

## Puzzles of (Non-)Democratization: Conditions of Authoritarian Stability

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Over the course of the last thirty years, many countries in the world have been democratized. This started as the third wave of democratization in the Twentieth Century, and despite declining pace, it is still in force. This development has issued in the most comprehensive democratic advancement ever experienced. On the global plane, the average level of democracy has been doubled. Today some 45 percent of the countries could be rated full democracies. But still a majority of countries can be rated more or less authoritarian.

The aim of this project is to examine some cases of enduring authoritarianism, to explore some critical conditions, which we believe contribute to the maintenance of the system. These have to do with different means of controlling potential opposition groups. The project involves five researchers, from different disciplines, at Lund University, and two international researchers. It should be seen as a continuation of an earlier project ("International democratization"), carried out by Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell in conjunction with peace and conflict researchers in Uppsala. So far we have accomplished the following:

1. A data set covering 191 countries 1972-2003 has been established. It in-

volves extensive information about different forms of government, supplemented by a broad array of possible explanatory variables. We believe this is the best data set in this field available today. We endeavor to analyze these data by means of the best statistical techniques at hand

2. Different indices of democracy have been assessed. Employing a set of criteria for internal evaluation, we find that two indices, Polity and Freedom House, outperform their rivals. The best fit is provided when the two indices are combined (Hadenius and Teorell 2005B).

3. Broad selections of determinants of democracy have been tested. We can confirm the impact of several well-known structural factors, such as economic development, religious composition and heterogeneity, natural resources, and diffusion. In addition, we find that peaceful demonstrations enhance the prospects of democratization. Overall, these factors display a poor explanatory capacity in the short-run. This lends support for the actor-oriented "transition paradigm", focused on short-term dynamics. Yet in the long-run, there is much more credit to the structural perspective (Teorell and Hadenius 2007). Besides, the theory of political culture (championed by Inglehart) has been tested. We find that this theory lacks empirical support (Hadenius and Teorell 2005A, Teorell and Hadenius 2006).

4. A new typology and measurement of authoritarian regime types has been constructed. This way, the frequency over time of different authoritarian regimes can be calculated. Using these measures, we have tested the likelihood of authoritarian regimes being democratized. We can show that the main democracy-avenue goes from a dominant to a non-dominant limited multiparty system (which has the strongest likelihood of being

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transformed into a democracy). This is a new finding (Hadenius and Teorell 2007).

To continue this work we want to extend our regime database, and to further explore the explanatory side of the study. As noted, we can establish that the authoritarian multiparty system is the prime stepping-stone to democracy. What is it, then, about these regimes that makes them generally more conducive to democratic development – and what is it that makes some change quite swiftly, whereas others, after all, have been maintained at low levels of democracy for long periods of time? Today we can only speculate about the answers to these questions. Thus, we can distinguish certain patterns of change (or not), but we cannot point out the *causal mechanisms* at work. In order to advance our knowledge in this field we intend to apply two research strategies, which we believe is mutually reinforcing.

### Large-n global analyses

The first strategy involves the extension of the large-n analyses, across time and with global coverage, which has been employed so far. Here we are now looking at the historical impact of elections (back to the 1920s) – to find out if legacies in this field affect the prospects of democratization later in time (which could explain the special role of authoritarian multiparty systems). This work is connected to an international research group, focused on the role of elections in the process of democratization. This group arranges two panels at the 2007 Meeting of the American Political Science Association. A follow-up conference will be held in December at the University of Florida. Our work will be presented on both occasions.

### Case studies of authoritarian stability

The other strategy is to focus on a small number of carefully selected cases, where more intense studies could be pursued. An advantage of this strategy is that it could provide more detailed information about explanatory mechanisms at play. Besides, it is normally possible to account for a much broader set of potentially important conditions. It is for this case study project, primarily, that we are now applying for funding.

As for the selection of cases we want, first of all, to include two countries, which stand out as remarkable outliers in the global analyses (having considerably lower democracy level than predicted) – namely Belarus and Singapore. These are marked, moreover, by a high degree of regime dominance. Opposition groups have been effectively marginalized, and this has been achieved by relatively mild methods. In addition, we would include two other countries. One is Tunisia. This is another example of enduring, effective and fairly smoothly accomplished authoritarian rule, executed in a semi-competitive fashion. At the same time, Tunisia represents another region: North Africa and the Middle East, which generally under-performs democratically. The other state which we would include, for comparative reasons, is Taiwan. In many ways, conditions in Taiwan up to the early 1990s were very similar to those prevailing in today's Singapore, Belarus and Tunisia. But in Taiwan the dominance of the regime was broken. Hence, we would have an interesting counter-example to relate to.

