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Abstract

How does democracy develop throughout a country once leaders in the national capital introduce or expand civil liberties and hold competitive elections—in other words, after democratic transition? The subnational democracy literature has shown that non-democratic subnational political regimes can endure within countries even after democratic transition. Yet, the democratic consolidation literature has not addressed how these enclaves are eliminated throughout the country or the territorial consolidation of democracy. This paper offers an explanation for the territorial consolidation of democracy. We argue that greater corruption control, a shift toward a unitary system of government, and a move toward centralized candidate selection promote territorial consolidation. Statistical analyses using V-Dem data, which cover 182 countries from 1900 to 2017, provide support for our argument.

Introduction

The process of democratic consolidation remains relatively opaque despite the proliferation of studies of democracy in the last three decades. How does democracy develop throughout a country once leaders in the national capital introduce or expand civil liberties and hold competitive elections—in other words, after democratic transition? The subnational democracy literature has shown that non-democratic subnational political regimes can endure within countries even after democratic transition (Gervasoni, 2010; Gibson, 2013; Giraudy, 2015; McMann, 2006). In some provinces, cities, and villages residents do not enjoy civil liberties or free and fair subnational elections, for example. Clearly democratic transition is not sufficient to ensure the territorial consolidation of democracy within a country.

Research on democratic consolidation provides little guidance about the territorial development of democracy within a country. One strand of the literature discusses the importance of the population developing democratic attitudes (O'Donnell, 1992; Rustow, 1970). Yet, studies have highlighted that pockets of non-democracy exist because of subnational elites' strategies (Gervasoni, 2010; Gibson, 2013; McMann, 2006; Ziblatt, 2009), not because of popular support for authoritarianism. A second strand of the democratic consolidation literature emphasizes that consolidation requires the co-optation of authoritarian elites and the building of consensus of among elites (O'Donnell, 1992; Higley and Burton, 1989; Valenzuela, 1992); however, these studies do not explicitly discuss subnational elites. Rather their focus is on national leaders and military officials. A third strand of literature, which investigates the impact of the mode of transition on consolidation, does not examine the role of subnational actors, institutions, or practices in transition.¹ These strands of literature overlook subnational regimes in favor of aggregate country characteristics (e.g. popular attitudes) and politics inside national capitals (e.g. national leaders and processes), yet evidence has shown that non-democratic subnational political regimes are an obstacle to democratic consolidation.

The subnational democracy literature also has not provided a theory of the territorial development of democracy within a country. This scholarship has primarily examined the existence and endurance of non-democratic subnational political regimes (Beer, 2003; Beer and Mitchell, 2006; Behrend 2011; Benton, 2012; Borges, 2011; Danielson et al., 2013; Eisenstadt, 2011; Eisenstadt and Rios, 2014; Hale, 2007; Herrmann, 2010; Hill 1994; Gervasoni, 2010; Giraudy, 2015; Lankina and Getachew, 2012; Lawson, 2000; Magaloni et al., 2007; McMann and

¹ See, for example: Di Palma 1990; Karl 1990; Karl and Schmitter 1991; Munck and Leff 1997; O'Donnell 1992; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986.

Petrov, 2000; Mickey, 2015; Montero, 2010; Moraski and Reisinger, 2003; Munro, 2001; Petrov, 2004; Rebolledo, 2012; Saikkonen, 2012; Sidel, 2014; Tudor and Ziegfeld, 2016). Moreover, most studies investigate countries where subnational variation in democracy continues to this day, so their utility in explaining change is limited. The small number of studies that have examined change over time explain the democratization of individual authoritarian subnational regimes, not the wholesale elimination of non-democratic subnational regimes in a country, which may or may not be identical processes (Gibson, 2005; Gibson, 2013; Giraudy, 2010; Giraudy, 2015; Hiskey and Canache, 2005; Lankina and Getachew, 2006; Gel'man and Lankina, 2008; Mickey, 2008; Mickey, 2015). Also, the generalizability of the findings of this prior research may be limited; the studies, in fact, examine only four countries, all with federal systems of government—Argentina, Mexico, Russia, and the United States.

Offering an explanation of the territorial consolidation of democracy within a country is important for theoretical, normative, and practical reasons. Theoretically, it can help eliminate the current “black box” between democratic transition theory and our understanding of the long-term success of democracy. Normatively, democratizing remaining pockets of non-democracy in countries that have undergone democratic transition extends democratic political rights and institutions to the entire population of a country. Practically, an explanation can provide guidance to democracy advocates and policy makers who aim to ensure the full development and survival of democracy in countries. This practical guidance is all the more important during this time of democratic recession, which has revealed that democracy is not as solidly rooted in countries as we had thought (Carothers, 2015; Diamond, 2015).

This paper offers a theory of the territorial consolidation of democracy. We begin with the concept of subnational regime variation or unevenness—in other words, all subnational political units in a country do not exhibit the same *de facto* level of democracy on the authoritarian-hybrid-democratic spectrum. Recent research has demonstrated that globally and over time, the factors that have most contributed to unevenness are largely distal ones, which remain static over time. These factors—rugged terrain and large and ethnically diverse populations—make it more difficult for national leaders to extend control over the territory of their countries (McMann et al., 2016a). At the same time, we know through case study research and exploration of new crossnational data that democracy has been territorially consolidated in some countries historically (McMann, 2013; Coppedge et al., 2018a). Drawing from this prior research, we seek to explain why unevenness decreases with respect to each country's baseline level of unevenness. Our focus is *not* on trying to understand why some countries experience more or less unevenness than others.

In order to develop a theory of territorial consolidation of democracy, we hone in on decreases in unevenness in the democratic direction. In other words, we are interested in the democratization of subnational authoritarian enclaves in countries that lean democratic, rather than the “authoritarianization” of subnational democratic enclaves in countries that lean non-democratic. We recognize, however, that some factors may have only the former effect; whereas, other factors might promote greater evenness regardless of whether it is in a democratic or authoritarian direction. Our theory, therefore, addresses both types of factors.

In seeking to understand how unevenness diminishes, this paper examines two manifestations of it—unevenness in the freeness and fairness of subnational elections and unevenness in government officials’ respect for civil liberties. These two forms of unevenness often do not occur together, as our data below indicate. Also, they pose different types of challenges to the territorial consolidation of democracy. Whereas a variety of government officials can violate civil liberties in a subnational political unit, subnational politicians can most readily manipulate subnational elections. Our theory takes into account these differences.

Our argument is that the quality of subnational elections and government officials’ respect for civil liberties grow more uniform throughout a country when the national government can more effectively extend control over the territory of the country. Changes to informal practices and institutions can increase national government control. These include greater corruption control, a shift toward a unitary system of government, and a move toward centralized candidate selection. Corruption control is particularly important to increase evenness in respect for civil liberties as a variety of different officials can violate civil liberties in a subnational political unit. The institutional changes are especially influential in promoting uniform subnational election quality as these changes reduce the autonomy of subnational officials, who can most readily manipulate elections.

We test our argument about factors that decrease unevenness and thus territorially consolidate democracy by using country fixed-effect linear models and by employing Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) data, which cover 182 countries from 1900 to 2017. Our results provide support for our argument.

This paper illuminates the topic of democratic consolidation by examining the territorial consolidation of democracy. In sum, it explores an undertheorized topic, investigates a puzzle that has not yet been studied, and offers an original argument to explain this puzzle and improve a body of theory. The paper tests the argument in more than 150 countries for more than a century. The paper proceeds by first describing the argument in greater detail. The second section introduces alternative explanations. The paper then elaborates on the data used and reviews general

patterns in unevenness to underscore how frequently the phenomenon occurs and its relationship to regime type and regime change. The penultimate sections test the argument and illustrate it with cases, and the final section concludes.

