terrorism charges as the regime reverted to increasingly brutal tactics in a vain effort to contain a jihadist uprising. The government attempted harsh security clampdowns against radical groups in the Sinai, with heavy loss of life and little strategic effectiveness. Parliamentary elections were pushed back into 2015 and, when they were held, were a highly controlled farce that garnered an extremely low turnout.

Notwithstanding the return of authoritarianism, Egypt has undoubtedly changed in ways that mean it has not reverted to pre-2011 conditions. Society is patently less deferential. Religious identity is itself defined and framed in less hierarchical terms.[42] Economic actors are more acutely aware of how urgently Egypt needs dispersed market power to create wealth, and that unreconstituted statist dirigisme has failed to foster balanced economic development. The international community has been weak but it was not as willing to overlook the most serious and egregious human rights abuses as it was before 2011.

Ukraine and Egypt: explaining the differences

Although Ukraine and Egypt exhibit self-evident differences, there are valuable lessons that can be drawn from their contrasting experiences of transition. There are a number of factors that help explain the two countries' different transition outcomes.

The value of second attempts

Ukraine's 2004 Orange revolution was squandered. It failed to generate sustained democratic reform, producing instead endless bickering by the warring factions in power and paving the way for the electoral comeback of Victor Yanukovych. This has taught a powerful lesson to the reform-minded politicians, civic activists and the general public about the need for deep institutional change. Although most analysis has concentrated on the failures of the Orange Revolution, it also provided civic activists and society at large with important lessons about the need to consolidate the protest's gains and to keep up the pressure for reform, transparency and accountability. One could speak of a learning curve

that was absent in Egypt as its civic actors had no experience of managing a political transition of any kind.

Egypt had no such recent experience to draw from: civic activists were not able to see how quickly the spirit of the revolution could subside; reformers from different factions could not see how their failure to compromise with each other would allow the forces of autocracy to regain the ascendancy; and liberals were too easily fooled into thinking that the army intervened in 2013 to protect liberalism from the Islamists rather than to quash all forms of open debate per se. Egyptian protesters did not invest enough into channelling the protest energy into institutionalised politics: their role in elections, in building political parties and in constitution-writing could have been greater. They failed to engage with the political process from within, sticking to street protests as a strategy instead.[43] The pre-2011 mass mobilisation experience in Egypt, although substantive, was limited to 'street politics' with protests being an outlet for citizen anger without further occasion to engage with political institutions.[44]

Political competition and alliance-building

In Ukraine, more than two decades of competitive politics seem to have produced a relatively resilient dynamic: the authoritarian turn by President Yanukovych had only lasted 3 years before the EuroMaidan took place. Yanukovych's departure was as abrupt as his rule seemed solid just days before that. His miscalculations were as much the reason for this as a number of structural features of the Ukrainian polity whose geography, economy and regional identities all preclude a stable centralisation of power. The immediate consensus by all political players after the removal of Yanukovych – not necessarily out of a genuine commitment to democracy – was that power centralisation was not acceptable. Ironically, this was in many ways a reinstatement of the post-Soviet status quo, whereby political competition is instrumental to protecting vested interests. Complex power distribution promotes power-sharing arrangements. Such political pluralism is both a safeguard against authoritarian backsliding and a major obstacle to genuine reform.

In Egypt, polarisation between Islamists and secularists militated against classical patterns of alliance-building and pacts. Failed democratisation became an almost self-fulfilling prophecy. President Morsi insisted he needed to force through constitutional changes and other reforms because the 'deep state' was aligned against him and determined to thwart his democratic intentions. Yet the more he sidelined inclusive processes, the stronger that opposition to him became. Real power-sharing was not accepted by any of the key actors – the military, Islamists or liberals – for different reasons but with the same tragic outcome. Because each key actor was highly suspicious of the others, Egyptian politics quickly became a zero-sum game, wherein whoever gets a chance engages in a fierce (and often illiberal) fight with the opponents, who are expected to do the same, if given a chance.

Economic structures

In Egypt, previous economic liberalisation under the Mubarak regime had empowered state cronies and vested interests rather than a genuinely independent and pro-democratic private sector. The army retained control of large sectors of the economy. There was no strong pressure for democratic reforms from the business sector. In Ukraine, a key factor was that powerful economic interests – the country's infamous oligarchs, in particular – withdrew support from the Yanukovych regime and believed some form of transition would help them protect their interests more effectively. Ukraine's oligarchs may not be democrats, but they compete against each other and require some form of open market structure. This is very different to the way that Egypt's far more paternalistic power dynamics pervade economic activity.

Liberal versus illiberal identities

While civic protestors in both Ukraine and Egypt agitated for democracy, the two uprisings were underlain by very different debates about identities. For Ukrainian protestors, democratic transition was an integral part of forging a more European and liberal identity for the country. This was not the case in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood adhered to a very partial or illiberal vision of democracy and fell into the temptation of trying to colonise rather than democratise the state.[45] While the Muslim Brotherhood moved towards more a moderate position in order to protect itself during Mubarak's rule, after 2011 it adopted an increasingly illiberal position in order to satisfy its conservative electorate. It did not make the switch from social movement to fully recognised, professional political party well. As it now suffers acute repression, the movement faces a crucial test. Egypt is unlikely to retain any degree of hybrid political openness without moderate Islamists having some form of political presence or representation.

In Egypt, liberalism and democracy increasingly collided in a way that was not the case in Ukraine. This explains why most self-defined liberals supported the army's coup in 2013: they believed democracy needed to be sacrificed in order to rescue liberalism. Egypt's 'deep state' was anxious and non-committal, weighing the shifting alliances and power re-alignments until it felt that decisive steps needed to be taken against the Morsi administration. The international community was equivocal in its reaction to the 2013 coup. The illiberal forces in Ukraine, on the other hand, despite retaining high visibility, did not manage to secure a decisive presence in the country's power structures. Although they remain a polarising element and may certainly perform better in future elections (indeed, the local elections in October 2015 sounded some alarm bells), they do not pose a direct threat to the country's democratisation at the time of writing.

The experience of violence by the protesters is crucial in both cases. A direct experience with violence raises the stakes, making protesters much less tolerant or open to compromise. It creates the space and a sense of purpose for more radical groups that would otherwise remain on the margins. It also 'normalises' moments of incivility as a necessary evil. Although inevitable in a violent revolutionary scenario, all these tendencies are inimical to democracy in the long run. This is the reason why reconciliation is extremely important in the post-revolutionary phase – something both countries failed to deliver. Although the situation in Ukraine is no doubt more democratic than in Egypt, an almost deliberate failure to promote reconciliatory politics coupled with the loss of territorial integrity and an ongoing armed conflict have planted time bombs that may blow the country's tentative achievements to pieces, should the overall economic, social or geopolitical situation take a turn for the worse.

Strong versus weak armed forces

The unique history, embedded power and prestige of the Egyptian military gave authoritarian forces significant leeway. In the 2011 revolution, the role of senior army figures was instrumental in convincing president Mubarak to step down. Thereafter they exerted significant control over the incipient transition. The army was willing to allow genuine political competition to the extent of allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to take power. In all this, it never lost its power, its alliance-building influence or its legitimacy with a large part of the Egyptian population. This gave al Sisi a huge margin for manoeuvre when the army intervened in 2013, allowing him sufficient support to re-establish strong autocratic structures before any unease among the wider population was stirred. In Ukraine, the armed forces were weak and did not play any significant political role. The military did not intervene during the EuroMaidan. The President's coercive power relied on small but cohesive special forces, such as the riot police. They were an effective instrument of protest oppression during the stand-off with protesters but never amounted to an autonomous political force. If anything, because of the violence, the Ministry of Interior was largely discredited after the events.

International factors

While international factors may not have been primary variables in explaining transition outcomes in Ukraine and Egypt, they were relevant. The policies of external actors reinforced transition dynamics at some moments, while sapping such momentum at others. Western governments were less cautious about supporting transition in Ukraine than in Egypt. Even in Ukraine, their support for transition was held back by geostrategic and domestic concerns, and this ambivalence played into the persistent features of hybridity in the country. Since 2013, the European Union and the United States have offered a wide range of support to Ukraine's democratic transition, and of greater depth than they provided after the 2004 Orange Revolution. Some have judged a democratic Ukraine to be essential to limiting Russia's geopolitical influence, while others felt that a proactive stance in Ukraine may create additional tensions in the region, and unnecessarily so. Russia's increasingly assertive policies are explicitly aimed at

manipulating the political process in Ukraine through a range of tactics that go beyond the conflict in Donbas. Unlike during the first two decades after the end of the Cold War, international influences in Ukraine today push the country in two opposite directions. For some reformers in Ukraine this is reason to intensify the pace of democratic transition; for others, it is a scenario that encourages reforms to be frustrated and diluted.

In Egypt, geopolitical calculations have been different. Western governments supported the 2011 revolution, but only in reactive mode. Ironically, they were so keen to see an Islamist government succeed in leading a democratic transition that they were insufficiently alert to how president Morsi's centralising control was paving the way to a military coup. Even democratic reformers in Egypt did not seek the kind of close alignment with European Union rules and policies that Ukrainian reformers did. Since the 2013 coup, the United States and European Union have struggled for leverage in Egypt. They have criticised the return to autocracy, but have also increased security cooperation with the regime. And the external influences coming from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have eased authoritarianism's return, as these countries have provided al Sisi with billions of dollars in support and active encouragement in weakening the Muslim Brotherhood. While a detailed study of international policies is beyond the scope of this chapter, it suffices to observe that contrasting external influences are another factor that help explain the variation on transition outcomes between Egypt and Ukraine.

Implications for transitology

The cases of Ukraine and Egypt have produced some of the most dramatic political events of recent years. The two countries experienced stirring democratic breakthroughs, in which social protests drove out corrupt and authoritarian regimes. 'Tahrir' and 'Maidan' have become perhaps the two most globally resonant emblems of a new type of democratic activism that flows from broad-based social movements. The two countries' trajectories are of particular significance to transitions analysis. This is because these two cases of dramatic breakthrough happened despite widespread predictions that such change was highly unlikely. They took place against an analytical background of work that focused more on explaining the apparent resilience of liberalised authoritarianism or unconsolidated democracy. Hence, in the aftermath of such dramatic, unexpected movements, broader analytical reflections come into view.

