

Multiparty Elections and Africa's Hybrid Regimes

Caryn Peiffer

Claremont Graduate University

caryn.peiffer@cgu.edu

Constantine Boussalis

Claremont Graduate University

constantine.boussalis@cgu.edu

Most regimes in Africa now hold regular multiparty elections. More often than not, however, regimes have adopted some of the formal trappings of democracy, like holding multiparty elections, but also maintain features of the country's authoritarian past. Some scholars argue that the democratic features these regimes have adopted will lead to the demise of their authoritarian nature. Specifically, Lindberg (2006; 2009) and Schedler (2002) argue that when regimes hold consecutive multiparty elections they are more likely to become increasingly democratic. Others however see elections as a guise, a mere formal concession to Western pressures to democratize, and they highlight the regime's ability to use authoritarian tactics to maintain their grip on power. This camp sees regime hybridity as an equilibrium. Our paper addresses the following question: how have the elections held by sub-Saharan Africa's illiberal regimes impacted the likelihood of democratic transition? We employ probit regression to explore the impact of multiparty elections on the tenure of Africa's hybrid regimes.

Paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, New Orleans, November 2009.

Draft. November 2009. Please do not cite or circulate without the authors' permission.

"We shed a lot of blood for this country. We are not going to give up our country for a mere X on a ballot. How can a ball point pen fight with a gun?"

- Robert Mugabe
June 15, 2008¹

Almost twenty years after the end of the Cold War, most observers agree on the state of democracy in Africa: on average regimes on the continent can be described as more hybrid than fully democratic or strictly authoritarian. In other words, in more cases than not, African governments have adopted some formal trappings of democracy, like multiparty elections, but have held on to some elements of authoritarianism. While this assessment of the state of African democracy is not controversial, scholars do differ in their predictions on the trajectory of democratization under these hybrid circumstances. Some argue that when a regime accepts certain elements of political liberalization, like the holding of multiparty elections, they make themselves more vulnerable to opposition parties, and give momentum to burgeoning democratic movements (Lindberg 2006; Schedler 2002). In this manner, a regime's choices to concede to demands for political liberalization eventually chip away at the authoritarian nature of the regime, resulting in almost a self-fulfilling democratic prophesy. Others, however, feel that hybridity is an equilibrium, or a system which recreates itself stifling the possibility of further democratization and limiting the chances of a retreat to authoritarianism. These scholars argue that regimes are able to hold elections and control the outcome, and in some cases use the holding of multiparty elections to the advantage of prolonging their tenure.

At the heart of the divergence between these two perspectives is the debate as to whether or not regimes that illustrate "hybridity" are in transition or whether or not

¹ Source: Africa News "Zimbabwe; Mugabe Threatens War If He Loses Run-Off Election." June 16, 2008. Accessed through Lexis Nexis on February 1, 2009.

comparativists should classify regimes as “hybrid,” thus accepting hybridity as an ending point or equilibrium. We wish to examine this paradox. In this paper we ask the question, how have Africa’s hybrid regimes been impacted by the elections that they have held? Has holding these multiparty elections threatened their ability to maintain elements of authoritarianism? Or have Africa’s hybrid regimes found ways to buffer themselves from the possible democratizing effects that holding elections may have?

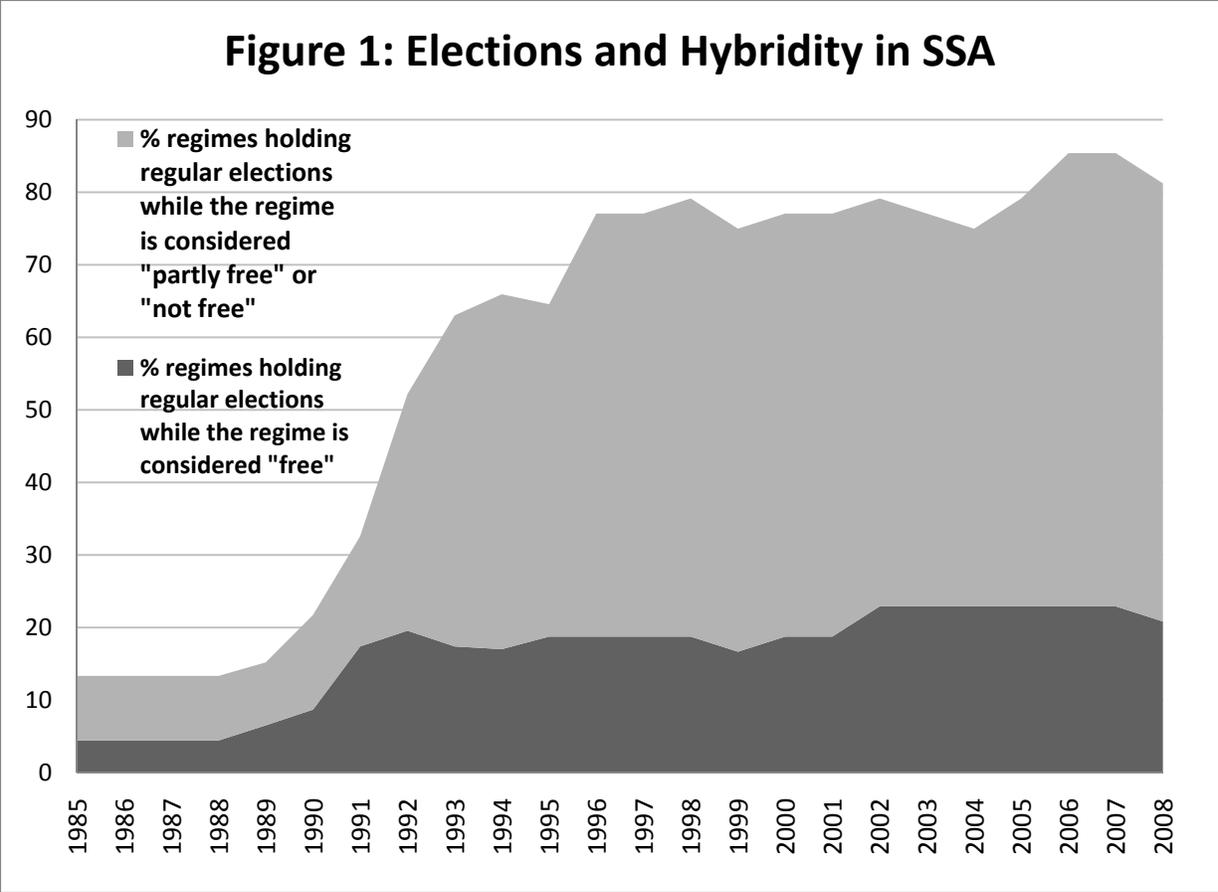
We use probit regression to objectively sort out the answer to these questions. Controlling for a series of covariates, we estimate the probability that an African authoritarian or semi-democratic regime will transition to full democracy for the post-Cold War period. Before a more in depth review of the data and methodology we employ, we first briefly discuss Sub Saharan Africa’s multiparty electoral history and review the relevant scholarly literature that provides several different hypotheses on the expected effects of elections on Africa’s hybrid regimes.