I. Argument

We argue that government officials' respect for civil liberties and the quality of subnational elections grow more uniform throughout a country when the national government can more effectively extend control over the territory of the country. This is consistent with prior research that found that countries that are prone to unevenness face obstacles to the government extending control over the territory (McMann et al., 2016a). We expect that the same relationship will be important to not only explaining the level of unevenness, but also to explaining how it decreases. However, because many of the factors that make a country prone to unevenness are static or near static—a rugged terrain and a large and ethnically diverse population—we look at time variant factors instead to explain change over time. We expect that changes to informal practices and institutions can promote evenness.

For informal practices and institutions to increase evenness in either respect for civil liberties or quality of subnational elections, they must change the behavior of the relevant officials. Both subnational officials and locally-based national officials can violate civil liberties in a subnational political unit. For example, in the Ghanzi district of Botswana, there is evidence that local police and locally-based national wildlife officials have tortured, rather than just prosecuted, members of the Baswara, for poaching and trespassing.² It is important to ensure compliance of both subnational and national officials in order to promote civil liberties. By contrast, to make subnational elections freer and fairer, subnational officials are the main target because they can most readily interfere with subnational elections. They live in the territory, so they are present before, during, and after an election and they are embedded in the local community. This makes it easier for them to use carrots and sticks against potential opposition. For example, governors' economic monopolies in Russian provinces enabled them to threaten the livelihoods of potential opposition candidates and dissuade them from running. This helped ensure governors' re-election (McMann, 2006). By contrast, national election officials are typically located in a country's capital, so it is more difficult for them to manipulate subnational elections. For free and fair subnational

² The Baswara were denied land they once used for herding and forced to hunt and gather, raising the issue of whether the poaching and trespassing laws were even just (Good, 2008).

elections then, it is especially important for the national government to bring subnational officials under its control.

With this logic in mind, we make a two-pronged argument. First, we contend that hampering the informal practice of corruption will increase evenness in all government officials' respect for civil liberties and the freeness and fairness of subnational elections. Second, we argue that institutional changes that reduce subnational officials' autonomy will promote evenness in subnational election freeness and fairness but not in respect for civil liberties.

When officials focus on governing rather than using public office for private gain, we would expect uniformity in respect for civil liberties and the quality of subnational elections to increase. Following democratic transition, the national government has a mandate to consolidate democracy, including ensuring that civil liberties are respected and subnational elections are free and fair throughout the country. Corruption is a particularly vexing obstacle to completing these tasks. In countries where corruption is pervasive, lower level officials and bureaucrats will not carry out the national government's instructions when they conflict with schemes for personal enrichment or they will manipulate their implementation for personal gain. National executives themselves can be distracted by the temptation of using public office for private gain rather than consolidating democracy. Corruption can also derail national legislators from the objective of serving their constituents, for example by protecting them from civil rights abuses by national officials. Similarly, it can distract judges from punishing those who commit abuses and thus deterring future violations. Also, the violation of rights is sometimes integral to schemes for personal enrichment so that corruption actually fuels civil liberties abuses. For example, in Indonesia's West Papua, the police and military have run protection rackets connected to the large mining and logging operations on the island. Profits from this illicit activity have encouraged the police and military to crack down on residents; they have broken up public meetings and arrested and beaten opposition leaders, among other abuses (King, 2004).

Because a wide variety of government officials and bureaucrats can engage in corruption, reducing this informal practice across the board is helpful to ending civil liberties violations. Many different officials and bureaucrats can violate the rights of those living in particular subnational political units, so refocusing everyone's efforts from private gain to the task of governance can help end civil liberties violations in those areas so that respect for civil liberties becomes more uniform throughout the country. Moreover, because civil liberties abuses are sometimes central to personal enrichment schemes, ending the schemes reduces the abuses.

Whereas many different officials and bureaucrats can violate civil liberties, primarily subnational officials manipulate subnational elections. Consequently, corruption control targeted

at them is helpful to increasing evenness in subnational election freeness and fairness. Subnational officials should be focused on implementing new democratic institutions and practices, rather than personal enrichment. In order to control subnational corruption, however, the national executive must be also focused on governing, rather than personal enrichment. Following democratic transition, the national executive is often the face and driver of democratic consolidation: he or she has typically been elected democratically and has a mandate to establish a full-fledged democracy. Consider, for example, Lech Wałęsa and Nelson Mandela who became presidents during the democratic transitions of Poland and of South Africa, respectively, and then were tasked with consolidating democracy in their countries. National executives must not get distracted with personal enrichment in order to ensure that subnational officials are also focused on democratization.

Institutional changes that reduce subnational officials' autonomy will promote evenness in subnational election freeness and fairness but not in respect for civil liberties. This is because primarily subnational officials manipulate elections, whereas a wide variety of officials can violate civil liberties. When subnational officials' autonomy is reduced, they cede influence over subnational election freeness and fairness to national officials, who, following democratic transition, attempt to expand democratic practices and institutions throughout the country. Moves toward a unitary system of government and more centralized party politics are two key institutional changes that can promote evenness in subnational election freeness and fairness.

A shift from federalism toward a unitary system of government can decrease subnational officials' authority to oversee subnational elections and thus enable national officials to better ensure election freeness and fairness. Countries with unitary systems of government hold subnational elections: ninety-five percent of countries with unitary governments in 2012 were holding subnational elections.³ However, as unitary systems do not grant subnational levels any spheres of autonomy (Riker, 1964), subnational officials are much more limited, than their counterparts in federalist countries, in their ability to manipulate the elections. This is consistent with the subnational democracy literature, which contends, or at least implicitly assumes, that unevenness is a result of federalism. This is reflected in the fact that federal states, specifically Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Russia, and the United States, are most commonly studied.⁴

³ This statistic was calculated from the variables Unitary government, described in Appendix Table A1, and the Subnational elections held variable (v2elffelrbin) in the V-Dem dataset (Coppedge et al. 2018a).

⁴ Russia was a federal state at the time of the studies. Beer, 2003; Behrend, 2011; Benton, 2012; Borges, 2011; Hale, 2007; Herrmann, 2010; Gervasoni, 2010; Giraudy, 2015; Gibson, 2013; Hill, 1994; Lankina and Getachew, 2006; Lawson, 2000; Magaloni, Diaz-Cayeros and Estévez, 2007; McMann and Petrov, 2000; Mickey, 2015; Montero, 2010; Moraski and Reisinger, 2003.

Party rules can also affect how much influence national leaders have in subnational political units. For example, selection of national legislative party candidates throughout the country by national party leaders reduces subnational officials' ability to put those loyal to them in the national legislature and thus their capacity to keep the national government from interfering in their territories. A national legislature not packed with subnational loyalists can work with other national officials to enforce national electoral laws and provide support to electoral oppositions in subnational political units to ensure higher quality elections there. This resonates with the subnational democracy literature, which has attributed the maintenance of non-democratic subnational regimes to local leaders' ability to prevent the national government from getting drawn into local political conflicts (Behrend, 2011; Benton, 2012; Gibson, 2013). In sum, we expect that when party rules change to enable greater national influence in subnational politics, unevenness in the freeness and fairness of subnational elections will decrease because subnational officials' ability to manipulate these elections is diminished.

It is important to note that two of the factors we identify should predict an increase in unevenness in either a democratic or authoritarian direction; whereas, the third should predict an increase in only a democratic direction. A reduction in corruption and a shift toward a more unitary system should each facilitate greater evenness in either direction. By contrast, more centralized candidate selection likely promotes evenness in the democratic direction because for a change in candidate selection to matter the national legislature must have some genuine influence. National legislatures are likely more influential the more democratic the national regime. We expect that each of three factors has an independent effect on evenness and that they do not need to act in unison in order for there to be an effect.