Events in Ukraine and Egypt are far from having run their course and outcomes are still highly uncertain. Ukraine is making tentative steps down the path of transition, albeit with significant resistance and limitations to deep structural change, while Egypt appears to be heading towards more repressive autocracy. In the next phase, it is possible that the situations could reverse. Ukraine may slip backwards, as conflict simmers and the opponents of reform regain firmer footing; and in Egypt, civil society may reawaken and begin to push back against the brutality of the regime. Even if such a dramatic reversal were to occur, it would in a sense validate our central point: namely, that the courses taken by transitions are highly *varied* and *changeable*, rather than unfolding in accordance with any expected, uniform and linear script. With that caveat, we offer the following tentative thoughts on how our comparison relates to this book's overarching themes.

First, *authoritarian regimes are stable until they are not*. It is striking that so few people predicted the sudden emergence of social revolts – either in Ukraine during the period in which Viktor Yanukovych was incrementally tightening non-democratic levers of control, or in Egypt from 2005. This should caution us in future to take greater care in making sweeping assumptions that political change is unlikely, based on surface features of regime stability.

Second, *transitions are characterised by a high degree of changeability*. Both cases discussed in this chapter clearly put political agency back at the centre of analytical explanation. Social mobilisation drove forward political opening in very different structural contexts. In the initial moments of dramatic change, in 2011 in Egypt and 2013 in Ukraine, agency seemed to outweigh structural variation as a variable. Compared to the classics of transitology,[46] recent revolutions demand an opening up of the empirical and analytical focus from elites to other societal actors. While the focus on contentious action per se is not new, the linkages between different types of actors have been explored insufficiently.[47] Our comparison between Ukraine and Egypt shows how potent social movements and protests were relative to elite pacts, but it also suggests that the ultimate impact of such social and political agency can be very different. Recent evidence from these two countries reinforces the observation that incipient transitions are eminently reversible. This chapter has unpacked how in each of our two cases a combination of structural and agency impediments continues to militate against fully successful democratisation. In explaining the divergence of outcomes in what started out as two similar citizen-led democratic breakthroughs, our two cases suggest the need for more focus on the mutually constitutive relationship between the state and society, between elites and civic activists.

A generalisable lesson might be that the changeability in transitions is greater today than in previous periods – in both 'forward' and 'reverse' directions. Also, where liberalism precedes democratisation, the outcome of transition is likely to be different from cases where it does not. Here, our case studies give empirical backing to some of Philippe Schmitter's observations in Chapter 10: that compared to the periods of previous waves of transition, there is today a greater multiplicity of actors to be taken into account, a wider range and shifting patterns of identities, broader sets of international linkages and more uncertainty and volatility which diminishes actors' chances of finding expression through political party systems. Together, these elements of fluidity offer potential for change and a challenge to predictability, while also cutting across familiar patterns of consolidation. Our two case studies suggest that there are both more potent enabling factors but also more confining variables militating against significant movement towards consolidation.

Third, *transitions can move in different directions*. At present it seems that the direction of change in Ukraine is towards deeper democratisation while the dominant dynamic in Egypt is one of deeper authoritarian control. Ukraine's degree of pluralism before the EuroMaidan revolution was greater than Egypt's before the 2011 revolution – even though both qualified as 'hybrid' or 'weak authoritarian' regimes. In Egypt, the Mubarak regime allowed a degree of opening before nervously seeking to reverse such modest liberalisation; this raised and then crushed citizen's expectations – the explosive combination that triggered mass protests. Both countries have fluctuated in 'forward' and 'reverse' directions for a decade now. The balance of political forces in Ukraine is likely to ensure that this changeability continues there. While authoritarianism currently appears to have firmly re-established itself in Egypt, some civic legacy of the 2011 revolution remains, suggesting that this country's political structures may also not be entirely set in stone.

Finally, *structural changes are relevant to explaining contrasting degrees of democratisation.* The two cases shed light on the limits of political competition and pluralism in a system where the political rules are not taken for granted and serve as instruments of power. Despite all the dramatic social mobilisation and upheavals and, in response, the violent attempts to reassert autocratic control, both countries have retained key features of an autocratic regime and predatory politics, although to a very different degree. In Ukraine, revolutionary, bottom-up pressure has led to political dynamics based more on elite trade-offs and negotiated concessions. These dynamics continue to forestall far-reaching change to the 'rules of the game', even as they also serve to keep some elements of pluralism and prospects for reform alive. In Egypt, on the other hand, the promptness with which authoritarianism has reasserted itself in a new guise shows how such deep structures are difficult to dislodge.

In summary, in examining transitions we should be alert to combinations of change and continuity: political events may take very different turns across different countries, and move back and forwards in moments of high drama, while underlying structures endure and some of the challenges related to hybrid regimes present common concerns across countries whose superficial politics take very different courses.

Notes

1 Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou and Timothy Sisk, Chapter 2 of this book.
2 Huntington, *The Third Wave*.
3 Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilisation and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.
4 Kalandadze and Orenstein, 'Electoral Protests and Democratisation'.
5 Stepan and Linz, 'Democratisation Theory and the "Arab Spring"'.
6 Carothers, 'End of the Transition Paradigm'.
7 O'Donnell *et al.*, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, p. 3.
8 Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*; Mikael Wigell, 'Mapping "Hybrid Regimes"'.
9 Morlino, *Changes for Democracy*.
10 Diamond, 'Elections Without Democracy'.

11 O'Donnell, 'Why the Rule-of-Law Matters' in Diamond and Morlino, *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, pp. 3–17.
12 Lipset, *Political Man*; Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*.
13 Rueschemeyer *et al.*, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*.
14 Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernisation, Cultural Change and Democracy*.
15 Grugel and Bishop, *Democratisation*.
16 Møller and Skaaning, 'Regime Types and Democratic Sequencing'.
17 Ekiert *et al.*, 'Democracy in the Post-Communist World'.
18 O'Donnell *et al.*, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*; Karl, 'Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America'.
19 See for example, Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilisation and the Collapse of the Soviet State,* on the former Soviet Union; on Asia, Boudreau, *Resisting Dictatorship*; and on the Middle East, Bayat, *Life as Politics*.
20 Keane, *The Power of the Powerless*; Keane, *Civil Society and the State*; and Tilly, *Social Movements*.
21 McAdam *et al.*, *Dynamics of Contention*.
22 Della Porta, *Mobilising for Democracy*.
23 Chambers and Kopstein, 'Bad Civil Society'; Kaldor and Muro-Ruiz, 'Religious and Nationalist Militant Groups'.
24 Razumkov Centre, *Ukraine 2015–2016*; regular reform updates are available on the website of the National Reform Council, www.reforms.in.ua.
25 Kudelia, 'If Tomorrow Comes'.
26 Kudelia, 'The House that Yanukovych Built'.
27 On the distribution of key economic assets and competing business interests in Ukraine, see Åslund, *How Ukraine became a Market Economy and Democracy*; Kudelia, 'The Sources of Continuity and Change of Ukraine's Incomplete State'.
28 Hale, *Patronal Politics*.
29 By some counts we are talking about approximately 300 'old guard' MPs and only thirty EuroMaidan activists in the 450-seat parliament.
30 Oleksandr Holubov, 'Poroshenko's Catch-22', Carnegie Moscow Centre, 23 November 2015, available at http://carnegie.ru/commentary/2015/11/23/poroshenko-s-catch-22/im7n#.Vld3GqUjwrQ.twitter.
31 Way, *Pluralism by Default*.
32 Pishchikova and Ogryzko, 'Civic Awakening'.
33 Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 'Maidan-2013: Who Protests, Why and For What?', poll conducted among the Maidan participants on 7–8 December 2013; and N. Shapovalova, 'Ukraine's Prodemocracy Movement', *FRIDE Commentary*, 3 February 2014, Madrid: Fride.
34 Authors' interviews.
35 Although these protests were taking place predominantly in the west and centre of the country, they spilled over into a number of provinces in the east and south, including those that had given considerable support to Yanukovych in 2010 and to his Party of Regions in 2012 (for example, the cities of Kyrovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiyv and Zaporizhzhya).
36 The economy shrunk by seven per cent in 2014 and by twelve per cent in 2015 according to World Bank Updates, available at www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/eca/ukraine/ua-macro-april-2015-en.pdf; UN estimates for 2015 are that eighty per cent of Ukrainians live on less than five dollars a day.
37 In the 1990s, Ukraine was the third largest recipient of bilateral aid by the United States, after Egypt and Israel. During the first two post-Soviet decades the United States government gave almost US$4 billion in technical assistance to Ukraine; democracy support programmes were a prominent, if small, part of it. The European Union, through its European Neighbourhood Policy, offered a comprehensive partnership that encompassed fostering of democratic norms and gradual reform. The European

Union assistance was more focused on government and state institutions; its distinctive approach centred on norms and standards approximation.

38 Mendelson and Glenn, *Power and Limits of NGOs*; Pishchikova, *Promoting Democracy in Postcommunist Ukraine*.

39 Two of the most cited assessments during this period were Brumberg, 'The Trap of Liberalised Autocracy' and Heydemann, 'Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World'.

40 Sayigh, 'Above the State'.

41 Carothers and Brown, 'The Real Danger for Egyptian Democracy'.

42 Roy, 'There Will Be No Islamist Revolution'.

43 Brown, 'Egypt's Failed Transition'.

44 Bayat, *Life as Politics*.

45 Hamid, *The Temptations of Power*.

46 O'Donnell *et al.*, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*.

47 Della Porta, *Mobilising for Democracy*.

4 Electoral transitions

Stumbling out of the gate

Pippa Norris

One of the first steps in most regime transitions following the downfall of an autocrat is to hold direct multi-party elections. It is hoped that this process will endow the new regime with legitimacy at home and abroad, strengthening its authority to rebuild fragile states and unify deeply divided societies. Elections are now a universal practice in peace-building and state-building missions, as the international community seeks to channel aid and assistance through a legitimate government. Nevertheless, electoral transitions remain fraught with danger. Some contests succeed by producing popular regimes which gradually strengthen human rights and democratic institutions, including inclusive parliaments, independent courts and stable states. Yet contentious elections can also feed social conflict and breed discontent. Moreover, many autocracies have learnt to use a series of manipulated and fraudulent elections to maintain their grip on power, containing and suppressing popular discontent behind a veneer of legitimate contests.