Hybrid Regimes and Elections in Africa

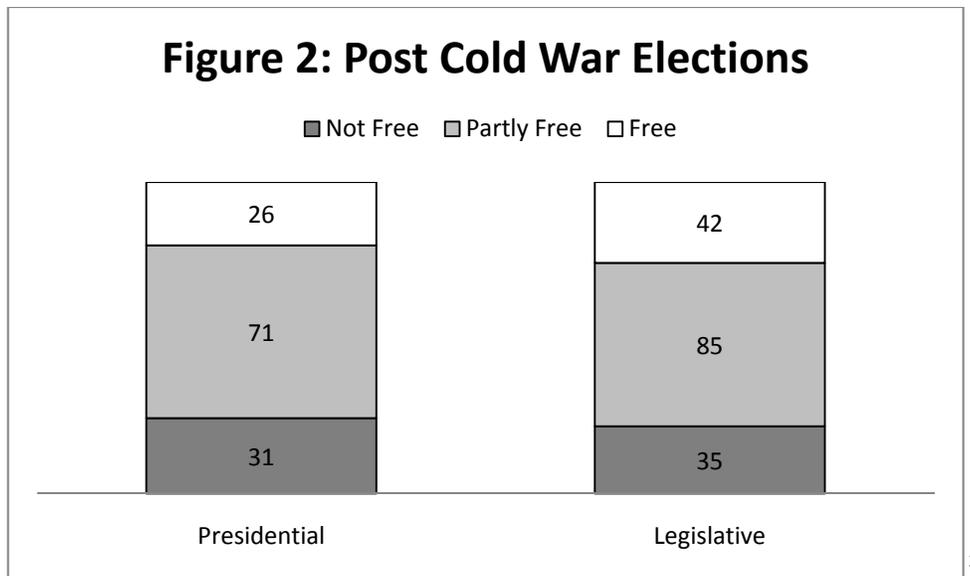
Prior to the end of the Cold War, Sub-Saharan Africa was plagued with a dominance of authoritarian regimes. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States and other European countries detracted from their notorious program of supporting Cold War allies in the region and instead focused on pressuring and promoting democratization (Carothers 2006). In the post-Cold War world, many regimes that were particularly dependent on foreign support and were domestically weak found that they had to concede democratic political reforms for the foreign support that they previously were so heavily reliant on (Bienen and Herbst 1996;

Joseph 1997, 1998; Peiffer and Englebert 2009). In an interactive process between incumbent regimes and both international and internal pressures, opposition forces were able to make many of the most infamous African dictators accept multi-party elections (Bratton and van de Walle 1997). In fact, twenty-nine of the forty-seven Sub Saharan African countries hosted a total of fifty-four elections between 1989 and 1994 alone. In fourteen of these cases, elections served as the avenue for peaceful power transfer (Bratton 1998: 54-55; Sandbrook 2000: 4).

While international donors and domestic actors mobilized to press for democratic changes, many regimes learned how to grant “minor political concessions with one hand while cracking down with the other” (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:110). As well documented elsewhere, while many regimes allowed multiparty elections, various strategies were implemented to control the electoral outcome and to prevent further liberalization (Carothers 1997; Joseph 1997; Sandbrook 2000; Jourde 2007). Specific tactics used included: denying opposition parties access to the publicly owned mass media, restricting opposition rallies by requiring permits to public meetings, co-opting opposition parties, using public resources to subsidize the governing party’s campaign, deploying militias to intimidate opponents, channeling patronage only to supportive constituencies, and diverting donor attention away from democratization in the country. In other words, Africa experienced a rise of hybrid regimes. Figure 1 outlines this trend.



Specifically, it displays the percentage of regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa that have held regular elections over time. While the dramatic shift on the continent towards the regularization of holding elections is evident by the steep slope from 1989 to the mid-1990s, the rise of hybridity is also evident in the fact that the majority of regimes that hold regular elections are done so in countries that are coded as “partly free” or “not free.” In figure 2, this trend is somewhat echoed, but instead of displaying it overtime and in percentage terms, it simply displays the number of elections that have occurred in the region, post Cold War. The picture is the same however, more elections have occurred in what Freedom House considers a less than consolidated democracy.



Defining hybridity, like defining any regime type is a sensitive subject in comparative politics. Others have tried to sub-categorize “hybrid” regimes into those that are “competitive authoritarian,” “exclusive republics” and “guided democracies” (Levitsky and Way 2002: 52). Levitsky and Way (2002: 52) warn that using broad categories such as “hybrid” or semi-authoritarian, risks the danger of glossing over important differences between specific types of hybrid regimes. The trends that we have outlined above (the rise of hybrid regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa) seem to fit most closely with the authors’ “competitive authoritarian” type of hybrid regimes: “formal democratic institutions [which] are widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority. Incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent, however, that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy” (Levitsky and Way 2002: 52).

² This is simply the number of elections that were held in countries that were ranked free, partly free and not free, by Freedom House, at the time of the election.

Literature Review

Holding Elections Furthers Democracy

There are at least two hypotheses found in the literature that argue that when a regime holds many multi-party elections they are following a path that will lead to further advances in democracy. As will be evident in the review below, the two postulate different routes which elections can impact a regime's political liberalization. In our analyses we are not able to sort out and compare the specific merits of these routes, rather we offer our analyses as simply a way of systematically determining whether or not regimes are impacted by the practice of allowing multiple and successive elections.