From this argument we derive the following hypotheses.

First, we hypothesize that when corruption decreases in a country, uniformity in the quality of subnational elections and government officials' respect for civil liberties increase. This variable, *Corruption control*, is measured with the V-Dem political corruption index. We reversed the scale so that higher values indicate less corruption. We expect that decreases in a wide variety of forms of corruption will reduce unevenness in government officials' respect for civil liberties. We include the variables *Public sector corruption control*, *Executive corruption control*, *Judicial corruption control*, and *Legislature corruption control* from V-Dem to test this idea. For each, higher values denote less corruption. Our argument indicates that control of national executive corruption should have the

greatest impact on unevenness in subnational election freeness and fairness.⁵ *Executive corruption control* allows us to test that.

Second, we hypothesize that when a country's system of government grows more unitary, subnational election quality, but not government respect for civil liberties, grows more uniform throughout the country. We measure this using the variable *Unitary*, based on the Quality of Governance dataset. A higher value represents a more unitary system.

Third, we expect that when national party leaders gain more control of the national legislative party candidate selection process, uniformity in subnational election quality, but not respect for civil liberties, increases in a democratic direction. *Centralized candidate selection* from the V-Dem dataset measures this and is reversed so that increasingly higher values represent more centralized control of candidate selection.

The reverse of these hypothesized relationships is unlikely, suggesting that the causal direction of our argument is correct. Greater uniformity in the quality of subnational elections and government officials' respect for civil liberties is unlikely to increase corruption control. And, greater evenness in subnational election freeness and fairness is unlikely to result in a shift toward a unitary system of government or centralized candidate selection. Moreover, our model specification, described in the Analysis section, lags our dependent variables in order to test the hypothesized causal direction.

II. Alternative Explanations

While our argument focuses on increased evenness as a result of the national government extending control throughout the country, it is also possible that respect for civil liberties and subnational election freeness and fairness grow more uniform as a result of diffusion or the independent development of democracy in many subnational political units. We consider alternative explanations that fit into each of these three categories.

As the capacity of the national government increases, national leaders could more effectively extend control throughout the country bringing subnational laggards into line with national democratization efforts. This is consistent with the state-building literature which examines the capacity of the national government to bring the periphery under its control (Mann, 1989; Tilly, 1990). We test this using Hanson and Sigman's State Capacity Dataset, which is more comprehensive conceptually and offers better year and country coverage than other measures of

⁵ Following executive corruption control, subnational official corruption control would be most important; however, data are not available to also test that.

state capacity. Their measure is an index of 24 indicators using Bayesian latent variable analysis and measuring administrative, coercive, and extractive capacity from 1960 to 2009 for up to 163 countries in a given year (Hanson and Sigman, 2013). *State capacity* ranges from -2.9 to 2.5 with a higher value indicating more state capacity.

A minimal requirement for the consolidation of democracy throughout a country is a national government's ability to ensure that the entire territory is secure. The absence of internal armed conflict can be thought of as the bare minimum for the national unity or stateness that scholars have highlighted as important to democratization (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Rustow, 1970). It is possible then that as armed conflict declines within a country, greater uniformity in government respect for civil liberties and subnational election freeness and fairness develops. To test this we use the measure *Armed conflict*, where conflict is coded as 1 and no conflict is coded as 0. The data are from Clio Infra (clio-infra.eu) drawing on Brecke (2001) and are available from the V-Dem dataset (Coppedge et al. 2018a).

Two other factors that can help national governments extend control over territory have been also shown to increase the likelihood of democratic consolidation. As a country develops economically, national leaders have more resources to bring territory under their control. This could include extending physical infrastructure to better incorporate outlying areas, basing more national government representatives in subnational units to monitor and enforce national directives, and providing more goods, services, and targeted programs in exchange for local populations' loyalty. Concurrently, economic development has been shown to be correlated with higher levels of democracy (Epstein et al., 2016; Lipset, 1959). In our analysis, economic development is measured by the variable *GDP per capita*, which is the natural log of the per capita GDP as recorded by Maddison. We test the impact of *GDP per capita* contingent on the variable *Democracy*, drawn from V-Dem's Liberal Democracy Index (Maddison, 2010).

Higher education levels in a country can make it easier for the national government to extend control. It can be easier for the national government to communicate complex ideas, such as new democratic institutions and practices, to citizens who are literate and have schooling. Education has been shown to directly support democracy by reducing the appeal of extreme doctrines and developing tolerance in the population (Lipset, 1959). For this reason we test this relationship contingent on *Democracy*. We measure the impact of *Education* on evenness with the average years of education among citizens older than 15. These data are derived from Morrisson & Murtin (2009) and can be found in the V-Dem dataset (Coppedge et. al. 2018a).

An added benefit of examining alternative explanations focused on the extension of national government control is that they are also tests of spuriousness. It is plausible that *State*

capacity, *Armed conflict*, *GDP per capita*, and *Education* could facilitate the national government controlling corruption, shifting toward a unitary system, and centralizing candidate selection as well as reducing unevenness in subnational election quality and respect for civil liberties.

It is also possible that greater uniformity in subnational elections and civil liberties results from external influences, rather than from increased national government control. This could be true at either end of the regime spectrum: pockets of non-democracy within a democratic-leaning country may democratize when the country's neighbors are more democratic, or pockets of democracy within an authoritarian-leaning country may grow more authoritarian when the country's neighbors are more authoritarian. This logic is supported by research on individual countries that has demonstrated that democratic neighboring countries can contribute to the democratization of subnational units in nearby non-democratic countries and thus promote unevenness in subnational regime type (e.g. Lankina and Getachew 2006). We test this using the indicator *Diverse regime neighborhood*, which we created by taking the average difference between a country's V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index score and that of its contiguous neighbors. Higher values indicate a greater difference between a country's level of democracy and its neighbors' level of democracy. The variable is equal to zero for countries with no neighbors, since without neighbors they would not be exposed to this kind of external influence.

A final alternative explanation we consider is the spontaneous development of democracy in those subnational political units that remained non-democratic following a country's democratic transition. Just as the economic development of a country has been shown to affect its regime type (Epstein et al., 2016; Lipset, 1959), it is plausible that uniform levels of economic development across a country's subnational political units also result in uniform subnational election freeness and fairness and respect for government officials throughout the country. We test this using Lee and Rogers' measure *Regional inequality*, which is the variance in subnational regions' GDP weighted by population (Lee and Rogers, 2017). Because this measure captures variance, we would expect that as variance decreases unevenness would as well, whether the country is at the authoritarian or democratic end of the spectrum.⁶

Before testing these alternative explanations and our hypotheses, we first introduce our measures of unevenness and examine patterns in unevenness.

⁶ A different alternative explanation about subnational economic variation is Carlos Gervasoni's (2010) argument that subnational variation in receipt of central government subsidies can account for subnational regime variation. Unfortunately, there is not a global measure of this concept, so we were unable to test it.

III. Measures of Unevenness

From the V-Dem dataset,⁷ we use a measure of the freeness and fairness of subnational elections (*Subnational election unevenness*) and a measure of government officials' respect for civil liberties (*Civil liberties unevenness*). These measures capture two central conceptualizations of democracy—the electoral conceptualization and the liberal conceptualization (Coppedge et al., 2011). The indicators neither measure every conceptualization of democracy (e.g. egalitarianism) nor do they capture every component of democracy (e.g. judicial independence). However, they encapsulate conceptualizations and components central to understanding regime type. They also exclude concepts, such as sovereignty and stability, that are not part of regime type and thus would impede our ability to identify generalizable factors that facilitate greater evenness. Validity tests of these two indicators demonstrate that they measure the underlying concepts well (McMann, 2018). Together, the measures provide an overall picture of the extent to which regime type varies across the territory of a country.