The most severe risks of contests failing to transition towards democracy are commonly thought to arise when attempting to organise elections under a wide range of challenging conditions, including in poor and illiterate societies with scattered rural populations that lack access to modern communications and transportation, in deeply divided states emerging from years of conflict and in countries with a long legacy of authoritarian rule and little, if any, experience of democratic practices. If transitional elections succeed, they do not, by themselves, guarantee further progress towards developing stable democratic states. Nevertheless, if elections fail, for whatever reason, then prospects for a sustainable process of democratisation fade. In this regard, they are an essential first step in any transition towards democracy despite the fact that some contests stumble and fall coming out of the gate.

The challenges associated with attempting to hold popular contests under very difficult circumstances are perhaps best illustrated by contemporary events in Afghanistan. Successive elections for the presidency, *Wolesi Jirga*, and provincial councils have been held in this country since 2004. This is despite a traditional political culture with tribal allegiances and rival forms of regional authority and elite patronage rooted in semi-feudalism; poor communications and transportation infrastructure over a vast territory; low levels of literacy and

schooling (the 2013 UNDP Human Development Index ranked Afghanistan 175th out of 186 countries worldwide, and second from the bottom in terms of the Gender Inequality Index); a murky politics characterised by endemic corruption and violence; and weakly institutionalised political parties, among peoples who have lived under violent conflict for decades. In 2009, widespread complaints about ballot stuffing led the Independent Election Commission to organise a complete recount.

The second round of the 2014 presidential elections saw more than 150 reported incidents of violence on polling day. In the aftermath, the leading presidential contender, Abdullah Abdullah, demanded that the Commission cease the count mid-way through due to alleged irregularities – an event followed by mass protests, the resignation of the chief commissioner and delays in announcing the results. The results of the audit suggest that perhaps as many as two million fraudulent votes were cast out of eight million in total. In the end, a brokered power-sharing agreement resolved the outcome but this also violated the spirit of the election. A detailed study of the Afghan experience over successive elections since 2004 concluded that the process strengthened the power of ruling elites but did little to develop representative democracy.[1]

To help gain an understanding of these types of problems, and the role of elections in transitions, the first part of this chapter describes modernisation theories of democratisation that are rooted in the classic accounts of Seymour Martin Lipset. The second part considers which structural factors from the previous research literature are plausible candidates to explain why elections succeed or fail, and also how the quality of elections can best be conceptualised and operationalised. The chapter then examines the cross-national evidence to analyse the process. The conclusion summarises the main findings and considers their implications for electoral transitions from autocracy.

Modernisation and mass politics

As Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou and Timothy Sisk discuss in Chapter 1, the earliest approach to understanding successful transitions from autocracy and subsequent processes of democratisation is rooted in theories of developmental studies, political economy and political sociology, exemplified by the long tradition established by Seymour Martin Lipset in the mid-twentieth century.[2] The so-called 'Lipset thesis' argues that democracies (and, by extension, levels of electoral integrity) flourish best in industrialised and post-industrial societies characterised by conditions of widespread literacy and education, with a substantial affluent, professional middle class and a pluralistic range of civic associations serving as a buffer between citizens and the state.[3] The original claim by Lipset specified most simply that: 'The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy'.[4]

Development consolidates democracy, Lipset theorised, by expanding access to information derived from literacy, schooling and the mass media; broadening the size of the middle classes; reducing the extremes of rural poverty; facilitating intermediary organisations such as labour unions, professional associations and voluntary organisations; and promoting the cultural values of legitimacy, moderation and social tolerance. The shift from agrarian to industrial capitalist production weakened the feudal grip of the traditional landed estates. Newly-unionised urban workers and middle class professional groups demanded access to the voting franchise and mobilised around rival parties that reflected their interests. Lipset emphasised that extreme social inequality maintained oligarchy or tyranny, while more egalitarian conditions, and in particular the swollen ranks of the middle classes, facilitated mass political participation and moderate political parties:

> Only in a wealthy society in which relatively few citizens lived in real poverty could a situation exist in which the mass of the population could intelligently participate in politics and could develop the self-restraint necessary to avoid succumbing to the appeals of irresponsible demagogues.[5]

During the 1970s, Dankwart Rustow reinforced the Lipset argument by claiming that the transition to democracy could be attributed to a predictable series of social changes accompanying economic development and societal modernisation – as predicted by indicators such as per capita energy consumption, literacy, school enrolment, urbanisation, life expectancy, infant mortality, the size of the industrial workforce, newspaper circulation and radio and television ownership.[6] The social determinism implicit in the more mechanical versions of modernisation theories has been subject to considerable criticism, especially the neglect of the role of actors, institutions, social movements and key historical events that contribute to overturning dictatorships and founding democracies. After all, middle-income nations such as Russia, Venezuela and Malaysia have experienced major problems with democracy and elections, which are not confined by any means to the world's poorest societies.

Nevertheless, following in Lipset's footsteps the relationship between wealth and democracy has, in subsequent decades, been subject to rigorous empirical inquiry. For more than half a century the association has withstood repeated empirical tests under a variety of different conditions, using cross-sectional and time-series data with a large sample of countries and years, and with increasingly sophisticated econometric models, as well as in many historical accounts of political developments occurring within particular nation states. Many studies have reported that wealth is associated with the standard indicators of democratisation, although the precise estimates of effects are sensitive to each study's choice of time period, the selection of control variables specified in causal models and the basic measurement of both democracy and economic growth.[7] Thus, the Lipset hypothesis has been confirmed by successive studies as well as in more recent work where Lipset revisited the original thesis.[8] The major challenge to the conventional wisdom has arisen from the work of Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi, who argue that greater economic development does not *cause* the downfall of autocracies and

the initial steps towards democratisation (which arise from multiple unknown causes, such as the death of a dictator, splits in the ruling party or external invasion). However, after passing a certain threshold level, a comfortable level of economic development does *consolidate* democratic institutions and thereby serves as a buffer preventing reversions to autocracy.[9]

In a previous work, I used time-series cross-national data during the 'third wave' era since the early-1970s and compared the impact of wealth (log GDP per capita) on four alternative measures of democratisation (by Freedom House, Polity IV, Vanhanen and Przeworski *et al.*/Cheibub and Gandhi), to double-check the robustness of the relationship in well-specified models incorporating many structural controls.[10] The evidence confirmed that wealth was significantly positively associated with each measure of democracy, showing a robust relationship, as many previous studies have reported. The underlying reasons for this relationship continue to be debated but separate models testing the effects of education and literacy on democratisation displayed a particularly strong link, as Barro earlier highlighted, suggesting that societies which invest in human capital are more likely to sustain democratic regimes.[11]

Social structure and electoral integrity

Besides development, my earlier study concluded that many additional structural fixed conditions proved significant:

> Democracy was usually more probable in countries which shared an ex-British colonial legacy, in regions which had seen the spread of democracy, in states outside the Middle East, in ethnically homogeneous societies and in countries with smaller populations ...; the models explained between half and two-thirds of the variance across the comparison, suggesting a relatively good fit, although ... many outlier cases can be found among both rich autocracies and poor democracies.[12]

Do similar structural conditions determine where elections succeed and fail? Since elections are a necessary – although far from a sufficient – condition for democratisation, similar patterns can be expected to be observed. The modernisation thesis can therefore plausibly be extended for our purposes to generate a series of testable propositions about the socio-economic conditions thought to be most favourable to strengthening elections as a mode of transition. Studies of fixed constraints typically focus on wealth and income (and thus indicators of economic growth, human development and social inequality), as well as the role of physical geography (the size and location of a state), inherited colonial legacies, patterns of ethnic heterogeneity, deep-seated cultural attitudes and values and the distribution of natural resources. Conditions in each society are regarded from the modernisation perspective as largely static, or else like phenomena such as human development and political culture which are believed to evolve at a glacial pace over successive decades or even centuries.

Contemporary multi-party elections, once largely the preserve of industrialised Western nations, have spread worldwide. They are attempted today under many challenging social conditions. These include extremely poor and divided developing societies, fragile states and transitional or hybrid regimes that lack both the military control used to maintain order in fully authoritarian states on the one hand, and the shared cultural values and accumulated experience of elections found in consolidated democracies, on the other. Since 2000, all but eleven countries worldwide have held national elections, and only a handful of states such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman have never held direct parliamentary elections.[13] Popular referendums to determine constitutional issues and state secession have also become more common, such as in Montenegro (2006), South Sudan (2011) and Crimea (2014). The growth of decentralised governance has led to more contests for state and local office, and the number of contests has multiplied within the twenty-eight European Union (EU) member states due to direct elections to the European Parliament since 1979.

Therefore, one plausible theory seeking to explain the distribution of flawed and failed elections around the globe lies in structural or fixed conditions which make contests inherently risky enterprises. Sceptics highlighting the perils of elections can point to an earlier wave of institution-building, when European-style parliaments were transplanted to many African societies during the winds of change era of decolonisation, only to collapse as the military or big men usurped power.[14] As Robert Dahl noted, where the underlying conditions are highly unfavourable, it is improbable that democracy could flourish under any institutional design. By contrast, if the underlying conditions reduce the risks, then democracy is likely to take root under almost any type of constitution.[15]

Despite the plausibility of structural explanations, and the extensive body of political economy and sociological literature testing the effects of wealth and security on democratisation, surprisingly little systematic research has, by contrast, analysed the impact of structural conditions on the quality of elections. One notable exception is work by Sarah Birch which examined whether a range of socio-political conditions heightened the risks of electoral malpractice, including cross-national levels of economic development, trade dependence, foreign direct investment, corruption, social inequality and urbanisation.[16] Each of these factors can be regarded as 'structural' constraints on elections, since it is difficult to alter many of these conditions in the medium- to short-term, if at all. For example, countries cannot reinvent their histories, or easily avoid conflict and refugees flowing across their borders from neighbouring states, although obviously states attempt to accelerate economic growth and human development, with greater or lesser degrees of success. Fully specified models should therefore control for a range of structural conditions. Such accounts are most powerful in explaining long-term trajectories of political development and the general probabilities of democratisation worldwide. They are less helpful in accounting for the specific timing and particular type of short- or medium-term fluctuations in electoral integrity.