The Onion Hypothesis

Schedler (2002) argues that the democratizing effects of elections occur as a result of a tug-of-war between an authoritarian leader seeking to legitimize their tenure in power in the international eye through holding elections on one side, and the other, opposition forces using elections to trickle into the legislature to eventually control future electoral rules, thus consolidating a democratic transition. Through this lens, authoritarian regimes seek to use elections as a tool to legitimize their rule to the international and domestic community. At the same time, they wish to control or manipulate the terms of an election as much as possible so as to protect their stay in office. Knowing this, opposition forces can simply boycott the election which will delegitimize the event, thus putting the autocrat's goal of achieving international legitimacy in jeopardy. With this possibility in mind, the authoritarian regime must not manipulate the electoral process as much as it is capable of doing, but instead just

enough so as to assure their victory and the participation of opposition forces (Monga 1995: 159). Calculating the optimal level of cheating or control is an uncertain road to walk on. Authoritarians make concessions in terms of the controls on their own power to manipulate the election results under great uncertainty. Authoritarians may concede too little and win an election that no one believes in, or they may concede too much and lose control of the legislative branch or their executive office altogether.

Only to the extent that opposition parties succeed in achieving legislative office in these flawed elections, do they “improve their chances to extract institutional reforms from the ruling party” (Schedler 2002). For this reason, they may find it in their interest to participate in an election they know will be manipulated as long as they feel they may be able to gain even a few more seats in the legislative bodies than they had previously. This possible “filtering-in” of opposition candidates to the legislature provides more chances for electoral legislative reform so as to secure a route towards freer and fairer elections in the future. In other words, “electoral success furthers electoral reform, which again furthers electoral success” (Schedler 2002). In this sense, ambivalent or flawed elections still hold significance for the opposition’s electoral potential in the future. As long as the opposition is able to continue to infiltrate the legislative branch through multi-party semi-democratic elections they are able to peel the layers of control from the proverbial authoritarian onion.

Schedler (2002) depicts the “electoral route to democracy” as neither linear nor a self-fulfilling prophesy. Along this game of tug-of-war, the authoritarian regime may re-evaluate its priority of achieving legitimacy and retract any concessions made in the past to the opposition. Such a move may however spark a different kind of destabilization and lead to an

extraconstitutional threat to the regime. By recognizing the complexities that may arise in these tugs-of-war, Schedler (2002) presents an almost unfalsifiable set of hypotheses. Our simplification of some of the implications he alludes to are discussed in the data section.

Electoral Civil Society Hypothesis

Staffan Lindberg is one of the most prolific writers on the effects of African elections on the continent's political landscape (2003; 2004; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2009). To attempt to summarize his contribution to the field and review the entirety of his work is beyond the scope of this paper. One thing is clear from the sum of his work; according to Lindberg (2004; 2006a; 2006b; 2009) successive and repetitive elections in Sub Saharan Africa lead to further democratization. In his later book he specifically writes: "Gradually and unevenly but surely, countries tend to move from obvious electoral authoritarianism, to an ambiguous gray zone, to electoral and sometimes liberal democracies" (Lindberg 2009: 38).

Lindberg acknowledges that there are probably many routes in which elections can theoretically democratize a polity, most of which take on the tone of starting from the "bottom-up." Quite different from Schedler's (2002) hypothesis which depicts an electoral change as a transfer of control from the ruling regime to the opposition in the legislature, Lindberg characterizes electoral change as starting with the individual voter and an organized civil society. Lindberg points out that during electoral cycles, citizens become the target of campaigns and thus "gain an awareness of their own roles as equal members of the sovereign power, endowed with rights to participate in the political process and to choose between alternatives under legitimate procedures" (2006b: 146). He further argues that this awareness

is retained post-election and starts to change the society's overall socio-political consciousness. Civic organizations use the run-up to elections as a catalyst of becoming hyper-active and use election-related activities to "build social capital and gain organizational experience while learning about democratic ideas and values related to transparency issues, the detection of electoral fraud, and the protection of political rights and civil liberties" (Lindberg 2006b: 147).

Elections become a part of an electoral self fulfilling prophecy when citizens and leaders accept the rules of democratic elections. Leaders who may not have been committed electoral democrats in the past, once elected, grow a vested interest in maintaining and advocating for the new rules of the day. Through Lindberg's lens, one gets the sense that elections not only teach people and organizations about the new rules of the game, but that they create an environment where, through the repetition of electoral cycles, society in general begins to identify with and defend the system. Lindberg entertains many more routes of democratization via elections including the possibility of encouraging freer press because of a media's tendency to redefine reporting boundaries during electoral periods, and the fact that electoral periods are a time when the international community exercises increased scrutiny and oversight over the fairness of elections which give even more support to the already throbbing domestic civil society.

Much of Lindberg's own empirical work utilizes a self-gathered dataset of every nationally contested election in Africa from 1989 to 2003. Strikingly, Lindberg finds a positive association between the number of repetitive, successive elections, despite the degree of freeness or fairness of the elections, to a country's civil liberties scores as of 2003 (Lindberg 2006a: 139) and again for civil liberties scores in 2007 (Lindberg 2009: 42-44). Lindberg also

documents the fact that since the famed 1990s wave of “founding elections,” Africa’s elections have become more participatory, legitimate and competitive, all of which should give scholars of the continent a reason to show some “demo-optimism” (Lindberg 2006a).

While Schedler (2002) writes specifically of elections in authoritarian settings and would thus translate well to the hybrid and authoritarian regimes in Africa today, Lindberg’s hypothesis seems to be framed in Africa’s potentially emerging democratic nature. In the regimes that hold elections but are still considered grossly authoritarian, do Lindberg’s hypotheses still apply? Lindberg’s own findings and words give us reason to believe that we can. While overall, Lindberg’s “take away” finding is that the number of elections a country has leads to an increase in the country’s civil liberties score (a measure from Freedom House that is widely used to approximate the level of democracy in a country), he also finds that even flawed elections support this positive association (Lindberg 2006a: 121). In his own words:

“this might seem counterintuitive, since authoritarian regimes running flawed elections are not usually associated with improvements in the rule of law, religious and associational freedoms, and absence of economic exploitation and protection from unjustified imprisonment. Yet , as suggested by the discussion of causal links, even flawed electoral experiences involving manipulation, rigging, and violence can be efficient in provoking actors to work harder to increase civil liberties in society” (Lindberg 2006a 121).