Questions used to collect data for these two indicators are identical in structure. The subnational elections question asks, “Does the freeness and fairness of subnational elections vary across different areas of the country?” The civil liberties questions, asks “Does government respect for civil liberties vary across different areas of the country?” There are three possible response categories: 0 = some subnational units differ significantly from others in the country, 1 = some subnational units differ from others in the country, and 2 = equivalence across most or all subnational units. Prior to the subnational election question in the data collection instrument, two subnational levels have been identified for evaluating election quality—regional, meaning the second-highest level of government just below the national government, and local, meaning the level below the region. For countries with more than two subnational levels, approximately one-quarter of countries, each regional and local level “that, in practice, has the most responsibilities (e.g. making laws, providing primary education, maintaining roads, policing, etc.) and resources to carry out those responsibilities” is used (McMann, 2018; Coppedge et al., 2017).

As the complete text of the two questions and various response-categories indicate (see Appendix Table A1), the variables measure how severe the differences are among areas of a country, but they do not quantify how many subnational units differ.⁸ Although the measures do

⁷ We use version 8 of the dataset from year 1900 through 2017. We do not use Historical V-Dem data, extending from 1789 to 1899, because in version 8 those data are not complete and fully integrated with the more contemporary data.

⁸ Whether a disputed territory is coded as a separate country or as part of another country depends on whether it meets the requirements of being a coding unit, as described in the Country Coding Units document. This document also provides information about how specific disputed territories are treated (Coppedge et al., 2018b).

not capture all dimensions of subnational regime variation, their geographic and temporal coverage do enable us to begin to understand how unevenness decreases.

Data for these two measures comes from country-expert coders, generally academics or members of nongovernmental organizations and typically residents or citizens of the country they are coding. For each indicator, an average of five coders with expertise in elections or civil liberties are enlisted, resulting in five separate codings. Coders' responses are aggregated in a measurement model that employs Bayesian item response theory (IRT) modeling techniques to estimate latent polity characteristics from each set of expert ratings. This model provides point estimates as well as estimates of uncertainty, which are based on inter-coder reliability and other features of the coders.⁹

The resulting indicators for subnational election and civil liberties unevenness are only moderately correlated (Pearson's $r=0.53$), suggesting that they measure different dimensions of regime type at the subnational level. For this reason, we examine each of them separately in our analysis.

Histograms, not pictured here, show a continuous distribution for each indicator. Consequently, we use linear models in our analysis.

IV. General Patterns

Unevenness after democratic transition is common, evident in different eras and regions of the world. Yet, only in approximately half the cases do countries then experience a change toward greater evenness. These patterns underscore the importance of identifying factors that promote territorial consolidation.

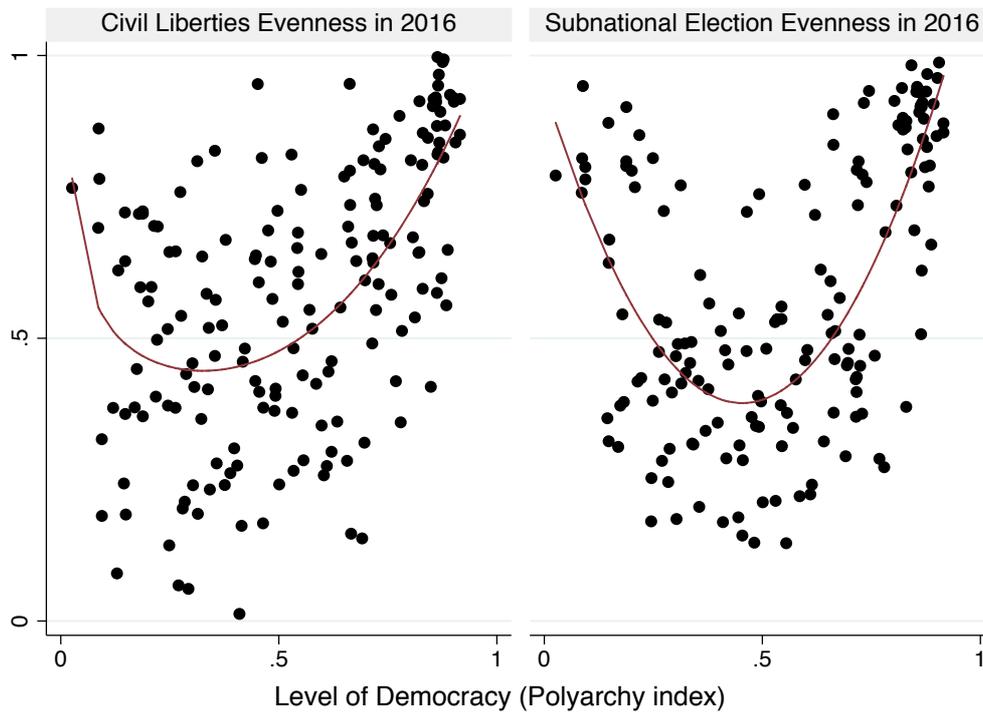
By definition, unevenness is most likely to occur in a hybrid regime—one that includes authoritarian and democratic elements.¹⁰ If a country is perfectly democratic or authoritarian, it would not have unevenness. This suggests a curvilinear relationship between unevenness and regime type, which is illustrated in Figure 1. Here we see that unevenness is most commonly found in hybrid regimes and evenness is most commonly found in authoritarian or democratic regimes.¹¹

⁹ Additional details about coder recruitment, selection, and characteristics and the measurement model are available in online V-Dem documents (Coppedge et al., 2018c; Pemstein et al., 2015).

¹⁰ For the definition of hybrid regimes, see Diamond (2002).

¹¹ The lower level of evenness in civil liberties, relative to subnational election freeness and fairness, in countries ruled by authoritarian national regimes is likely indicative of the need for a national regime to exert control over more officials to maintain equivalent civil liberties abuses, than to maintain equivalently low quality subnational elections, as our theory suggests. The lower level of civil liberties evenness in authoritarian regimes, relative to democratic regimes, is likely indicative of the fact that while violating civil liberties is a tool of authoritarian national regimes used

Figure 1: The Curvilinear Relationship between Evenness and Regime Type



Scatter plots with Civil Liberties Evenness ($N=178$) or Subnational Election Evenness ($N=165$) on the y-axis and Regime Type on the x-axis. Cross-national data from 2016. Fractional-polynomial prediction indicated by red curve.

Though our analysis examines the drivers of evenness in either direction (i.e. toward autocracy or democracy), we are especially interested in how countries move up and to the right on this U-shaped curve, from uneven hybrid regimes to even democracies.

Many countries that have shifted toward democracy nonetheless exhibit unevenness, stressing that this is an important phenomenon to study. Of 192 cases of democratic transition between 1900 and 2014,¹² 33 percent exhibited high levels of civil liberties unevenness, subnational election unevenness, or both forms of unevenness afterwards. Further, we observe high levels of unevenness post-transition across different waves of democratization and world regions.

Only about half of democratic transitions have been followed by increases in evenness, indicating that territorial consolidation of democracy is not guaranteed. Following the 192 democratic transitions, in only 16 percent of cases did government officials' respect for civil liberties and subnational election freeness and fairness grow more even. There were also cases

when and where needed, protection of civil liberties throughout the country is an objective of democratic national regimes.

¹² Cases of democratic transition were defined as countries that had an average score between 0.5 and 0.8 on the Liberal Democracy Index over a 10-year period and then had a higher score in the subsequent 10-year period. While the exact number of democratic transitions would vary with different scores and a different time span, the point remains that unevenness is common after democratic transition.

where only one became more even: in 23 percent of cases only government officials' respect for civil liberties grew more even and in 15 percent of cases only subnational election freeness and fairness grew more even. It was most common for neither to grow more even; this was true in 46 percent of the cases.¹³ Again, we observe these trends across different regions and waves of democratization.