The policy implications of fixed conditions for the international community are largely the need to be strategic in prioritising the choice of country interventions, since high risks are associated with attempts to strengthen electoral integrity in the most challenging environments. A wide range of indicators have been developed by scholars and these are consolidated for analysis in the cross-national and cross-national time-series datasets assembled and distributed by the Quality of Government Institute based at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.[17]

When analysing the cross-national evidence, it is important to consider conventional assumptions about the direction of causality in complex interactive processes. Ethnic heterogeneity and population divisions by religious, linguistic, racial and nationalist identities, for instance, are conventionally treated by researchers as enduring or 'fixed' characteristics of societies. Yet constructivist accounts emphasise that the political salience and meaning of latent ethnic identities can be either heightened or moderated by the rhetorical appeals of party leaders – and thus by the institutional incentives to mobilise either ethnic or inter-communal appeals arising from the electoral rules.[18] The physical boundaries of the nation state are regarded from the structural perspective as largely stable, even though geographic distances for trade and access to Western markets are shrunk by developments in transportation, communications and modern technologies. Similarly the mapped boundary lines of the nation state are occasionally reshaped by secession and conquest, as in Eastern Ukraine, as well as by enlargement of regional associations, such as Romania (2007) and Croatia (2013) joining the EU, and by broader processes of globalisation and cosmopolitan communications.[19] Similarly access to the production of natural resources like oil and natural gas have been transformed by technological developments, such as hydraulic fracking that has facilitated the exploitation of new areas of hydrocarbons, while regulatory policies can either mitigate or exacerbate the impact of state capture of natural resources. Factors such as a culture of corruption can also be regarded as the effect of lack of electoral accountability, as much as a cause of why contests fail.

Despite these complex issues of interpretation and the limits of the available longitudinal evidence, the effect of several long-term conditions which are genuinely independent of electoral integrity within the time-span of a specific contest – including the impact of physical geography, colonial legacies and population size – are examined using cross-national data in this study. These conditions are properly specified as fixed in the models: holding elections in some of the world's largest countries, such as India, Nigeria or Indonesia, for example, may plausibly provide more serious logistical and organisational challenges compared with contests in, say, Guatemala or Jamaica. Nevertheless, national elections per se cannot effect a country's physical geography or population size in the short-term (although even here a few notable exceptions exist, since previous secession referendums, such as in Bangladesh, Sudan and Crimea, can determine a country's contemporary national borders and electorate in subsequent contests).

Measuring perceptions of electoral integrity

For the dependent variable, this study draws primarily upon evidence of whether elections meet international standards derived from the techniques of expert surveys. These methods have been widely used in political science including in Transparency International's expert survey of perceptions of corruption,[20] the Varieties of Democracy project under development by the Institute for Good Government[21] and several expert surveys of political party ideologies and policy positions.[22] To provide comprehensive evaluations of each stage of the electoral cycle, this study utilises data from the Electoral Integrity Project expert survey on Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI-2.5) covering all national elections around the globe during a twenty-four month period from mid-2012 to mid-2014, excluding micro-states (with populations below 100,000). The study selects a cross-section of electoral experts to participate in the survey, including both domestic and international respondents. The survey interviews around forty electoral experts from each country, generating a mean response rate of around twenty-eight per cent across the survey. *Electoral experts* are defined in the PEI study as political scientists (or scholars in related social science disciplines such as law, history, political economy or political sociology) who are knowledgeable on one or more of the following topics: elections, electoral systems, electoral administration, voting behaviour, public opinion, campaigns, political communications, mass media, democracy and democratisation, political parties and party systems, human rights and national politics. All these topics touch on different dimensions of the underlying concept of electoral integrity. '*Expertise*' is defined by publication of scholarly articles, books and conference papers or teaching at university level on these topics, and/or by membership and participation in professional research groups, disciplinary networks and organised sections on the above topics with organisations such as the International Political Science Association.

The instrument used for the expert survey relies upon multiple questions, not simply an overall 'pass/fail' summary judgement. Social psychological research suggests that breaking estimates into their components parts, or greater granularity, usually generates more accurate answers.[23] The forty-nine items about electoral integrity contained in the questionnaire are designed to capture expert judgments about whether specific national elections meet internationally-recognised principles and standards of elections.[24]

Economic and human development

The core Lipset thesis concerns the role of economic development (conventionally monitored by each society's per capita GDP) which is closely associated with notions of societal modernisation, including the spread of industrialisation, urbanisation and education, as well as the related role of the broader notion of human development – as measured by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) where longevity and education are added to the measure of per

capita GDP. While it is commonly assumed that higher quality elections occur in richer nations, the empirical evidence supporting this claim is not in fact well-established. In one of the most systematic comparative analyses, Birch used multivariate models to test the impact of a series of structural variables on electoral malpractices. The study found that GDP growth was not significantly correlated with many measures of election quality (by Freedom House, the Economist Intelligence Unit and Kelley's Quality of Elections Dataset). Moreover, she also reported that growth was significantly related to her Index of Electoral Malpractices, but in a *positive* direction (suggesting that higher growth led to lower quality elections), for reasons which remain unclear.[25] Birch's study did not test the direct effects of levels of economic development on malpractices, however, to avoid problems of multi-collinearity in the models.[26] Any interpretation of the relationship also needs to consider using time-lags to partially overcome possible issues of endogeneity. Lisa Chauvet and Paul Collier reversed the relationship to test the impact of the frequency of holding elections (of any quality) on economic policies in developing countries. They reasoned that regular contests strengthened the incentive for governing parties to improve their economic performance in order to win votes and retain office. The study reported that the more frequently elections are held, the better the policies, as measured by the World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessments.[27]

To start to describe the comparative evidence without any controls, Figure 4.1 shows the observed correlation between contemporary levels of electoral integrity measured by the summary PEI-2.5 Index and levels of economic development lagged by 5 years (to reduce the danger of endogeneity, since the quality of elections could affect income), measured by per capita GDP (in purchasing power parity) in 2009 from the World Development Indicators. The bivariate correlation without controls displays a significant and strong relationship (R=0.583, P=0.00); as expected affluent post-industrial societies such as Norway, the Netherlands and Austria also have the highest quality elections according to the overall PEI-2.5 Index. By contrast, some of the poorest societies under comparison had the worst electoral performance, including Cambodia, Djibouti and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Moreover, the results proved consistent when the sub-components of the PEI survey were broken down further, revealing that wealth was significantly correlated (at the conventional 0.05 level) with all the indicators, with the exception of district boundaries (see Table 4.1).

Nevertheless, the best fit line displayed in Figure 4.1 is not linear but quadratic, *suggesting that a stepped shift occurs in the integrity of elections once a certain minimum level of moderate economic development is reached.* The estimate suggests that integrity is most likely once countries achieve a per capita income of roughly $15,000 or more (in constant 2005 dollars). Thus, it can also be observed that many contests which experts rated positively as 'high integrity' (ranked in the top thirds of the PEI index) showed a wide scatter across the top oval. Therefore, contests in many middle-income nations scored well, such as Chile, Argentina and Lithuania, all rated by experts as similar or better than the quality of elections in the United States. At the same time another cluster of

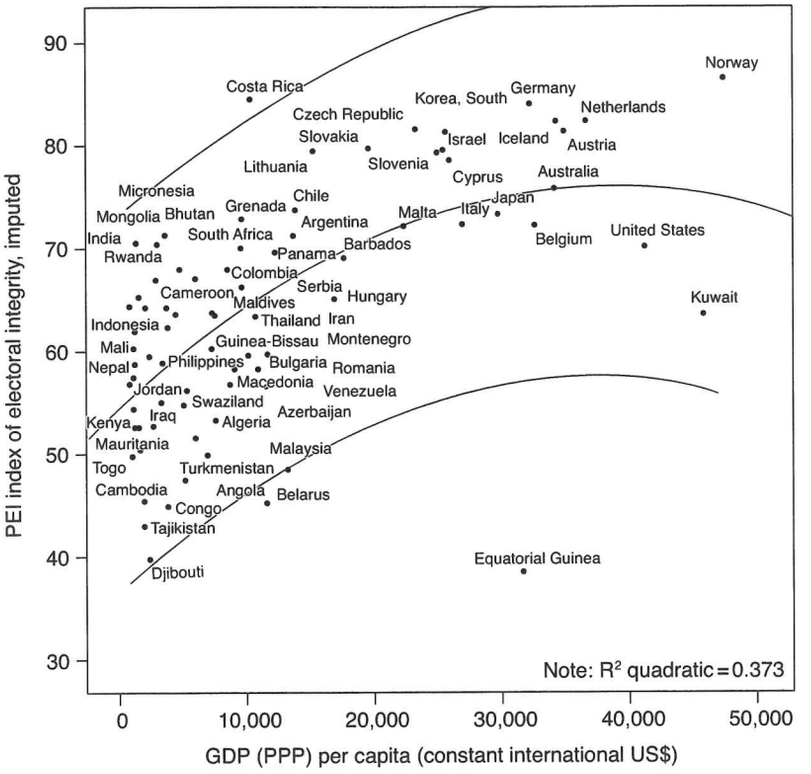

Figure 4.1 Electoral integrity and wealth (sources: PEI Electoral Integrity Index, Electoral Integrity Project 2014 – expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, (PEI-2.5); per capita GDP in purchasing power parity (PPP) in 2009 from the World Development Indicators included in the Quality of Government Cross-national Dataset www.qog.pol.gu.se/data/).

poorer countries can be observed with per capita income below $15,000 (in the bottom oval) and in this category societies varied sharply in the quality of their elections, ranging from low income Tajikistan and Djibouti with flawed contests, to poor countries such as Mali, Bhutan and Nepal, which had elections rated more highly by experts. The observational pattern suggests there is a link – as expected, richer nations tend to have better quality elections – but the relationship is both a stepped shift once a minimal level of wealth is reached in a society and several exceptions such as Equatorial Guinea and Kuwait show that the links are far from deterministic. In this regard, the observed relationship is closer to the Alvarez *et al.*, version of modernisation theory rather than the classic Lipset thesis.[28] In subsequent ordinary least squares (OLS) multivariate regression analysis, per capita GDP is transformed by estimating the square root in order to model the stepped shift more accurately.