“The End of the Transition Paradigm”

If democratic openings eventually and inevitably lead to more democratic advancements, then as a field we should resolve to keeping our eyes on new democracies’ progress and consider these regimes to be ultimately on the road to further democratization, or be in “transition.” However, we should not assume that regimes are in transition if regimes that adopt democratic features are able to also maintain trappings of authoritarianism, and stifle

further substantive liberalization. The latter argument has been voiced by some of the most prominent scholars on democracy and democratization (See Carothers 2002, Diamond 2002, and Levitsky and Way 2002 for examples). For example Carothers (2002: 9) writes “by far the majority of third-wave countries have not achieved relatively well-functioning democracy or do not seem to be deepening or advancing whatever democratic progress they have made. In a small number of countries, initial political openings have clearly failed and authoritarian regimes have resolidified.” Similarly Levitsky and Way (2002) write “It may therefore be time to stop thinking of these cases in terms of transitions to democracy and to begin thinking about the specific types of regimes they actually are” (p.51).

For many of Africa’s regimes, specifically, hybridity has been theorized as an equilibrium state due to the interplay of many different forces. The flaws of political conditionality and the ability of regimes to control the transitions contributed the state of their hybridity and continue to add to hybridity’s vitality on the continent.

Flaws of Political Conditionality

While international donors were able to use their economic and political leverage to pressure regimes to adopt formal democratic changes, their effectiveness in delivering fully democratic governments was muted for many reasons. First, donor actions may lack the coordination necessary to back regimes into a corner to out squeeze the changes necessary for more substantive reform (Uvin 1993). Because being able to successfully condition economic and/or political support on democratic advancements requires that the support from the donor(s) is crucial to the regime’s survival, one donor could undermine the efforts of others by

providing the needed support without the approval of others. In fact, many fear that because China's aid and commercial dealings come with no political conditions, their relatively new presence in the region will undermine Western and domestic efforts at democracy building (Tull 2006).³

In addition to the collective action and coordination problems, donors have had a particularly difficult time in implementing more meaningful conditions on support due real operationalization issues surrounding more meaningful reform (Uvin 1993: 70; Carothers 1997: 97; Hook 1998: 173; Barkan 1997: 388). In other words, while whether or not a multiparty election occurred can be fairly easily measured, it is not clear what other bench marks could be used to measure reforms that would be necessary to institute a consolidated democracy. "If the recipient government complies and aid is renewed, it is unclear how much backsliding will trigger renewed aid sanctions" (Brown 2005: 184). Donors are forced to use more clear signs of backsliding to back up their intentions of pressuring democracy. Boulding and Hyde (2004) find that aid withdrawal is especially likely to happen when the regimes display dramatic and easy to recognize undemocratic behavior, like a coup or civil conflict.

Donors have also often lacked the willingness to monitor and sanction bad democratic behavior. The democratizing agenda can often conflict with other objectives (Uvin 1993: 69; Hook 1998). For example, donors are hesitant to cancel development projects much more so than loans, credits or balance of payments support. Development projects require long term planning to have real and lasting impact. The instability in funding such products from enforcing

³ This collective action and coordination problem is also articulated in the literature on the effectiveness of sanctions, for the same reason.

political conditionality could jeopardize their objectives and would probably be very costly (Brown 2005: 184).

Donors may prioritize a commercial, economic, strategic or humanitarian interest in a country, over its agenda to promote deeper reforms to democratize. There are plenty of these examples, but Gordon Crawford in 1997 argued that the US and EU failed to implement strict conditions on their aid to Nigeria during the return to military rule in 1993, because of their oil interests in the country (p. 91). Another example is in Uganda, the West has all but turned a blind eye on the fact that Museveni's Uganda has become a de facto one party state. Western donors generally ignore this because of the country's economic growth, success with fighting HIV and the government's support in helping the US fight the War on Terror.

Because donors can promote several policies at once, (economic reform, national security, poverty alleviation, health and education), "measuring compliance with all forms of aid conditionality becomes problematic. How does a donor respond if, for example, a government frees political prisoners but further restricts the media, or if a democratically elected leader is also corrupt?" (Brown 2005: 188). Prioritization must occur, and recipient regimes know this, and actively try to exploit this as well. For example, Jourde finds that Mauritanian and Guinean state elites actively "enacted a series of performances such as the arrests of alleged 'Islamists,' 'warlords,' and other transnational 'subversive threats,' thereby framing their domestic and foreign policies in ways that can resonate with hegemonic international discourses, seeking to obtain either more support from Western states or to lower their democratization pressure (or both)" (2007: 481).

Donors often emphasize stability over further democratization, and their preoccupation with stability has in some cases actually impeded domestic movements that have pushed for democracy. Stephen Brown's case on Kenya illustrates this point perfectly. In Kenya donors first endorsed the unfair election in 1992. After the election a domestic organization (NCEC) held mass demonstrations in opposition to the unfair election and Arap Moi's continuation of power. Clashes with the police resulted in violence and deaths, yet the democracy movement maintained its momentum. After World Bank loans were suspended and foreign aid was frozen, Moi's regime made limited and largely shallow concessions which did not alter the ruling party's unfair advantage. Due to these circumstances the next election (1997) was marred with unfair irregularities. Although internal reports of many donors documented that the opposition should have won a majority in parliament during the 1997 election, fearful of the possible violence that could ensue from not endorsing the election, many of them suppressed this evidence and officially accepted the results, undermining the domestic democratic movement (Brown 2001). I think it can be reasonably argued that any time a flawed election is accepted, donors are being actively unsupportive of the democratic movement in the country. In Kenya, funding issues for their programs were also of concern. For example, the main "American elections consultant was instructed by her USAID/Nairobi superiors to 'tone down' her report, so that the USAID mission would not have its funding reduced by Congress (which, they felt, did not understand the importance of their support to Kenyan NGOs)" (Brown 2001: 734).

Controlling a Transition

The cracks in political conditionality often resulted in loose parameters for governments to operate in, and essentially manipulatable inconsistencies. Africa's leadership exploited the international community's preoccupation with electoral politics and reluctance to enforce more stringent democratic conditions due to competing priorities by holding on to an inordinate amount of control in negotiating the scope of the transition. Incumbent governments used several strategies to control the transition to their favor, which in many cases these tactics flew under the radar of what the international community could or was willing to monitor and sanction, including: denying opposition parties access to the publicly owned mass media, restricting opposition rallies by requiring permits for public meetings, co-opting opposition parties, using public resources to subsidize the governing party's campaign, deploying militias to intimidate opponents, hold controlled national conferences, dividing opposition groups, diverted donor attention away from democratization in the country, keeping an inordinate amount of power under the executive, and channeling patronage only to supportive constituencies (Sandbrook 2000; Carothers 1997; Joseph 1997; Jourde 2007). For those incumbents that were able to stay in power, these tactics obviously benefitted them immensely, and in the cases of electoral turnover, these strategies laid the ground work for new political parties to keep an advantage in subsequent electoral cycles.