In sum, greater evenness occurs after only about half the cases of democratic transition and in less than a fifth of the cases in both civil liberties and the freeness and fairness of subnational elections. Progress on territorial consolidation is not guaranteed. This raises the question of which factors help produce this important outcome.

V. Analysis

We test our hypotheses in Tables 1-4 using linear regression models that include country and year fixed effects, as well as country-clustered standard errors. The dependent variable is *Civil liberties* (CL) *evenness* or *Subnational elections* (SE) *evenness*. Each of the models presented also includes *Democracy* and *Democracy*². We include these variables to account for the observation, mentioned above, that countries with hybrid regimes are more likely to experience unevenness. Since it is not our intention to explain why such regimes experience greater unevenness, we choose instead to control for this general pattern in the data, and thereby to focus our analysis on the remaining within-country variation in each dependent variable.¹⁴ Independent variables are lagged one year behind the dependent variable in all models.

Models in Table 1 test our key hypotheses regarding *Corruption control*, *Unitary government*, and *Centralized candidate selection*. The results are consistent with our hypotheses. The findings indicate that while *Corruption control* has a positive and statistically significant effect on both types of evenness (Models 1-4), *Unitary government* and *Centralized candidate selection* only appear influential in the case of SE evenness (Models 2 and 4).¹⁵ We see further from Models 2 and 4 that the effect

¹³ When evenness increases following democratic transition, it tends to endure. In 80 percent of the cases where government officials' respect for civil liberties grew more even and in 75 percent of the cases where subnational election freeness and fairness grew more even, ten years later the level remained the same or had increased.

¹⁴ Not surprisingly, we see that adding *Democracy* and *Democracy*² greatly improves model fit, producing lower values of AIC and BIC.

Within-country variation accounts for approximately 25 percent of unevenness in civil liberties or subnational election freeness and fairness; whereas between-country variation accounts for the remainder. This is evident from running an empty multilevel model, with years nested inside countries. The focus of this paper is within-country variation as earlier work has examined between-country variation. McMann et al. 2016a.

¹⁵ Because changes in *Unitary government* are relatively rare, we removed a case that was the best fit for our model and ran the test again as a robustness check. We found that a single case does not drive our results, thus giving us more confidence in our finding.

of *Centralized candidate selection* is conditional on the level of *Democracy* in a country, with larger effects taking place in more democratic regimes.

Table 1: Explaining Change in Evenness Over Time within Countries

VARIABLES	(1) CL	(2) CL	(3) SE	(4) SE
Corruption control	0.194*** [0.047]	0.146** [0.062]	0.187*** [0.065]	0.198** [0.086]
Unitary government		-0.047 [0.049]		0.056** [0.025]
Centralized candidate selection		0.016 [0.095]		0.234** [0.112]
Candidate selection x Democracy		-0.243 [0.194]		-0.335* [0.192]
Democracy	-0.162 [0.113]	-0.007 [0.213]	-0.762*** [0.131]	-0.329 [0.209]
Democracy ²	0.395*** [0.125]	0.339** [0.153]	0.900*** [0.144]	0.630*** [0.184]
Observations	17474	11255	13559	9859
Countries	181	169	177	165
Years	117	115	117	115
R-squared (within)	0.158	0.212	0.192	0.211
AIC	-30680	-24163	-22950	-18509
BIC	-29756	-23283	-22055	-17646

Dependent variable is civil liberties evenness (CL) or subnational election evenness (SE); larger values represent greater evenness. Country-clustered standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and country fixed effects. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

To test our claims about the impact of different forms of corruption, we also provide disaggregated results using each of the four components of the Corruption Control index: *Public sector corruption control*, *Executive corruption control*, *Judicial corruption control*, *Legislature corruption control*. Each component of the index is an interval measure with a range of 0 to 1. Models in Table 2 test each component individually (Models 2-5 and 8-11) and together (Models 6 and 12) on the same sample of country-years, to allow for a direct comparison of coefficients and standard errors as well as model fit. The results are consistent with our argument. Looking at the case of civil liberties, the findings indicate that each component of the *Corruption control* index has a positive and statistically significant impact on evenness. The contribution of each is further evidenced by the fact that their significance drops when all are added to the model. In the case of elections, we find more variation in the behavior of each component in the index. Here, only the coefficients for *Executive corruption control* and *Legislature corruption control* have *p*-values less than 0.05; these components also produce the greatest improvement in model fit. Only *Executive corruption control*

Table 2: The Effect of Corruption on Evenness

VARIABLES	(1) CL	(2) CL	(3) CL	(4) CL	(5) CL	(6) CL	(7) SE	(8) SE	(9) SE	(10) SE	(11) SE	(12) SE
Corruption control	0.171*** [0.051]						0.227*** [0.084]					
Public sector corruption control		0.110*** [0.036]				-0.033 [0.059]		0.081 [0.055]				-0.157* [0.081]
Executive corruption control			0.147*** [0.042]			0.126** [0.061]			0.208*** [0.073]			0.287*** [0.110]
Judicial corruption control				0.206*** [0.069]		0.103 [0.074]				0.191 [0.117]		0.062 [0.111]
Legislature corruption control					0.150** [0.061]	0.029 [0.064]					0.179** [0.078]	0.022 [0.083]
Unitary government							0.041* [0.023]	0.042* [0.025]	0.046* [0.024]	0.048* [0.025]	0.041* [0.024]	0.053** [0.026]
Centralized candidate selection							0.179 [0.130]	0.155 [0.136]	0.190 [0.131]	0.165 [0.135]	0.156 [0.131]	0.196 [0.130]
Candidate selection x Democracy							-0.295 [0.211]	-0.260 [0.214]	-0.330 [0.211]	-0.246 [0.211]	-0.255 [0.212]	-0.333 [0.207]
Democracy	-0.111 [0.106]	-0.146 [0.108]	-0.162 [0.109]	-0.098 [0.105]	-0.074 [0.106]	-0.127 [0.105]	-0.516** [0.239]	-0.554** [0.249]	-0.557** [0.246]	-0.523** [0.249]	-0.495** [0.243]	-0.526** [0.247]
Democracy ²	0.331*** [0.123]	0.392*** [0.128]	0.392*** [0.125]	0.332*** [0.123]	0.331*** [0.126]	0.343*** [0.120]	0.782*** [0.196]	0.848*** [0.202]	0.848*** [0.195]	0.794*** [0.212]	0.786*** [0.198]	0.834*** [0.205]
Observations	12924	12924	12924	12924	12924	12924	9020	9020	9020	9020	9020	9020
Countries	180	180	180	180	180	180	165	165	165	165	165	165
Years	117	117	117	117	117	117	115	115	115	115	115	115
R-squared (within)	0.190	0.175	0.192	0.181	0.176	0.197	0.244	0.213	0.251	0.222	0.226	0.262
AIC	-25189	-24941	-25214	-25035	-24956	-25291	-17552	-17186	-17625	-17285	-17335	-17763
BIC	-24300	-24052	-24325	-24146	-24067	-24380	-16699	-16333	-16772	-16432	-16483	-16889

Dependent variable is civil liberties evenness (CL) or subnational election evenness (SE); larger values represent greater evenness. Country-clustered standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and country fixed effects. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3: Alternative Explanations – Civil Liberties Evenness