To test the Lipset thesis further, the UNDP's Human Development Index arguably provides a superior measure of societal modernisation, by combining wealth, longevity and education. Reflecting Amartya Sen's notion of human development, this index monitors the quality of people's lives, not simply the success of the economy.[29] The series of annual UNDP Human Development Reports have convincingly demonstrated that many societies, such as Equatorial Guinea and Iraq, with moderate levels of median income at national level (derived from natural resources) lag behind in relative levels of schooling, longevity and living conditions.[30] Education, in particular, provides cognitive skills, knowledge and cultural attitudes which are widely regarded as vital for citizen's informed choices and active participation in civic affairs. The comparison observed in Figure 4.2, without controls, confirms that the Human Development Index is more strongly correlated with the quality of elections than GDP alone,

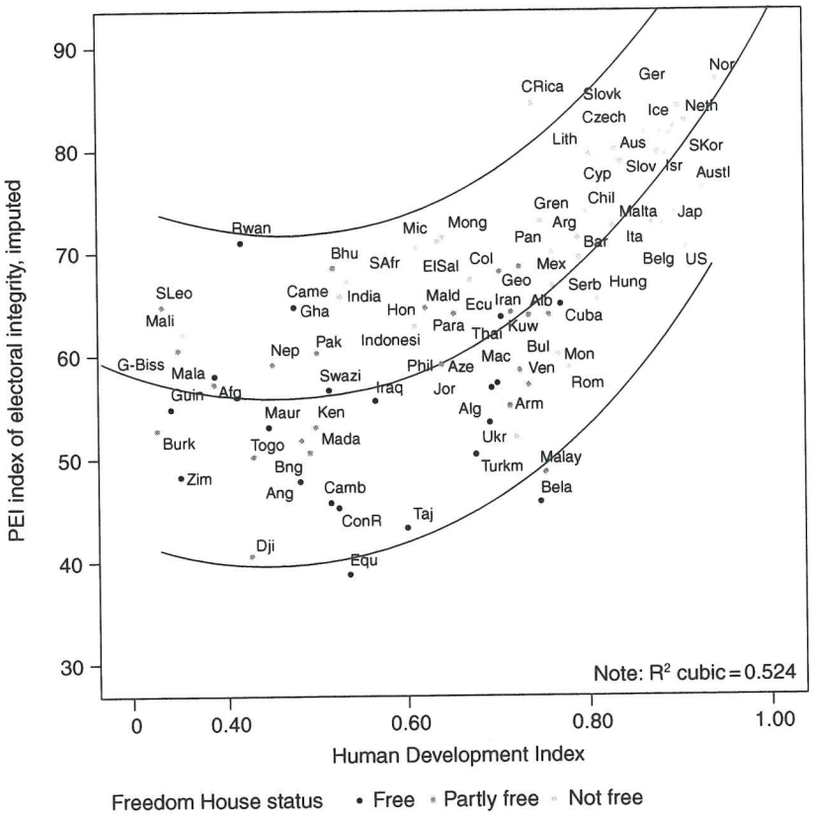

Figure 4.2 Electoral integrity and human development (sources: PEI Electoral Integrity Index, Electoral Integrity Project 2014 – expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, (PEI-2.5); Human Development Index 2009 (combining income, longevity and education) from UNDP included in the Quality of Government Cross-national Dataset www.qog.pol.gu.se/data/).

although again contrasts can be observed between low development societies such as Rwanda and Bhutan, with relatively positive scores in the quality of elections, and Djibouti and Angola, which perform poorly. The cubic line rather than a linear relationship provides the best overall fit, suggesting a far from straightforward progressive shift. Table 4.1 displays strong and significant correlations across all eleven sub-components of the electoral cycle.

Natural resources and corruption

There are a few cases which can be observed as clear outliers in the relationship between wealth and electoral integrity – most notably oil-rich (but human development poor) Equatorial Guinea. The well-known 'resource curse' is another related structural explanation: countries with GDP highly dependent upon abundant reserves of non-renewable mineral resources, such as Kuwaiti oil, Democratic Republic of Congo gold or Sierra Leone diamonds, usually produce less diversified and less competitive economies, more income inequality with less investment in social policies that build human capital and a heightened danger of state capture and rent-seeking by ruling elites.[31] Lootable natural resources which can be smuggled across borders, such as diamonds, rare minerals, ivory, cocaine and heroin, are making countries particularly vulnerable to criminal cartels, civil war, insurgency and rebellion.[32] Assessing the degree to which an economy is dependent upon natural resources is not easy, however, especially given the black market trade in illicit goods. To measure the distribution of natural resources, this study draws upon the World Bank's measure of total natural resources rents for 2012 (percentage of GDP), where these rents are the sum of oil, natural gas, coal, minerals and forest. Given the unequal distribution of resources across countries, the measure is logged for a better linear fit. 'Rents' are estimated as the difference between the value of production of these resources at world prices and the total costs of production. 'Rentier states' are those like Saudi Arabia which derive all or a substantial portion of their national revenues from the rent of indigenous resources to external clients.

Figure 4.3 shows that, without any prior controls for the wealth of a country, there is only a strong negative correlation ($R=-0.450$, $P=0.000$) between the distribution of natural resources and the PEI Index of electoral integrity. Further analysis in Table 4.1 confirms significant correlations linking resource rents with all of the PEI sub-indices from stages in the electoral cycle. Nevertheless, there is a substantial dispersion of observations across the regression line in Figure 4.3; for example, countries with higher per capita revenues derived from resources include Equatorial Guinea (ranked worst in integrity), Kuwait (ranked moderate) and Norway (ranked extremely highly). Natural resources usually appear to function in many rentier states as a curse for many dimensions of democratic governance, but reservoirs of natural resources in mature democracies do not inevitably depress the quality of elections.

What of related direct measures of corruption? The resource curse can be expected to heighten the risks of electoral malpractices, since ruling elites in

Table 4.1 The PEI Index and its components correlated with economic indices

	GDP per capita, PPP (constant international US$)	*Human Development Index*	*Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)*	*Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)*
PEI index of electoral integrity	0.583**	0.645**	–0.450**	0.726**
Electoral laws index	0.225*	0.239*	–0.391**	0.444**
Electoral procedures index	0.529**	0.625**	–0.390**	0.653**
Voting district boundaries index	0.191	0.385**	–0.294**	0.241**
Voter registration index	0.585**	0.638**	–0.351**	0.561**
Party and candidate registration	0.458**	0.515**	–0.431**	0.590**
Media coverage index	0.271*	0.248*	–0.371**	0.416**
Campaign finance index	0.516**	0.556**	–0.388**	0.527**
Voting process index	0.521**	0.653**	–0.321**	0.592**
Vote count index	0.481**	0.623**	–0.504**	0.622**
Results index	0.533**	0.594**	–0.294**	0.579**
Electoral authorities index	0.473**	0.526**	–0.441**	0.673**

Sources: PEI Electoral Integrity Index and its sub-components, Electoral Integrity Project 2014 – expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, (PEI-2.5); CPI from the Quality of Government Cross-national Dataset www.qog.pol.gu.se/data/; Total natural resources rents as % of GDP (2012) from the World Bank, World Development Indicators.

Notes
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N = 85 countries.

Figure 4.3 Electoral integrity and natural resources (sources: PEI Electoral Integrity Index, Electoral Integrity Project 2014 – expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, (PEI-2.5); log total natural resources rents 2012 (% of GDP), World Bank World Development Indicators. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.TOTL.RT.ZS).

rentier states control assets which can be deployed to gain support and maintain their grip on power, particularly through clientelism, patronage and corruption. For example, when faced with continuing anti-government protests, riots and social unrest following uprisings elsewhere in the region, Bahrain, which obtains ninety per cent of its state revenues from oil, substantially boosted state subsidies discounting the price of petrol, utilities and food, in an attempt to maintain support for the regime. There is also some empirical support for the proposition that patronage politics is linked with poor quality elections: Birch analysed cross-national data and reported that Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index was associated with incidence of electoral malpractices.[33]

However, care is needed when interpreting the direction of causality in this relationship. Acts such as the abuse of state employees, patronage politics and

vote-buying can clearly serve to undermine electoral integrity, especially where a pervasive culture of kleptocracy undermines public trust and confidence in electoral procedures and authorities. Yet it could also be argued that by breaking the chain of electoral accountability, so that crooked leaders can no longer be thrown out of office through the ballot box, corruption should be understood as primarily the product, rather than the cause, of poor quality contests. Thus, again, it is important to lag the independent measure of corruption as a partial control for problems of endogeneity in cross-national analysis.

Comparative evidence of the frequency of actual corrupt behaviour is notoriously difficult to gather with any reliability, not least because these acts are often illicit and hidden. To monitor perceived corruption, as a close proxy, this study draws upon Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), based on compiling many expert sources, first launched in 1995. There are questions about whether reported corruption perceptions reflect the lived experience and underlying reality of corruption, and whether such perceptions are uniform across cultures.[34] Nevertheless, the CPI is widely used by scholars and by the international community, including being incorporated into the World Bank Institute's Good Governance indices.[35] One note of caution is in order. It would be expected that the expert perceptions of electoral integrity would probably closely reflect broader perceptions of corruption – not least because the composite PEI Index includes some related questions on political finance, although the term 'corruption' was not used explicitly in the design of the PEI questionnaire. As a partial control for endogeneity, the CPI was measured in 2007–2011, lagged before the year of the election. Figure 4.4 shows the correlation between the lagged CPI and the PEI Index, without controls. The observed results confirm the existence of a strong and significant bivariate relationship (R=0.726, P=0.000). Moreover, the CPI was strongly and significantly linked with all the sub-components of the PEI with one exception (voting boundaries). Like wealth, the quadratic line provided the best fit, suggesting a stepped shift or 'plateau' effect. The simple correlations therefore suggest that perceptions of corruption (which are also strongly linked with the macro-level distribution of resource rents) are associated with perceptions of electoral integrity.