The fact is that Africa's leaders were the home team. In general these leaders quickly learned to grant "minor political concessions with one hand while cracking down with the other" (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 110). This control allowed incumbent regimes to have the upper hand in the initial elections, and winning initial elections further benefitted them in

subsequent elections, as these parties kept their access to state resources and control of state apparatuses. This is evidenced by the fact that “at the end of 2002, the single party in power before 1989 remained there in 15 of the region’s multiparty political systems” (van de Walle 2003: 300). Even when an incumbent was voted out of office in the first multiparty elections, the winning party did not find it in their interest to change the overwhelming advantage that they as a new ruling party would have in subsequent elections. Instead they found it in their interest to use their new access to state resources to tip future playing fields towards their advantage (van de Walle 2003). In fact, most of the parties that won the founding or first multiparty election (whether they were incumbent or opposition) in the early 1990s were overwhelmingly able to stay in office in subsequent electoral cycles (van de Walle 2003).

Hybrid Equilibrium

Prior to the 1990s, democracy was limited to only a few countries in Africa. For the rest, authoritarianism had entrenched itself deeply, shaping the society, controlling the economy, and preventing democratization from occurring endogenously. The state devoured economic and political power, limiting any democratic coalition from organizing independently of it. Regimes often played into ethnic rivalries or aided in solidifying ethnic identity by rewarding constituencies based on communalism. At the very minimum, an endogenous democracy needs a strong opposition; it needs advocates, sometimes fighters and future protectors of democracy. But in the shadow of Africa’s authoritarianism, the prospects of democratic change have been met with only weak and fractionalized opposition parties which lack a strong ideological base and is mostly organized around ethnicity.

At the end of the Cold War, because the West put new democratic conditions on their support, regimes that were especially dependent on these resources and thus vulnerable to this pressure conceded democratic political reforms. However, political conditionality failed to institutionalize consolidated democracy. As Uvin writes

“ politics is usually the privilege of a very small percentage of the population, the large, silent majority –farmers, urban poor—are totally excluded from it. The exercise of political conditionality cannot change these facts, and in the best cases risks bringing about only cosmetic changes, replacing some of the faces at the top, but continuing to exclude the majority of population from meaningful participation in the social and political life of their societies” (1993: 73).

While Lindberg (2006) and Schedler (2002) theorize that civil society and opposition groups can learn, mobilize and pressure for democratic changes around multiparty elections, many scholars highlight the fact that regimes too can learn from holding multiparty elections, to gain an advantage in the polls and ultimately prevent further liberalization. In the next section we describe our methods and data for analyzing whether or not elections have sufficiently democratized Africa’s hybrid regimes.

Sample and Data

The focus of this paper is to assess the possible impact that holding consecutive multiparty elections might have on a regime’s ability to remain authoritarian. We use two separate samples in our analysis. The first consists of Sub-Saharan African regimes that are not considered free and have existed for at least 3 years. The second sample includes African regimes which are semi-authoritarian, or more specifically are scored as “partly free” by Freedom House, that have also existed for three years.

The three year rule was used as a threshold to exclude periods of temporary existence and times where competing parties may be struggling over the rules of the regime (Geddes 1999: 18). Additionally, a regime is thought to “continue” if the same party remains in office, even though the president or prime minister might change. The sample begins at 1990, one year after the Cold War is thought to have ended and multi-party elections really started to take hold in Africa.

In this paper there are two ways in which an authoritarian or hybrid regime is considered to have broken down its authoritarian nature. We code a breakdown as having occurred when free and fair elections take place with the result of the incumbent’s party losing and a peaceful transfer of power taking place. A second type of authoritarian “breakdown” occurs when a regime sufficiently democratizes. Specifically, even if there has not been a transfer of power between parties, if Freedom House codes the country as “Free” we code this as a sufficient break down of the nature of the authoritarian regime. While there were also regimes that ended due to unconstitutional break downs, like in the case of a coup or civil war, we do not treat these as a “break-down” in our dataset. Because we are specifically examining the conditions when a regime is made to give up its authoritarian nature for democratization, we censor these breakdowns. More specifically we end our observation of the regime, but do not consider the end of the regime as being a break-down because it did not result in a sufficient amount of democratization.

Elections

Our primary variable of interest is the number of elections an authoritarian regime has held. We consulted three different sources to gather this information on each of the authoritarian regimes in our sample (data used in Lindberg 2006a; African Elections; Golder 2005). Although there are numerous ways in which one can construct an elections variable we focus specifically on the cumulative number of elections which have been held in a given country, rather than the number of elections held by a regime. More specifically, the elections variable we construct is simply the number of legislative and presidential elections that have occurred in a country. This measure speaks to Lindberg's (2006a; 2006b) hypothesis that the more elections a country has had the more democratic its polity will become. In accordance with his work, we expect that this measure will have a destabilizing effect on the regime.

A few supplemental notes on the measures of elections are also in order. Specifically, we recorded the number of elections the authoritarian regime had allowed up until the observation year for each year and for each country in our sample. For example, if in 2005 a country had held six elections since independence, 2005 was coded as a six. Furthermore, we made the decision that if two elections occurred within the same year (legislative and presidential) these were coded as only one election. This decision was made because we felt that each of the hypotheses discuss effects that come with the atmosphere around an election period thus we came to the conclusion that if two elections occurred in the same year they would be both a part of the same election period and would not separately impact the regime's survival. For example, if an election occurred on a Monday, and another on a Tuesday, we would not expect that Tuesday's elections would have an independent effect on the knowledge

voters would obtain or on deterring possible opposition. In other words, the elections would likely be a part of the same education and learning period for voters and groups, or a part of the same show of power to possible opposition groups.