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
VARIABLES	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL
State capacity index	0.020* [0.011]											
Armed conflict (internal)			-0.015 [0.012]									
Diverse regime neighborhood					0.009 [0.006]							
Regional inequality							0.037 [0.034]					
GDP per capita, logged									0.029* [0.016]			
GDP per capita, logged x Democracy									-0.042 [0.028]			
Education 15+											0.007 [0.009]	
Education 15+ x Democracy											-0.014 [0.011]	
Corruption control	0.152*** [0.052]	0.164*** [0.053]	0.209*** [0.056]	0.211*** [0.056]	0.172*** [0.059]	0.168*** [0.060]	-0.013 [0.067]	-0.004 [0.069]	0.174*** [0.050]	0.178*** [0.049]	0.133** [0.064]	0.127** [0.063]
Democracy	-0.147 [0.119]	-0.170 [0.119]	-0.140 [0.130]	-0.138 [0.130]	-0.184* [0.105]	-0.160 [0.103]	-0.333* [0.188]	-0.327* [0.189]	0.189 [0.184]	-0.063 [0.112]	-0.110 [0.130]	-0.086 [0.130]
Democracy ²	0.345** [0.154]	0.381** [0.155]	0.344** [0.137]	0.344** [0.137]	0.373*** [0.127]	0.344*** [0.125]	0.492** [0.229]	0.488** [0.230]	0.435** [0.191]	0.286** [0.139]	0.489** [0.194]	0.327** [0.144]
Observations	7224	7224	13744	13744	11201	11201	1365	1365	11243	11243	11393	11393
Countries	161	161	166	166	168	168	75	75	152	152	135	135
Years	51	51	101	101	117	117	54	54	117	117	111	111
R-squared (within)	0.148	0.142	0.140	0.139	0.222	0.218	0.233	0.231	0.199	0.193	0.154	0.150
AIC	-17137	-17087	-26196	-26179	-24425	-24361	-4033	-4031	-21391	-21304	-21975	-21924
BIC	-16765	-16722	-25414	-25403	-23553	-23497	-3778	-3781	-20504	-20432	-21131	-21095

Dependent variable is civil liberties evenness (CL); larger values represent greater evenness. Country-clustered standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and country fixed effects. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4: Alternative Explanations – Subnational Election Evenness

VARIABLES	(1) SE	(2) SE	(3) SE	(4) SE	(5) SE	(6) SE	(7) SE	(8) SE	(9) SE	(10) SE	(11) SE	(12) SE
State capacity index	0.003 [0.010]											
Armed conflict (internal)			-0.014 [0.011]									
Diverse regime neighborhood					0.012 [0.009]							
Regional inequality							0.040 [0.029]					
GDP per capita, logged									-0.004 [0.017]			
GDP per capita, logged x Democracy									-0.060 [0.045]			
Education 15+											0.019** [0.007]	
Education 15+ x Democracy											-0.036** [0.018]	
Corruption control	0.115* [0.063]	0.116* [0.063]	0.221** [0.096]	0.223** [0.096]	0.209** [0.088]	0.203** [0.087]	0.058 [0.066]	0.069 [0.069]	0.199** [0.094]	0.181** [0.091]	0.253*** [0.085]	0.241*** [0.085]
Unitary government	0.041 [0.034]	0.041 [0.033]	0.046** [0.022]	0.045** [0.022]	0.049* [0.026]	0.054** [0.026]	-0.005 [0.013]	-0.003 [0.013]	0.069*** [0.025]	0.074*** [0.026]	0.016 [0.016]	0.038 [0.030]
Centralized candidate selection	0.149 [0.091]	0.151* [0.090]	0.257** [0.120]	0.264** [0.121]	0.197* [0.115]	0.204* [0.117]	0.332 [0.204]	0.328 [0.210]	0.252* [0.133]	0.240* [0.136]	0.267** [0.111]	0.264** [0.119]
Candidate selection x Democracy	-0.426* [0.219]	-0.427* [0.218]	-0.376 [0.229]	-0.379* [0.228]	-0.298 [0.184]	-0.301 [0.191]	-0.470* [0.240]	-0.460* [0.247]	-0.421* [0.235]	-0.363 [0.239]	-0.492** [0.195]	-0.366 [0.226]
Democracy	-0.220 [0.248]	-0.222 [0.248]	-0.258 [0.228]	-0.248 [0.226]	-0.411* [0.217]	-0.372* [0.208]	0.221 [0.220]	0.220 [0.222]	0.126 [0.323]	-0.256 [0.240]	-0.266 [0.212]	-0.295 [0.235]
Democracy ²	0.513** [0.211]	0.517** [0.212]	0.594*** [0.191]	0.588*** [0.190]	0.686*** [0.195]	0.643*** [0.184]	0.024 [0.147]	0.025 [0.147]	0.818*** [0.275]	0.569*** [0.195]	0.991*** [0.308]	0.603*** [0.197]
Observations	6165	6165	7593	7593	9296	9296	1321	1321	8329	8329	8108	8108
Countries	154	154	154	154	158	158	73	73	142	142	131	131
Years	51	51	101	101	115	115	50	50	115	115	111	111
R-squared (within)	0.171	0.171	0.202	0.200	0.211	0.205	0.138	0.132	0.230	0.219	0.262	0.237
AIC	-13934	-13936	-14711	-14700	-17519	-17451	-4803	-4795	-15641	-15531	-16006	-15742
BIC	-13551	-13559	-13969	-13965	-16655	-16595	-4538	-4536	-14791	-14694	-15180	-14930

Dependent variable is subnational election evenness (SE); larger values represent greater evenness. Country-clustered standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and country fixed effects. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

remains significant and its coefficient in the correct direction when the other corruption indicators are included in the model.¹⁶

Models in Tables 3 and 4 test each of the alternative explanations, showing both individual tests (odd numbered models) and a comparison to our benchmark model using the same sample of country-years (even numbered models). We test the first alternative explanation regarding the effect of *State capacity* in Models 1-2. While adding this variable provides a small improvement in model fit in the case of CL evenness, it does not improve model fit at all in the case of SE evenness. Similarly, while the effect is positive, as expected, it is not significant in the case of SE evenness and only marginally significant, at the 0.10 level, in the case of CL evenness. We obtain similar null findings with respect to other alternative explanations, namely *Armed conflict* (Models 3-4), *GDP per capita* (Models 5-6), *Education* (Models 7-8), *Diverse regime neighborhood* (Models 9-10), and *Regional inequality* (Models 11-12). In each case, the added variable produces at best a marginal improvement to model fit and none of the coefficients reach standard levels of statistical significance (i.e. p -values less than 0.05). The relatively small number of country-years with armed conflict—only 10 percent—likely accounts for this variable’s lack of influence on unevenness. The weak results for *State capacity*, *Armed conflict*, *GDP per capita*, and *Education* also increase confidence that our argument is not spurious. With the exception of those variables for which only much shorter time series are available (*State capacity* and *Economic diversity*), we still find significant effects in Tables 3 and 4 for our three variables of interest, as predicted: *Corruption control* (in the case of both CL and SE evenness), *Unitary government* (in the case of SE evenness), and *Centralized candidate selection* (in the case of SE evenness).

In sum, the statistical analysis provides support for our argument that corruption control promotes evenness in both civil liberties and subnational elections, with control of a variety of forms of corruption being important to the former and control of executive corruption being particularly important to the latter. The findings also support our argument that a shift toward a more unitary form of government and a more centralized means of selecting candidates for the national legislature increase evenness in subnational election freeness and fairness. The lack of support for alternative explanations further increases confidence in our argument.

¹⁶ V-Dem data appear on both sides of the equation, for the dependent variables and also for the corruption index indicators and *Centralized candidate selection*. However, it is unlikely that this accounts for our results because different country experts tend to code the variables on each side of the equation. V-Dem data collection is divided into surveys and these dependent and independent variables appear on different surveys. We are unable to conduct robustness checks using alternative data because no such data exist for the dependent variables and *Centralized candidate selection* (McMann, 2018). For corruption, the time series of the other datasets are too short to examine within-country variation, or, in the case of Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index, the data are not designed for time series analysis (McMann et al., 2016b).