Several of the observed relationships of the key economic factors can be tested more systematically by examining the multivariate analysis presented in the first model in Table 4.2. The four successive models add additional blocks of factors, removing any which caused problems of multi-collinearity. Thus, the models did not include the UNDP's Human Development Index since, not surprisingly, this index is strongly inter-correlated with wealth, by definition and construction. The models also excluded the Transparency International subjective measure of Perceptions of Corruption, since this was so strongly correlated with per capita GDP and the objective measure of resource rents, generating similar problems of multi-collinearity.[36]

The first model tests the effects of wealth (transformed by the square root of GDP per capita in purchasing power parity) and the measure of natural resource

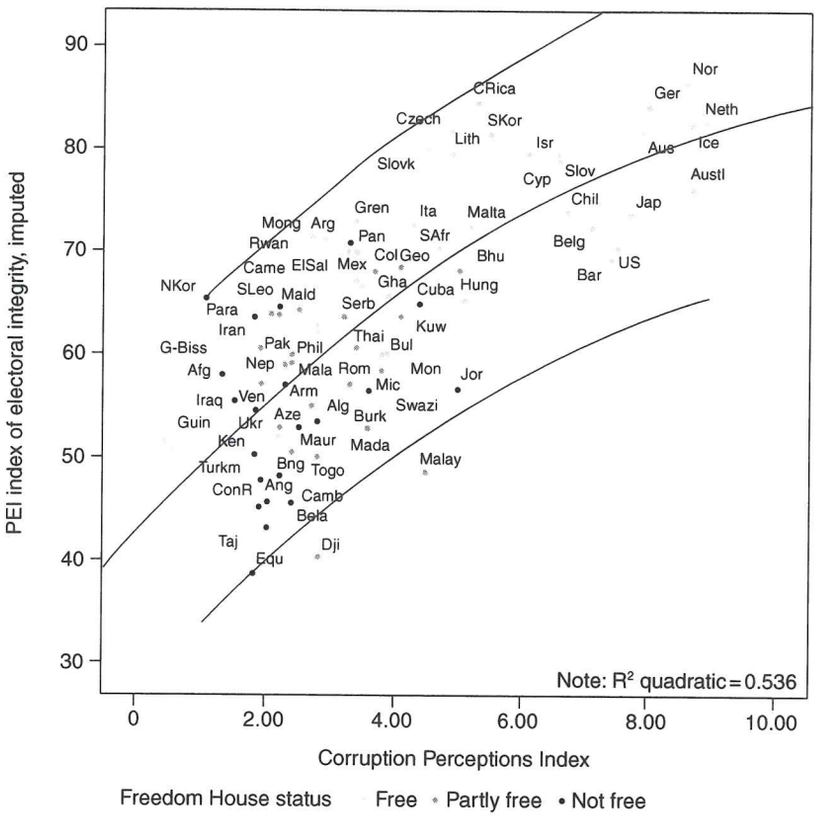

Figure 4.4 Electoral integrity and perceptions of corruption (sources: PEI Electoral Integrity Index, Electoral Integrity Project 2014 – expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, (PEI-2.5); Corruption Perceptions Index 2009 included in the Quality of Government Cross-national Dataset www.qog.pol.gu.se/data/).

rents on the PEI Index. The results in Table 4.2 confirm that both wealth and natural resources were strongly and significantly related to the PEI Index; not surprisingly, most richer countries had better quality elections, while at the same time resource-rich states usually tended to suffer worse malpractices. These two factors alone explained considerable variance in the PEI Index (Adjusted R^2=0.426).

Geography

Were other structural conditions also important? The physical geography of a country can be expected to matter for processes of democratisation and development in several ways, including a state's location close to the equator (and thus

Table 4.2 Structural conditions and electoral integrity

	Model 1		*Model 2*		*Model 3*		*Model 4*		*Model 5*	
	Economy		*And geography*		*And ethnicity*		*And colonial legacy*		*And state history*	
	B	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*	*B*	*S.E.*
Economy										
Wealth (Sqrt per capita GDP PPP)	0.102***	0.020	0.090***	0.026	0.050*	0.032	0.047	0.026	0.025	0.033
Natural resources (% GDP)	–1.92***	0.527	–1.91***	0.553	–1.77***	0.001	–1.73**	0.546	–0.997	0.001
Geography										
Population size (000s)	–	–	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.000
Latitude	–	–	5.66	6.01	14.71*	6.097	14.56*	6.42	11.46	6.83
Area size (sq. km)	–	–	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000
Ethnicity										
Linguistic fractionalisation	–	–	–	–	1.11	4.034	0.937	4.07	0.649	3.95
Religious fractionalisation	–	–	–	–	2.23	4.490	2.15	4.84	2.61	4.68
Predominant Muslim society (0/1)	–	–	–	–	–5.20*	2.65	–5.08	2.68	–4.15	2.55
Predominant Catholic society(0/1)	–	–	–	–	4.67	3.06	4.14	2.56	2.38	2.83
Predominant Orthodox society (0/1)	–	–	–	–	–7.52*	3.66	–6.99*	3.33	–7.87**	3.22
Middle East region (0/1)	–	–	–	–	2.85	3.88	2.54	4.42	5.71	4.55
Colonial legacy										
Previous British colony (0/1)	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.575	2.67	0.148	2.81
Year of independence	–	–	–	–	–	–	–0.009	0.009	–0.004	0.008
State history										
History of democracy 1972–2010 (FH)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.49***	0.474
History of conflict 1972–2004 (UCDP)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–0.041	0.087
Constant	56.4	–	55.5	–	55.3	–	73.4	–	58.3	–
Adjusted R^2	0.426	–	0.415	–	0.499	–	0.493	–	0.544	–

Sources: PEI Electoral Integrity Index Electoral Integrity Project 2014 – expert survey of Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, Release 3 (PEI-3); all other indices from the Quality of Government Cross-national Dataset www.qog.pol.gu.se/data/.

Notes

1 B – Beta Coefficient, S.E. – standard error.
2 *, **, *** – degree of statistical significance.
3 OLS (ordinary least squares) Regression analysis where the PEI Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index is the dependent variable in eighty-five countries. All models used tolerance tests to check that they were free from problems of multi-collinearity.

vulnerability to tropical diseases and distance from access to global markets), the physical size and terrain of a state (and thus types of agricultural production and distances from the federal government) and population size.[37] By extension, geographic factors are also plausible underlying conditions which could affect the quality of elections. At the simplest level, immense logistical challenges are posed when organising elections in large and populous countries. In India, for example, over 814 million citizens were entitled to vote in 930,000 polling stations during the 2014 general elections, involving five million polling personnel and civil police forces with nine staged phases of voting from 7 April to 12 May, with ballot boxes carried to from remote communities in deserts and far-flung mountainous villages. The estimated total cost of the general election campaign was US$5 billion, of which around US$577 million for running expenses came from the public purse.[38] The logistical, financial and technical challenges shrink to more manageable proportions in smaller states. Nevertheless, the importance of the size of nations on electoral integrity needs to be tested empirically, not least because the role of physical geography as a deep driver of economic growth and development has been strongly debated among political economists with some rival schools arguing that 'institutions rule' in determining economic growth, especially the colonial legacy concerning the institutions of rule of law and private property.[39] Other aspects of physical geography, including the location of a country in relation to neighbouring states (and thus patterns of regional diffusion, the influence of hegemonic states, the spillover effects of conflict and the permeability of cross-border communications) are treated in this study more properly as international influences upon elections.

The results of the empirical analysis presented in Model 2 in Table 4.2 show that despite the assumed importance of physical geography, once models control for wealth and natural resources, population size and area size of a country are *not* significant predictors of electoral integrity. After all, despite the immense logistical hurdles which Indian elections encounter, according to PEI more severe problems occur with contests in the smaller states of neighbouring Bangladesh and Pakistan. The latitude of a state (i.e. its distance from the equator) approaches the conventional cut-off point for statistical significance, however, and it crosses this threshold in subsequent models. A heated debate continues to rage in political economy, following William Easterly and Ross Levine, as several scholars have emphasised that geographic latitude is critical for development as it serves as a proxy for many other factors, including the type of agricultural crop production, distance to global trade markets, ecological threats, vulnerability to tropical diseases and the existence of deep-rooted poverty.[40] The results of the analysis in Models 2–4 in Table 4.2 suggest that for all these reasons, the latitude of a state's location also plays a role in increasing the dangers of electoral malpractices occurring in states close to the equator.

Ethnic heterogeneity and religious cultures

Ethnic heterogeneity is widely regarded as another condition which heightens the risks of failed elections – and indeed failed states and failed economies.[41] Deeply divided societies with a high level of ethnic fractionalisation among distinct religious, linguistic, nationalistic or racial communities are also believed to be most vulnerable to armed internal conflict.[42] Multi-ethnic societies are widely assumed to face particularly serious challenges in holding democratic elections, maintaining political stability and accommodating rival communities. Hence, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder argue that holding early elections as part of any peace-settlement in poor and conflict ridden states can exacerbate tensions, by producing populist leaders who seek to heighten latent ethnic identities to maximise their popular support.[43] In this view, it is important in this context to follow a sequential process, first reconstructing the core functions of the state to maintain security and manage the delivery of basic public services before subsequently moving towards elections.