Dependence on Foreign Aid

Countries in Sub Saharan Africa are among the poorest and the most aid dependent in the world (Crawford 2001: 210). Since the end of the Cold War, donor governments have at least rhetorically stated that they will use foreign policy tools like foreign aid to pressure regimes to adopt more liberal elements of democracy and democracy in general (Finkel, Prerez-Linan, and Selingson 2006; Knack 2004). Whether or not this rhetorical shift has actually produced consistent and effective policy is the subject of debate (Finkel, Prerez-Linan, and Selingson 2006; Knack 2004). To account for the possible democratizing impact that aid conditionalities might have on Africa's regime's we include a measurement of the regime's dependence on foreign aid. While other studies have used foreign aid received as a percentage of a nation's GNI as a measure of dependence on foreign resources, and thus vulnerability to foreign demands, we agree with Pierre Englebert that (Peiffer and Englebert 2009) using foreign aid as a percentage of exports is more fitting. To explain, we assume that a regime's decision to democratize due to conditionalities would be a last resort effort. That is, only really desperate or vulnerable regimes would be willing to risk losing their grip on power that they enjoy by maintaining authoritarian attributes by democratizing. A regime's vulnerability to conditions would thus be reflected in its dependence on needing foreign aid to fund its basic government operations.

A regime that has access to other resources, other than foreign aid will be more buffered from any conditionalities on aid than a regime that solely relies on foreign aid for its operations. Two countries may have the same aid to GNI ratio, but one might be much less dependent on aid for its vitality. The distinction is based in what types of finance the government has access too. For example, if one country's economy is cash based (subsistence agriculture) the government will be less able to mobilize resources from the larger economy for its own need. Thus its access to foreign aid will be much more vital to its survival. However, if a country has the same aid to GNI ratio, but its economy is much more based in exports, the government will be better able to extract rents from the export sector and will be less reliant on foreign aid for its functioning. In other words, it will be more buffered from any foreign demands that aid might carry. Thus, if we look at the ratio of aid to exports we get a more accurate picture of how beholden the regime is to foreign demands. The higher the percentage of aid of exports the more likely we think a regime will be destabilized based on political conditionalities that might be attached to such aid.

Economic Development

There are two competing views on the effect of the level of economic development on the survival of an authoritarian regime. The first view stems from the modernization literature (see Lipset 1959) and posits that as a society becomes increasingly developed a middle class emerges which eventually calls for full political rights and democratic rule. More recent empirical works, however, find little support for the modernization hypothesis. Indeed, Przeworski et al. (2000) find that GDP per capita does not lead to authoritarian breakdown but,

rather, acts as a stabilizing force in democratic societies. We measure the level of economic development as GDP per capita (constant 2000 dollars).

Economic Performance

There is substantial evidence that the rate of change of the size of the economy has a positive effect on authoritarian survival (Gasiorowski 1995; Smith 2004; Omgba 2009). Following these empirical findings we control for economic performance using the one-year lag of the GDP growth rate. Data for both economic development and performance were gathered from the World Development Indicators database.

Population

The size of the midyear total population of a country is also accounted for in the analysis. One might expect that the formation and success of a democratic opposition to an authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regime may be more likely in societies with larger populations given the increasing difficulty of controlling larger groups of people. Of course, there are numerous examples of countries which are governed by regimes with authoritarian elements—Iran and China being the most notable examples. Population data were accessed at the World Development Indicators database.

Natural Resource Endowment

The amount of oil and mineral resources which a country possesses can affect the democratic tendencies of its society. In a landmark study, Michael Ross (1999) finds support for the

argument that oil and mineral wealth has a negative effect on democracy, especially in the developing world. We construct a dummy variable which is counted as a 1 if the total level of oil and mineral exports of a nation account for more than 1/3 of merchandise exports for a given year. We expect that a natural resource rich authoritarian or semi-democratic regime in Africa is less likely to democratize fully. Oil and mineral export data were found at the World Development Indicators database.

Size of Military

We control for the proportion of the economically active population of a country which is composed of armed personnel—members of the regular armed forces as well as paramilitary personnel are included in this measure. Following from previous work on the role of the military in democratic consolidation (Aguero, 1992; Stepan, 1988), we expect a positive relationship between the size of the military and the resilience of an authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regime. A large security apparatus can be understood as exerting a deterrent effect on any potential change of the status quo. Data on the number of armed personnel are compiled by the International Institute for Strategic Studies and were accessed at the World Development Indicators database.

French Colonial Legacy

We include a dummy variable of whether or not the country is a former French Colony. This was included to incorporate the idea that the French have had a special relationship with its former colonial leaders since independence. More specifically, France has come to the rescue in

terms of deploying French military resources to the aid of leaders of former French colonied, despite their clearly authoritarian traits. Additionally, France has kept close diplomatic ties to many authoritarian regimes in its former colonies. We expect that French hybrid or authoritarian leadership have had an easier time at avoiding fully democratizing because of this special relationship.

Soviet Client

As an additional measure of a regime's vulnerability to international demands of democratization we incorporate a dummy variable as to whether or not a regime was a soviet client during the cold war, based on Thad Dunning's (2004) list of former soviet clients. We expect that Soviet Clients would be particularly vulnerable to Western demands of democratization as they would have to adapt to these demands to gain access to Western patronage.

Time since End of Cold War

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a defining shock to the international system. The initial period following the end of the Cold War was a time of significant shifts in the international status quo. The secession of the Eastern European nations from the Soviet sphere of influence and the emergence of newly independent states from the ashes of the Soviet Union itself are dramatic examples of the immediate events following the collapse. The time following the Cold War can be understood as a measurement of external vulnerability. That is, the immediate period following the collapse was a time of heightened risk for authoritarian regimes which had

previously been supported by either superpower. After all, there was little reason for the United States to continue supporting dictators in Africa for geopolitical reasons. In addition to dramatically reducing the amount of foreign aid and other support that the US and many Western European countries gave to their clients during the Cold War, as discussed earlier, in many cases they attached new conditions for their foreign aid, as well as other support, (i.e. military). Further, the USSR did not have either the willingness or the ability to continue supporting its client states in Africa as well as elsewhere.

Although the end of the Cold War exerted significant transformational inertia, the impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union has arguably dissipated over time. Specifically, many observe that conditions on foreign aid for many African countries have softened generally, and in some specific countries have softened due to competing donor interests (resource interests, War on Terror alliances, concerns of stability, etc). Including this variable is an added marker of a regime's vulnerability to the international atmosphere that started pushing democracy at the end of the Cold War. We argue that the length of time following the end of the Soviet Empire will have a negative effect on the probability of sufficient democratization. We control for the natural logarithm of the length of time since the period 1992-1994, for example, had a much higher level of "external inertia" than the period 2000-2001.