Our argument is also consistent with our empirical finding in the General Patterns section that 23 percent of countries grew more even in government officials' respect for civil liberties but only 15 percent of countries became more even in subnational election freeness and fairness, following democratic transition. It is likely that institutional changes that facilitate the latter are less common than corruption campaigns that contribute to both forms of unevenness. We know, for example, that only nine countries in our dataset experienced a shift on the unitary-federal spectrum. The lower frequency of institutional changes would help explain why increased uniformity in subnational election freeness and fairness is less common than greater evenness in government officials' respect for civil liberties.

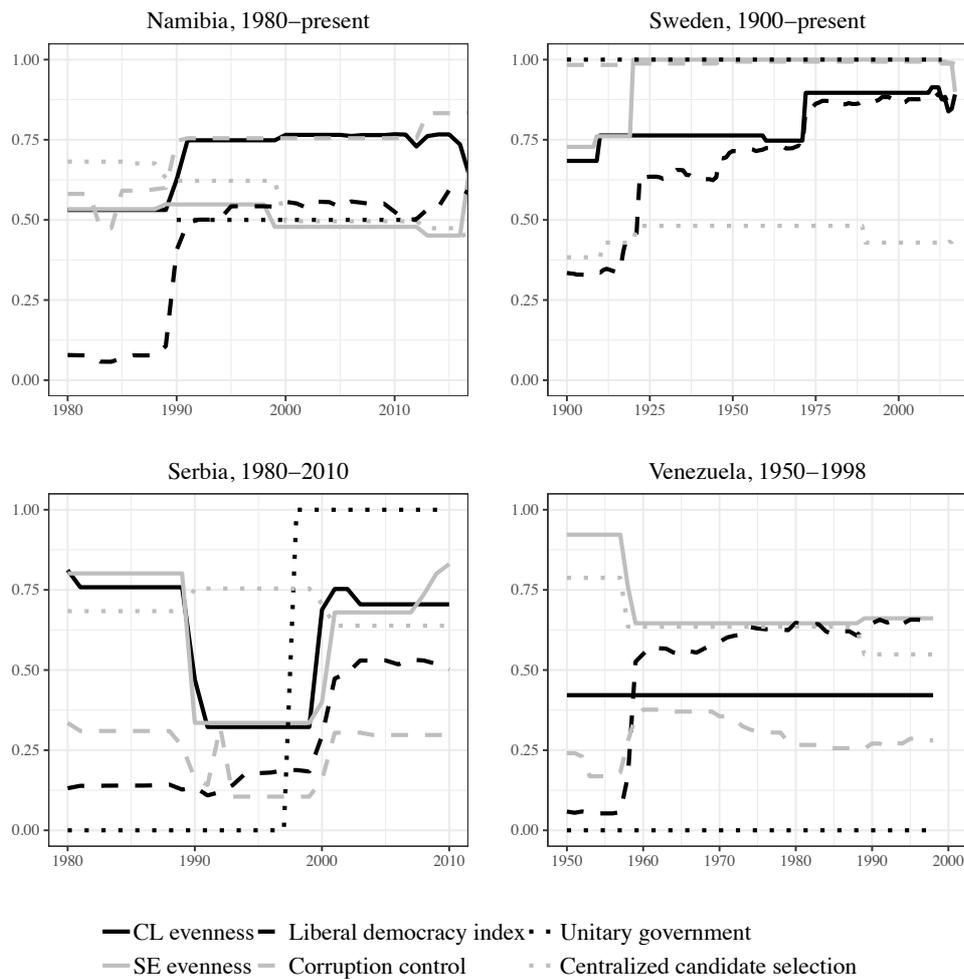
VI. Illustrations

To illustrate our argument, we describe the relationships in four countries: Namibia, Sweden, Serbia, and Venezuela. While all four have experienced a democratic transition at some point in their histories, only in Namibia, Sweden, and Serbia were those transitions followed by an increase in a type of evenness. The fact that Namibia and Sweden did not become more even on both dimensions is consistent with the descriptive statistics and our argument that the two dimensions are distinct.

As Figure 2 illustrates with the black dashed line, Namibia underwent a democratic transition in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As corruption control increased in the late 1980s, government officials' respect for civil liberties grew more even—evident from the gray dashed and solid black lines, respectively. Evenness in the freeness and fairness of subnational elections did not increase; in fact, it decreased a bit even though corruption control increased. However, consistent with our argument, the other two factors were not favorable to greater evenness in freeness and fairness of subnational elections: candidate selection decentralized (the dotted gray line) and Namibia's government system remained between a unitary and federal system (black dotted line).¹⁷ The three variables' relationships with evenness in subnational election freeness and fairness underscore our earlier points that these variables are independent and do not need to act in unison in order for there to be an effect. They also serve as a reminder that our argument is based on generalized relationships and our analysis captures average effects; whereas each democratic transition exhibits unique characteristics.

¹⁷ The Unitary Government variable lacks data from before 1990, but the system of government was comparable in the 1980s (Tonchi, Lindeke and Grotzger, 2012; Williams and Hackland, 2015).

Figure 2: Illustrations



Sweden achieved parliamentary democracy by 1914 after which it transitioned to a modern democracy with mass suffrage, among other attributes, consistent with the black dashed line in Figure 2. As a parliamentary democracy at the beginning of its transition to a full democracy, Sweden continued to face unevenness in the freeness and fairness of subnational elections, albeit not a significant amount, as depicted by the solid gray line. However, with more centralized candidate selection (gray dotted line), subnational election freeness and fairness grew more uniform. Corruption control remained high and the country maintained a unitary system of government, illustrating again that the variables do not need to act in unison in order for there to be an effect.

Serbia also experienced increased evenness in subnational election freeness and fairness following a democratic transition in the late 1990s. In this case a change in the system of government—from federal to unitary—was influential, as the black dotted line in Figure 2 depicts. Following this dramatic shift, subnational election freeness and fairness grew more uniform as shown by the solid gray line. By contrast, candidate selection grew slightly more localized (gray

dotted line) and corruption control (the dashed gray line) increased at the same time as evenness in subnational election freeness and fairness. This suggests that one of the variables can have an effect without acting in unison with the others. With regard to government officials' respect civil liberties (solid black line), its increased uniformity is consistent with our argument about the positive relationship with corruption control.

Venezuela is a contrasting case: the country underwent a democratic transition in the late 1950s, but it did not grow more even in either respect, as our argument would predict. Civil liberties unevenness remained a problem throughout this period until the late 1990s, after which democracy eroded (black solid line). Corruption control remained relatively steady (gray dashed line), varying within a relatively small range, consistent with our argument. Subnational election freeness and fairness drops (solid gray line) as candidate selection grows more localized (gray dotted line). Venezuela maintained a federal system and corruption control, as noted above, stayed relatively stable, emphasizing the independent effect of candidate selection.

In addition to illustrating our argument, these countries highlight that these relationships hold across different regions and waves of democratization. Among the four, Africa, Europe, and Latin America are represented as are the three waves of democratization.

VII. Conclusions

This paper examines the unstudied puzzle of how unevenness in the development of democracy is reduced with the objective of establishing a theory of the territorial consolidation of democracy. Whereas other studies have focused on explaining the development and persistence of non-democratic enclaves in recently democratized or hybrid regimes, we investigate the factors that help eradicate these enclaves and thus territorially consolidate democracy within countries.