Tensions among different ethnic communities are generally thought to undermine government legitimacy, social tolerance and inter-personal trust, all of which are believed to lubricate the give-and-take of political bargaining and compromise which characterise democratic processes. In the worst cases, ethnic conflict may lead to deep-rooted and prolonged civil wars and occasional cases of outright state failure, as exemplified by developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Sudan, Azerbaijan, Chechnya and Sri Lanka.[44] Ethnic heterogeneity is monitored in Model 3 in Table 4.2 using Alberto Alesina *et al.*'s estimate of linguistic and religious fractionalisation, as these types of social cleavages differ across world regions.[45] It should be noted that although this data source provides comprehensive estimates for all countries worldwide, it only gives an indication of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of a society using relatively crude measures, without attempting to assess the political salience and cultural meaning of these cleavages. The cross-national measurement of ethnic divisions remains a tricky and complex issue. For example, in the United Kingdom, Welsh nationalism is strongly tied to linguistic cultural identities, with roughly one-fifth of the population able to speak Welsh, whereas north of the border, the issue of Gaelic is less salient for feelings of Scottish nationalism, except on the islands. By contrast, Northern Ireland is divided between Protestant and Catholics, and by social class and income, not by language. Thus, the Alesina *et al.* measures, drawn from incomplete sources, capture only a very imperfect and limited dimension of all these types of identity politics in the British Isles.

In addition, debate continues about the importance of the predominant religious culture in a society. In particular, it is questioned whether the robustness of the authoritarianism (and thus the failure of electoral integrity) that has taken root throughout most states in the Middle East and North Africa, despite the Arab Uprising, can be attributed primarily to the rentier states and sharp social inequalities generated by oil dependent economies in this region; or is this a broader phenomenon which can be attributed to deep-rooted cultural values

dividing the Muslim world and the West?[46] The well-known 'clash' thesis developed by Samuel Huntington also emphasised the effects of the enduring legacy of religious cultures on democratic values and beliefs throughout the world, including historical divisions within Europe into Protestant, Catholic, Muslim and Orthodox states.[47] The role of predominant religious cultures is expected to leave a deep and enduring imprint on the democratic, economic and social values which are widespread in contemporary societies, even though faith and active religious practices have faded in affluent secular societies.[48] Thus, even today Protestant Sweden and Catholic Italy are expected to show divergent values on many basic moral tenants, such as the value of marriage and the family, the role of the state or willingness to obey the law and pay taxes voluntarily, even though regular church-going has been abandoned in the Nordic states and both societies share many similar characteristics as affluent post-industrial economies and EU member states.

Accordingly, Model 4 in Table 4.2 entered the predominant religious tradition of each state, where Protestantism is treated as the default category. Finally, the Middle East is also entered as a dummy variable, to see if there is any residual impact from Arab states after controlling for Muslim cultures and the distribution of natural resources. The results in Model 3 show that once wealth and natural resources are controlled for, linguistic and religious ethnic heterogeneity, contrary to expectations, play an insignificant role as predictors of the PEI Index. Societies can be relatively homogeneous or they can be divided into many communities, but the model suggests that this in itself, based on these admittedly imperfect estimates, does not predict when elections will fail. Nevertheless, the type of predominant faith does seem to leave a cultural imprint; states in Eastern Europe with an Orthodox religious heritage, and also predominately Muslim societies, perform significantly worse in the quality of their elections than Protestant societies even after controlling for natural resources and levels of economic development. Moreover, it appears that, contrary to the claims of Alfred Stepan and Graeme Robertson,[49] it is the predominantly Muslim heritage more than being located in the Middle East and North Africa which has this effect.

Colonial legacies

The historical imprint left from colonial legacies can also be expected to prove important for development and democratisation, and by extension for electoral integrity as well.[50] An association between past type of colonial rule and contemporary patterns of democracy has been noted by several observers; for example Christopher Clague *et al.* report that lasting democracies (characterised by contestation for government office) are most likely to emerge and persist among poor nation states in ex-British colonies, even after controlling for levels of economic development, ethnic diversity and size of population.[51] Under British rule, they suggest, colonies such as Canada, Australia and India gained experience with electoral, legislative and judicial institutions, in contrast with countries under French or Spanish rule. Arguing along similar lines, Lipset and

Lakin also suggest that what mattered in ex-colonial states was whether the previous occupying power was itself democratic.[52] Settlers in the British colonies, they argue, inherited a pluralist and individualist culture and legislative institutions of self-government, which would prove critical to the development of democracy, notably in the United States, Canada, India and New Zealand. By contrast, colonists in Latin America were strongly influenced by the Spanish and Portuguese culture, with a more centrally controlled, hierarchical and paternalistic form of rule, at a time when the Spanish monarchy had few institutionalised checks on its power.

To examine the path-dependent role of the type of colonial legacies on contemporary patterns of electoral integrity, countries are coded for whether or not they were ex-British colonies. The year of national independence is also examined, on the grounds that longer experience of sovereignty is likely to consolidate institutions such as electoral systems, political parties, parliaments and courts over successive decades, whereas countries which have experienced more recent decolonisation, such as Georgia and Ukraine's independence from the USSR, and Timor Leste's independence from Indonesia, are likely to have more fragile institutions. Thus, Model 4 in Table 4.2 adds colonial histories to the structural conditions already considered. Although there are many reasons to assume that these historical conditions should matter, the results in fact suggest that, contrary to expectations, neither a British colonial legacy nor the year of independence proved significant predictors of the quality of elections.

State-building and state fragility

Path-dependent accounts also emphasise that the history of a state will leave an enduring mark in other ways beyond colonial legacies. In particular, elections held in fragile states and deeply divided societies emerging from conflict are regarded as at particular risk of failure. Since the early-1990s, during the post-Cold War era, elections have become a standard part of the international community's peace-building blueprint.[53] It is widely hoped that elections will facilitate the emergence of democratic governments with popular legitimacy and encourage political parties to channel grievances through conventional political means rather than armed conflict, and thus bring durable stability to deeply divided societies with a long history of bloodshed. Hence, United Nations peace-building missions assisted with organising transitional elections in Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Burundi, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Liberia and Sudan.[54] In the most positive cases, elections do appear to have contributed towards durable peace settlements and the establishment of legitimate and stable governments, such as in Mozambique, El Salvador and Croatia.[55] Elsewhere the attempts of the international community to hold elections have often proved less effective, however, and states have continued to struggle to contain violence.[56] This problem is exemplified by continuing unrest in the Central Africa Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan, the three most fragile states ranked worldwide in 2013 by the Centre for

Systemic Peace.[57] Renewed ethnic conflict which broke out in Iraq in 2014, despite national elections in 2005 and 2010, can also be added to this list.

Moreover, scholars warn that instead of building sustainable peace, elections attempted prematurely during regime transitions are likely to backfire.[58] Mansfield and Snyder argue that where party competition remains poorly institutionalised, elections provide incentives for leaders to use ethnic and nationalist appeals when attempting to mobilise supporters and thereby gain power, indirectly intensifying the risks of inter-communal conflict. Instead of rushing into early elections, the authors recommend that a sequential process should be followed by peace-building missions where the most urgent priorities are to establish rule of law and security, effective public sector services, and public administration reforms – before subsequently seeking to hold competitive and democratic elections.[59] For all these reasons, states which have experienced recent conflict are likely to have elections which are at highest risk of further bloodshed. By contrast, path-dependent accounts emphasise that states which have consolidated democratic institutions over an extended period of time will have accumulated a deep reservoir of democratic culture, including the values of trust and tolerance, which makes them more likely to overcome any specific problems which may arise in a particular contest through peaceful mechanisms, such as the courts, rather than resorting to violence.

Accordingly, as a final step, Model 5 in Table 4.2 includes a summary measure of each country's previous historical experience or 'stock' of democracy (the sum of the annual Freedom House annual scores for political rights and civil liberties from the 'Third Wave' era in the early 1970s to 2010) as well as each country's experience of civil conflict (the sum annual scores for internal conflict from UNDP-PRIO's dataset from 1972 to 2004). Here, the results of the analysis do differ from the earlier models; in particular, in Model 5 the historical stock of democracy proved to be a strong and significant predictor of contemporary levels of the PEI Index while the economic indicators dropped out of the explanatory factors. Thus, if a country had a strong record of political rights and civil liberties throughout the 'third wave' era, contemporary elections were more likely to meet international standards of integrity. The evidence suggests that a large part of any electoral success or failure comes not from the particular contest itself but from state institutions, cultural values and political behaviours which evolve and consolidate over many decades. This is a path-dependency explanation, although at the same time it does leave numerous puzzles – not least, why have democratic regimes succeeded in some places and not in others? I have discussed this issue in detail elsewhere and it cannot be addressed here, particularly because we lack consistent time-series data to explore historical trends using the PEI Index, which only started with elections held in mid-2012.[60] Moreover, and contrary to expectations from the case-study literature, the summary measure of historical conflict experienced by a country over recent decades was *not,* unlike the democratic record, a significant predictor of electoral integrity today. This somewhat weakens the path-dependency argument, suggesting that past conflicts will not inevitably dampen attempts to strengthen the quality of contemporary contests through the ballot box.

Conclusions on electoral transitions

In accordance with the classic modernisation thesis electoral transitions, and indeed the quality of any subsequent elections, can be expected to prove most problematic where structural conditions produce unfavourable contexts. This includes the world's poorest societies, where contests are held among illiterate populations without access to news media, with poor infrastructure for communications and transport for managing polling and campaigning, and states lacking extended historical experience of democratic contests. An extensive literature in developmental sociology and political economy has debated these claims over more than half a century. The idea that underlying structural conditions greatly heighten the risks of failed elections is also a pervasive assumption in much popular commentary. What does the empirical evidence suggest?

Three key findings emerged from the empirical analysis. First, *wealth matters for the quality of elections*. Not surprisingly, according to the PEI Index richer economies usually had better quality elections. However, this process was observed to function primarily through a stepped shift rather than a linear development. Once countries reached a minimal threshold of around US$15,000 per capita GDP, elections commonly tended to meet international standards. Among poorer countries falling below this threshold, however, elections are riskier operations and malpractices tend to become more common. The impact of wealth continued to prove a significant predictor of the quality of elections across successive models with a progressively wider range of structural controls. This finding is hardly surprising given the extensive research literature over the last half a century linking wealth and democracy. Exactly why there are these contrasts between rich and poor societies, however, remains to be determined.