Methodology and Results

We employ probit regression to estimate the impact of the abovementioned covariates on the probability of an authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regime transitioning to a full democracy.

We use robust standard errors which are clustered by regime to account for intragroup correlation.

Table 1 displays the results of the models for the sample of authoritarian and “hybrid” regimes as well as those of only “hybrid” regimes. Although the sample which consists of only semi-authoritarian regimes has a smaller number of observations and regimes, estimation results remain consistent across both samples. First, we find a statistically negative effect on the likelihood of a transition to full democracy as the GDP growth rate of a country increases. Second, the results suggest that the number of military personnel (as a percentage of the total workforce) also retards the likelihood of a democratic transition. Lastly, we find that the length of time following the collapse of the Soviet Union also has a negative effect on the probability of a regime collapsing due to a democratic push.

<TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

Even though the coefficients of the probit model convey information regarding the statistical importance of covariates as well as the direction of the effect on the likelihood of a regime fully democratizing, any inference regarding the substantive effects of these variables is problematic if one relies exclusively on the estimated coefficients. To gain a more intuitive understanding of the regression results, Table 2 displays the predicted probabilities of democratic transition for a resource-poor Soviet client given minimum and maximum values of military personnel size and the length of time which has passed since the collapse of the USSR. For GDP growth, we compare the effect of having a growth rate at the 25th and 75th percentile values of the sample. All other covariates are set at their mean values. Additionally, the 95% confidence intervals for each predicted probability are displayed.

<TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE>

To be clear, the substantive effects of the statistically significant covariates seem to be small. Additionally, the wide confidence intervals for many of the predicted probabilities are also an area of concern. Nevertheless, interesting implications can still be derived from the results.

The performance of the economy seems to have a much stronger effect on the probability of a democratic transition among the sample of purely authoritarian and “hybrid” regimes. According to our estimates, a Soviet client state with a small resource endowment and a low GDP growth rate has an 11 percent chance of becoming a full democracy. Among only “hybrid” regimes, this probability falls to around 2 percent. Indeed the impact of GDP growth for the semi-authoritarian sample is small since the difference in the predicted probability for a low and high performer is only 1 percent. What is particularly interesting about this finding is it is the opposite as what we might expect when viewing democratization to have occurred through a modernization type process. The modernization hypothesis stipulates that with economic growth, a middle class will be economically empowered. With this new found economic interest of a stronger middle class, they will demand to have a voice over economic policies to protect their wealth. These demands will spill into their enfranchisement as meaningful voters. However, we find exactly the opposite. Descriptively our findings put modernization on its head. A closer examination does not necessarily deem this finding to be completely counter-intuitive, however. Because Africa’s real growth stories have mostly been commodity based, economic growth has not translated into an enlarged and powerful independent middle class. Mauritania, Angola, and Equatorial Guinea are just a few

countries that have extremely high growth rates which are primarily based on oil. So instead of benefitting a middle class, growth of this nature has translated into an income boom for the regimes in power. Far from undermining their ability to maintain authoritarianism, economic growth in Africa has largely buffered its regimes from having to democratize due to foreign demands.

The size of the military (both regular and paramilitary) has a much stronger substantive effect on the probability of democratic transition. In the full sample, we estimate that a regime which has a small military has a 9 percent chance of becoming a full democracy. Among the “hybrid” sample, the probability increases markedly to 14 percent. The results suggest, therefore, that the size of a regime’s defense force has a much larger impact among “hybrid” regimes. The negative relationship between military size and the probability of a democratic transition which we find in this study parallels a similar result by Gasiorowski and Power (1998:759-760).

Lastly, holding all other covariates at their mean values, the probability of a democratic transition for Soviet client with a low level of natural resources at the onset of the collapse of the Soviet Union is around 3 percent in the full sample. When estimating the time effect among semi-authoritarian regimes only we find that the probability increases to approximately 9 percent.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most significant finding of this study is the lack of a significant effect of elections on the probability of a democratic transition. Our results suggest that there must be certain prior phenomena which drive the process of democratic transition. Elections may be important but

we find little support for them being a primary cause of democratic transition. Indeed, the presence of elections even among “hybrid” regimes does not have a statistically significant effect on a regime becoming fully democratic. This lends support to the notion that initial openings of many regimes in Africa just after the end of the Cold War have been diminished. Indeed, our results lend support to the notion that “hybridity” has become an equilibrium state for many African regimes, regardless of whether they hold elections. Policymakers in the developed world should begin to reassess the importance of focusing exclusively on the holding elections in these types of regimes. If the objective is further democratization, it may be more fruitful for resources and energy to be devoted to other areas.

We do find a statistically significant negative effect of economic performance on the probability of a democratic transition among African authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes. Authoritarian elements seem to be protected by high growth rates. Furthermore, we find that the size of a regime’s security apparatus also has a dampening effect on the probability of a democratic transition. Lastly, our results show that as a regime gets farther away from the initial shock of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the probability of a democratic transition decreases significantly.

Future work on the impact of elections and other covariates on the probability of a democratic regime among fully authoritarian and “hybrid” regimes could benefit from a survival analysis estimation. Whereas this study has focused on the probability of the transition as an event, survival analysis will allow us to investigate the determinants of a regime’s tenure. Given the objectively wide confidence intervals of the predicted probabilities, the application of different empirical tests to the question of elections and democratic transitions would benefit

our research agenda greatly. Indeed, it would allow for the strengthening of the theoretical leverage of our argument that elections by themselves cannot explain democratic improvements.