Our findings suggest that greater progress toward territorial consolidation of democracy can be made by strengthening national governments' abilities to carry out their democratic mandates. Our analysis showed that reducing corrupt practices, which distract officials and bureaucrats from these mandates, and shifting toward a unitary system of government and centralized candidate selection, which empower national officials relative to subnational ones, made democracy more even throughout countries. These specific tools for extending control over territory were shown to be more effective than high state capacity generally. The finding that an absence of armed conflict does not promote consolidation is likely more indicative of the fact that it is a relatively rare occurrence rather than that its absence is not an important precondition.

These specific tools for extending national government control over territory were also more helpful to territorial consolidation than socioeconomic or international change. Increased country wealth, education levels, evenness in subnational regions' wealth, and democracy of a country's neighbors did not help move countries toward democratic consolidation. These findings suggest that practitioners should invest in corruption control and some government and party centralization, rather than socioeconomic change, to help consolidate democracy.

Theoretically, this paper helps to revive the idea of democratic consolidation and unpack the "black box" between democratic transition and democratic consolidation. We argue that a key component of democratic consolidation is the emergence of democracy throughout the territory of a country. And, tools, such as corruption control, more unitary government, and more centralized candidate selection, can best facilitate this territorial consolidation of democracy.

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Appendix

Appendix Table A1: Variable Definitions

Dependent Variables

Civil liberties evenness. Does government respect for civil liberties vary across different areas of the country? 0: No. Government officials in most or all areas of the country equally respect (or, alternatively, equally do not respect) civil liberties. 1: Somewhat. Government officials in some areas of the country respect civil liberties somewhat more (or, alternatively, somewhat less) than government officials in other areas of the country. 2: Yes. Government officials in some areas of the country respect civil liberties significantly more (or, alternatively, significantly less) than government officials in other areas of the country. This original scale is reversed so that higher values indicate greater evenness. Source: V-Dem. *v2chryunev*

Subnational election unevenness. Does the freeness and fairness of subnational elections vary across different areas of the country? Subnational elections refer to elections to regional or local offices. 0: No. Subnational elections in most or all areas of the country are equally free and fair (or, alternatively, equally not free and not fair). 1: Somewhat. Subnational elections in some areas of the country are somewhat more free and fair (or, alternatively, somewhat less free and fair) than subnational elections in other areas of the country. 2: Yes. Subnational elections in some areas of the country are significantly more free and fair (or, alternatively, significantly less free and fair) than subnational elections in other areas of the country. This original scale is reversed so that higher values indicate greater evenness. Source: V-Dem. *v2elsnlsff*

Independent Variables

Armed conflict (internal). Did the country experience an internal armed conflict? Coded 1 if true in a given year, 0 otherwise. Source: V-Dem. *e_müinterc*

Centralized candidate selection. How centralized is legislative candidate selection within the parties? 0: National legislative candidates are selected exclusively by national party leaders. 1: National legislative candidate selection is dominated by national party leaders but with some limited influence from local or state level organizations. 2: National legislative candidates are chosen through bargaining across different levels of party organization. 3: National legislative candidates are chosen by regional or state-level organizations, perhaps with some input from local party organizations or constituency groups. 4: National legislative candidates are chosen by a small cadre of local or municipal level actors. 5: National legislative candidates are chosen by constituency groups or direct primaries. This original scale is reversed so that higher values indicate less local control (i.e. more centralized candidate selection). Source: V-Dem. *selection*

Corruption control. How pervasive is political corruption? The index is arrived at by taking the average of (a) public sector corruption index (*v2x_pubcorr*); (b) executive corruption index (*v2x_execorr*); (c) the indicator for legislative corruption (*v2lgercpt*); and (d) the indicator for judicial corruption (*v2jucorrdc*). In other words, these four different government spheres are weighted equally in the resulting index. We replace missing values for countries with no legislature by only taking the average of (a), (b) and (d). The original scale is reserved so that higher values indicate less corruption. Source: V-Dem. *v2x_corr*

Democracy. An index measuring the extent to which the ideal of liberal democracy is achieved.. Source: V-Dem. *v2x_libdem*

Democracy². Quadratic form of Democracy variable. See above.

Diverse regime neighborhood. Average gap (as an absolute value) between the *Democracy* score of the country of interest and that of each of its contiguous neighbors. *demo_neighbors*

Economic diversity. Measures regional inequality within a country using a population weighted coefficient of variance. Source: Lee and Rogers (2017).

Education 15+. The average years of education among citizens older than 15. Source: V-Dem. *e_peaveduc*

Executive corruption control. How routinely do members of the executive, or their agents grant favors in exchange for bribes, kickbacks, or other material inducements, and how often do they steal, embezzle, or misappropriate public funds or other state resources for personal or family use? The index is formed by taking the average of the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for executive bribery (*v2exbribe*) and executive embezzlement (*v2exembez*). Higher values indicate less corruption. Source: V-Dem. *v2x_execorr*

GDP per capita (ln). Gross domestic product per capita. Source: Maddison (2010). *e_migppcln*

Judicial corruption control. How often do individuals or businesses make undocumented extra payments or bribes in order to speed up or delay the process or to obtain a favorable judicial decision? 0: Always. 1: Usually. 2: About half of the time. 3: Not usually. 4: Never. Higher values indicate less corruption. Source: V-Dem. *v2jucorrdc*

Legislature corruption control. Do members of the legislature abuse their position for financial gain? 0: Commonly. Most legislators probably engage in these activities. 1: Often. Many legislators probably engage in these activities. 2: Sometimes. Some legislators probably engage in these activities. 3: Very occasionally. There may be a few legislators who engage in these activities but the vast majority do not. 4: Never, or hardly ever. Higher values indicate less corruption. Source: V-Dem. *v2lgcrrpt*

Public sector corruption control. To what extent do public sector employees grant favors in exchange for bribes, kickbacks, or other material inducements, and how often do they steal, embezzle, or misappropriate public funds or other state resources for personal or family use? The index is formed by taking the average of the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the indicators for public sector bribery (*v2excrptps*) and embezzlement (*v2exthftps*). Higher values indicate less corruption. Source: V-Dem. *v2x_pubcorr*

State capacity index. An index of state capacity based on 24 separate components; calculated using Bayesian latent variable analysis. Source: Hanson and Sigman (2013). *Capacity*

Unitary government*. Measures whether the state is (1) Federal, (2) Hybrid, or (3) Unitary. From Pippa Norris. Source: Quality of Government Standard Dataset 2013 (Teorell et al., 2013). *unitary*

*** These non-V-Dem variables were manually extended by conducting research in order to improve their coverage. Variable names from the paper's dataset appear at the end of each entry.**

Appendix Table A2: Descriptive Statistics

VARIABLES	(1) N	(2) mean	(3) sd	(4) min	(5) max	(6) countries
Civil liberties evenness	18,278	0.561	0.227	0	1	182
Subnational elections evenness	13,950	0.610	0.244	0	1	178
Armed conflict (internal)	14,332	0.0857	0.280	0	1	168
Centralized candidate selection	18,211	0.676	0.187	0	1	182
Corruption control	18,018	0.546	0.281	0.0229	0.995	181
Democracy	17,757	0.248	0.250	0.00244	0.903	182
Diverse regime neighborhood	11,677	0.169	0.125	0	0.756	173
Economic diversity	1,366	0.341	0.225	0.00167	2.490	75
Education 15+	11,640	4.490	3.384	0.0100	13.30	135
Executive corruption control	18,154	0.538	0.306	0	1	182
GDP per capita, logged	11,425	8.356	1.130	4.898	12.30	153
Judicial corruption control	18,113	0.549	0.206	0	1	181
Legislature corruption control	13,403	0.501	0.208	0	1	181
Public sector corruption control	18,128	0.556	0.296	0	1	182
State capacity index	7,272	0.00138	1.003	-2.884	2.510	162
Unitary government	11,342	0.788	0.375	0	1	169