On the one hand, a sociological explanation in line with the classic Lipset argument suggests that more affluent societies expand the moderate middle classes and generate civic associations, labour unions and professional organisational networks; these serve as a buffer between citizens and the state, strengthen access to information through literacy, schooling and mass media, encourage cultural values of trust and tolerance associated with democracy and reduce the extremes of rich and poor common in agrarian societies. On the other hand, an institutional account suggests that more affluent nations have resources – including human, financial and technical capital – which strengthen the capacity of electoral authorities to organise elections that meet international standards. It is possible that both propositions could be at work.

Second, *natural resources* (measured by per capita oil exports) *do usually appear to operate as a 'curse'* for the quality of elections, as with broader processes of democratisation. This pattern was found to persist despite controlling for many other related structural factors, notably countries with a predominately Muslim religion. Thus, for Arab states oil seems to trump the type of faith, although it remains to be seen whether this pattern persists once more elections have been evaluated from the region. Nevertheless, this remains a probabilistic statement, not an inevitable destiny, which helps to explain the quality of

contests in Equatorial Guinea and Turkmenistan more than an obvious outlier such as Norway. Natural resources and oil-dependent economies can generate rentier states which are plagued by an affluent few and stark socio-economic inequalities, lack of investment in human capital and basic welfare services, migrant workers and expatriate visitors without any citizenship rights and the patronage politics of crony state capitalism. Yet the contrasts observed between contests held in Kuwait and Equatorial Guinea suggest that even oil-rich authoritarian states can improve the quality of their elections.

Finally, once studies control for wealth and oil *many of the structural conditions* which might be considered plausible candidates for explaining the quality of elections around the world, *including the physical size of countries, colonial legacies and ethnic fractionalisation, were not observed to be significant predictors of contemporary patterns of electoral integrity*. Contests in states closer to the equator, and elections in countries with a predominant Orthodox or Muslim culture, were also often riskier propositions. By contrast, the history of democracy and autocracy in a country during the 'Third Wave' era since the early to mid-1970s was important for the contemporary quality of elections – with democratic institutions and cultures consolidated over successive contests. Consolidation means than even where specific irregularities occur – e.g. the Florida case – the reservoir of trust and confidence which institutions gradually accumulate over time is sufficient to overcome these problems through regular democratic channels, including the courts and legal reforms, rather than through direct actions which destabilise the electoral process, such as violent protests or boycotts. Thus, initial elections after transitions from autocracy and in the early stages of democratisation are indeed risky enterprises – perhaps illustrated most vividly in recent years by the experience of Egypt post-Mubarak, with the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood during the transitional multi-party elections, only to be followed by post-revolutionary instability and a backlash producing the popular election of a brutal dictatorship without respect for human rights under General Abdelfattah al Sisi. Yet, from a policy-making perspective, as the cases of Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Lithuania also illustrate – in some favourable circumstances middle-income societies which have lived for decades under authoritarian one-party states can still develop effective electoral processes that meet international standards within the space of a relatively few years.

Notes

1 For a fascinating and detailed account, see Coburn and Larson, *Derailing Democracy in Afghanistan*. See also UNDP, *Human Development Report 2013*.
2 For a discussion, see Birch, *Electoral Malpractice*; Ham, 'Why do Elections Fail?'.
3 Lipset, 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy'. See also Lipset, *Political Man;* Lipset *et al.*, 'A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy'; and Lipset and Lakin, *Democratic Century*.
4 Lipset, 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy'.
5 Ibid. The most recent statement of this relationship by Lipset and Lakin suggests that capitalist free-market economies produce multiple commodities which are critical for democracy by creating more heterogeneous and diverse centres of wealth and power. They suggest this reduces the economic control of the state and provides the basis for opposition organisations and the economic foundation for an active civil society. See Lipset and Lakin, *Democratic Century*, Chapter 5.
6 Rustow, 'Transitions to Democracy'.
7 Krieckhaus, 'Regime Debate Revisited'.
8 Jackman, 'On the Relation of Economic Development and Democratic Performance'; Bollen, 'Political Democracy and the Timing of Development'; Bollen, 'World System Position, Dependency and Democracy'; Bollen and Jackman, 'Political Democracy and the Size Distribution of Income'; Brunk *et al.*, 'Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy'; Huber *et al.*, 'Impact of Economic Development on Democracy'; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck, 'Comparative Democracy'; Helliwell, 'Empirical Linkages between Democracy and Economic Growth'; Vanhanen, *Prospects for Democracy*; Barro, 'Determinants of Democracy'; Przeworski *et al.*, *Democracy and Development*; Lipset *et al.*, 'A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy'; Lipset and Lakin, *Democratic Century*; and Acemoglu *et al.*, 'Income and Democracy'.
9 Adam Przeworski *et al.*, 'What Makes Democracies Endure?'; Przeworski and Limongi, 'Modernization: Theories and Facts'; Adam Przeworski *et al.*, *Democracy and Development*.
10 Norris, *Driving Democracy*, Chapter 4.
11 Barro, 'Determinants of Democracy'.
12 Norris, *Driving Democracy*, p. 88.
13 Norris, *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*, Chapter 4.
14 Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden*.
15 Dahl, *On Democracy*.
16 Birch, *Electoral Malpractice*.
17 See the Quality of Government Institute, www.qog.pol.gu.se.
18 Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed*; Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*.
19 Norris and Inglehart, *Cosmopolitan Communications*.
20 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview.
21 The Varieties of Democracy Project, https://v-dem.net/.
22 Steenbergen and Marks, 'Evaluating Expert Judgments'.
23 Meyer and Booker, *Eliciting and Analysing Expert Judgment*.
24 For further details see Pippa Norris *et al.*, 'Assessing the Quality of Elections'; Norris *et al.*, 'Measuring Electoral Integrity'. See also www.ElectoralIntegrityProject.com.
25 Birch, *Electoral Malpractice*, Table 3.1 and Table 3.2.
26 Ibid.
27 Chauvet and Collier, 'Elections and Economic Policy in Developing Countries'.
28 Przeworski *et al.*, *Democracy and Development*.
29 Sen, *Development as Freedom*. The UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures a country's average achievements across three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools; and a decent standard of living, as measured by GDP per capita in purchasing power parity (PPP) US dollars.
30 See, for example, UNDP, *Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*; also the 2014 UNDP data, http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-1-human-development-index-and-its-components.
31 See, for example, Ross, 'Does Oil Hinder Democracy?'; Jensen and Wantchekon, 'Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa'; Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution*; Ross, 'How do Natural Resources Influence Civil War?'; Haber and Menaldo, 'Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism?'; and Ross, *The Oil Curse*.

32 Collier and Sambanis, *Understanding Civil War*; Humphreys, 'Natural Resources, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution'; and Snyder, 'Does Lootable Wealth Breed Disorder?'.
33 Birch, *Electoral Malpractice*, pp. 64–65.
34 Andersson and Heywood, 'The Politics of Perception'.
35 Prominent papers in this literature include Paulo Mauro, 'Corruption and Growth'; Knack and Keefer, 'Institutions and Economic Performance'; and LaPorta *et al.*, 'The Quality of Government'. This literature is surveyed in detail in Rose-Ackerman, 'Governance and Corruption'.
36 Alternative indices of corruption were tested and found to suffer from similar problems, such as the Bribe Payers Index and the World Bank Group's Control of Corruption.
37 Easterly and Levine, 'Tropics, Germs, and Crops'; Alesina and Spolaore, *The Size of Nations*; and Teorell, *Determinants of Democratisation*.
38 The Electoral Commission of India, http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/the_setup.aspx; *The Times of India*, 'Polls to Cost country Rs 3,500 crore this year', 8 February 2014.
39 See Acemoglu *et al.*, 'Reversal of Fortune'; Rodrik *et al.*, 'Institutions Rule'.
40 Easterly and Levine, 'Tropics, Germs, and Crops', pp. 3–39.
41 Alesina *et al.*, 'Fractionalization'; Alesina and La Ferrara, 'Ethnic Diversity and Economic Performance'; Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds*; Collier and Sambanis, *Understanding Civil War*; and Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace*.
42 For an argument challenging the conventional wisdom that more ethnically- or religiously-diverse countries are more likely to experience significant civil violence, see Fearon and Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War'.
43 Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*; and Mansfield and Snyder, *Electing to Fight*.
44 See, for example, Paris, *At War's End*; Collier and Sambanis, *Understanding Civil War*; Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace*; and Kaufmann, 'Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars'.
45 Alesina *et al.*, 'Fractionalization'.
46 Stepan and Robertson, 'An "Arab" More Than a "Muslim"'; Dunning, *Crude Democracy*.
47 Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*.
48 Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*.
49 Stepan and Robertson, 'An "Arab" More Than a "Muslim"'.
50 Acemoglu *et al.*, 'The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development'; and Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*.
51 Clague *et al.*, 'Determinants of Lasting Democracy in Poor Countries'.
52 Lipset and Lakin, *Democratic Century*, Chapter 11. See also similar findings in Hadenius, 'The Duration of Democracy'.
53 The expansion in peace-keeping activities and the settlement of civil wars has attracted a substantial literature. See, for example, Paris, *At War's End*; Jeong, *Peacebuilding in Post-conflict Societies*; Collier and Sambanis, *Understanding Civil War*; Dobbins *et al.*, *The UN's Role in Nation-building*; Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace*; Jarsad and Sisk, *From War to Democracy*; Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars*; and Toft, *Securing the Peace*.
54 Kumar, *Post-conflict Elections*; McFaul, *Advancing Democracy Abroad*; and Zurcher *et al.*, *Costly Democracy*.
55 Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace*.
56 Marshall and Cole, *Global Report 2014*. See also Fortna and Howard, 'Pitfalls and Prospects in the Peacekeeping Future'; Fortna, 'Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace?'.
57 These three states scored highest on the State Fragility Index 2013; see Marshall and Cole, *State Fragility Index and Matrix 2013*.
58 Snyder, *From Voting to Violence*; and Mansfield and Snyder, *Electing to Fight*.
59 Brancati and Snyder, 'Rushing to the Polls'.
60 This is discussed in detail in Norris, *Driving Democracy*.