Table 1: Probit Regression Results

	(1) All Authoritarian	(2) Hybrid Regimes
<i>Elections</i>	0.11 (0.08)	0.09 (0.09)
<i>GDP growth</i>	-0.04** (0.02)	-0.07* (0.04)
<i>GDP per capita</i>	0.15 (0.20)	0.56 (0.37)
<i>Population (millions)</i>	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
<i>Foreign Aid Dependence</i>	0.03 (0.04)	0.23 (0.23)
<i>Natural Resource Dummy</i>	0.03 (0.29)	0.32 (0.30)
<i>Size of Military (% workforce)</i>	-1.36*** (0.41)	-2.06*** (0.72)
<i>French Colony</i>	-0.10 (0.32)	-0.16 (0.38)
<i>Soviet Client</i>	0.23 (0.28)	0.10 (0.29)
<i>Time since Cold War (ln)</i>	-0.33** (0.16)	-0.42** (0.20)
Constant	-2.07 (1.44)	-4.37* (2.58)
Observations	475	236
Regimes	61	48
Prob > χ^2	0.00	0.01
Pseudo R-squared	0.13	0.15
Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

Table 2: Predicted Probability of Full Democratization for a Resource-Poor Soviet Client

Authoritarian and “Hybrid” regime sample		
Variable	Predicted Probability of Full Democratization	95% Confidence Interval
GDP Growth (25 th Percentile)	0.11	[-0.13, 0.35]
GDP Growth (75 th Percentile)	0.00	[-0.00, 0.00]
Military Size (Minimum)	0.09	[-0.01, 0.19]
Military Size (Maximum)	0.00	[-0.00, 0.00]
Cold War Time (Early)	0.03	[-0.05, 0.11]
Cold War Time (Late)	0.00	[-0.00, 0.01]

“Hybrid” regime sample		
Variable	Predicted Probability of Full Democratization	95% Confidence Interval
GDP Growth (25 th Percentile)	0.02	[-0.01, 0.05]
GDP Growth (75 th Percentile)	0.01	[-0.01, 0.03]
Military Size (Minimum)	0.14	[-0.03, 0.31]
Military Size (Maximum)	0.00	[-0.00, 0.00]
Cold War Time (Early)	0.09	[-0.07, 0.26]
Cold War Time (Late)	0.01	[-0.01, 0.02]

Bibliography (incomplete)

- Adejumobi, Said. 2000. “Elections in Africa: A Fading Shadow of Democracy?” *International Political Science Review*. 21(1): 59-73.
- African Elections. Accessed at: <http://africanelections.tripod.com/>.
- Austin, Dennis. 1975. “Introduction.” In Dennis Austin and Robin Luckham, eds., *Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana, 1966-1972*. London: Frank Cass.
- Beaulieu, Emily and Susan Hyde. 2009. “In the Shadow of Democracy Promotion: Strategic Manipulation, International Observers, and Election Boycotts.” *Comparative Political Studies*. 42: 392-415.
- Bienen, Henry and Nicolas van de Walle. 1989. “Time and Power in Africa.” *The American Political Science Review*. 83(1): 19-34.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M. and Bradford S. Jones. 2004. *Event History Modeling: A Guide for Social Scientists*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bratton, Michael and Nicolas van de Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and George W. Downs. 2005. "Development and Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 84(5): 77-86.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and Hilton L. Root. 2002. *Governing for Prosperity*. Yale University Press.
- Bueno De Mesquita, Bruce, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson and Alastair Smith. 1999. "Policy Failure and Political Survival: The Contribution of Political Institutions." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 43(2): 147-161.
- Cingranelli, David L. and David L. Richards. 2008. *The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset*. Accessed at: <http://www.humanrightsdata.org>
- Clague, Christopher , Philip Keefer, Stephen Knack and Mancur Olson. 1996. "Property and Contract Rights in Autocracies and Democracies," *Journal of Economic Growth* 1(2): 243-276.
- Clague, Christopher, Philip Keefer, Stephen Knack, and Mancur Olson. 1997. "Democracy, Autocracy, and the Institutions Supportive of Economic Growth." In Christopher Clague (ed.), *Institutions and Economic Development*. Johns Hopkins University Press: 91-120.
- Crawford, Gordon. 2001. *Foreign Aid and Political Reform: A Comparative Analysis of Democracy Assistance and Political Conditionality*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Palgrave.
- de Soto, Hernando. 2000. *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*. Basic Books.
- Easterly, William. 2001. *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Englebert, Pierre. 2000. *State Legitimacy and Development in Africa*. CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
- Finkel, Steven, Anibal Perez-Linan, and Mitchell Seligson. 2006. "Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building: Results of a Cross-National Quantitative Study." Accessed at: http://www1.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/impact_of_democracy_assistance.pdf.
- Gasiorowski, Mark. 1995. Economic Crisis and Political Regime Change: An Event History Analysis. *American Political Science Review* 89(4):882-97.
- Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "Authoritarian Breakdown." Presented at the annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.
- Geddes, Barbara. 2002. "The Effect of Foreign Pressure on the Collapse of Authoritarian Regimes." Presented at the annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.
- Geddes, Barbara. 2005. "Why Parties and Elections in Authoritarian Regimes?" Presented at the annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

- Golder, Matthew. 2005. "Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2000." *Electoral Studies*. 24(1): 103-121.
- Knack, Stephen. 2004. "Does Foreign Aid Promote Democracy?" *International Studies Quarterly*. 48(1): 251-266.
- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2002. "Elections Without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy*. 13(2): 51-65.
- Lindberg, Staffan. 2003. "It's Our Time to "Chop": Do Elections in Africa Feed Neo-Patrimonialism rather than Counter-Act It?" *Democratization* 10(2): 121-140.
- Lindberg, Staffan. 2004. "The Democratic Qualities of Competitive Elections: Participation, Competition and Legitimacy in Africa." *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*. 42(1): 61-105.
- Lindberg, Staffan. 2005. "The Consequences of Electoral Systems in Africa: a Preliminary Inquiry." *Electoral Studies* 24(1): 41-64.
- Lindberg, Staffan. 2006a. *Democracy and Elections in Africa*. MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lindberg, Staffan. 2006b. "The Surprising Significance of African Elections." *Journal of Democracy*. 17(1): 139-151.
- Lipset, Seymour M. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review* 53(1): 69-105.
- Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006 *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Malesky, Edmund and Paul Schuler. 2008. "Why do Single-Party Regimes Hold Elections? An Analysis of Candidate-Level Data in Vietnam's 2007 National Assembly Contest" *Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association*.
- Marshall, Monty G. and Donna R. Marshall. 2007. *Coup D'Etat Events, 1960-2006*. Accessed at: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/>
- Monga, Celestine. 1995. "Civil Society and Democratisation in Francophone Africa." *Journal of Modern African Studies*. 33(3): 359-379.
- Ongba, Luc Desire. 2009. "On the Duration of Political Power in Africa: The Role of Oil Rents." *Comparative Political Studies*. 42(3): 416-436.
- Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sanhueza, Ricardo. 1999. "The Hazard Rate of Political Regimes." *Public Choice*. 98(3-4): 337-367.

Schedler, Andreas. 2002. "The Nested Game of Democratization by Elections." *International Political Science Review*. 23(1): 103-122.

World Development Indicators. Accessed at <http://www.worldbank.org>