The prime focus in all case studies would be the development – or not – of an effective opposition. In an authoritarian setting, we argue, a successful democratic opening can only be accomplished through action by opposition groups in

pursuit of vital economic and social resources (cf. Howard and Roessler 2006); international pressure can play role, but only as a supplement to domestic opposition forces. In semi-competitive, electoral systems, which we look at, the regime tends to tilt the elections heavily in its favor. Yet, in several instances, fraudulent elections have triggered popular outrage, which (as in the cases of Ukraine and Georgia) has brought the authoritarian government to a fall. But for that to happen, the existence of a potent opposition network, which could coordinate the protests, is required. In Belarus, Singapore and Tunisia, no such protests have been seen. In Taiwan an effective opposition was swiftly organized.

Inspired by an argument suggested by Bellin (2000) we would look at the role of the main actors in the economic field: the business community and organized labor (see also Acemogulu and Robinson 2006). As we read the argument, these actors could be prevented from taking democratic action out of two sets of concerns: (i) lack of autonomy, and (ii) fear. In the first instance, it is a matter of being too economically dependent of the regime – through ownership ties, subsidies, export controls, wage controls, etc. In the latter case actors are concerned about redistributive efforts (in consequence of democratization) that would affect themselves negatively. The existence of grave socio-economic cleavages is held as the main background factor here. Yet, other concerns, such as ethno-linguistic divides and the threat of terrorism, could have impact too. Following Carothers and Ottoway (2005), moreover, we want to examine the measures employed by the regime to control civil society, to make sure that existing popular associations do not join forces with opposition parties. For that, various

repressive instruments could be applied. Besides, the regime could make use of strings of co-optation between state and society; it could also set up its own associations, which take over the activities in the fields in question. The aim of the study is to illustrate concretely how these preventive conditions operate, and how they interact to maintain authoritarian rule. In the case of Taiwan, of course, the task will rather be to find out how these conditions were changed. No such in-depth case study, with a comparative orientation, has been carried out with a focus on multi-party authoritarian regimes.

**Belarus** is today the last dictatorship in Europe. Under President Lukashenka, who came to power in 1994, the regime has systematically censored the media, arrested and harassed independent journalists, driven the opposition underground, and engaged in massive electoral manipulation. In 1999, four major opposition leaders and journalists were assassinated. The opposition is both highly fragmented and tiny – with virtually no support outside the capital (Way 2005). In 2006, Lukashenka was voted to his third term in office in elections in which he effectively blocked all opposition access to media and falsified between a third and half of all votes. At the same time, most observers agree that Lukashenka would have won a free and fair election. The survival of Lukashenka's repressive regime for thirteen years on the borders of Western Europe raises important questions about the sources of authoritarian stability in the post-Cold War era. Why has Lukashenka been able to eliminate regime opponents that have been so robust in neighboring countries such as Poland and Ukraine? What combination of repression, patronage and persuasion has allowed him to retain such broad domestic support? Why

have the international community, including the EU, been so unsuccessful at strengthening regime opposition? Despite the country's geographic proximity and theoretical importance, Belarus has received remarkably little scholarly analysis – outside of a few accounts by area specialists such as Ioffe (2003) and Marples (1999). There has been almost no effort to examine the role of the opposition in Belarus in comparative perspective.

**Singapore** has been ruled by the same party (PAP) for almost 50 years. In the most recent election, 2006, the party gained 82 out of 84 parliamentary seats (as in the two previous elections). A few opposition parties do exist; two are represented in parliament. But their ambitions, and capacities, are modest indeed. As a token of their weakness, they together field candidates in only a minority of the constituencies. The opposition has been criticized for its lack of unity and ambitions (Margolin 2005). Yet, its almost complete marginalization can be seen as the result of a successful regime policy. The governing party dominates the state apparatus completely, and it exercises extensive control in both economic and social life – which is effectively used at election times. Among the more totally authoritarian states in the area (such as China), Singapore has been referred to as an inspiring model. It is rich and well-functioning, and it has found a formula to combine (a degree of) political pluralism and firm regime stability. At the same time, Singapore rejects the well-known modernization-theories: that affluence breeds democracy (Mutalib 2000; Mauzy and Milne 2002). Hence, on many accounts, it is an interesting case to inquire. Not much has been done in previous research to unravel the mechanism that makes this extraordinary case going. Comparative perspec-

tives have been conspicuous by their absence.

**Tunisia** has since independence been a one party authoritarian regime. Since 1989 periodic competitive elections have been held – along with a trampling of citizenship rights, restrictions on media reporting, and the absence of a law-abiding state. Aware of the importance of international legitimacy, the current president (Ben Ali) has initiated reforms in order to "strengthen democracy", but these are just a façade. In the latest elections (2004) Ali's RCD won 80 % of the seats. The five legal opposition parties together got 20 %, which equals the share stipulated by law. From a top-down perspective, this case study sets out to analyze how the regime uses different strategies to split and divide the opposition (Lust-Okar 2004). Ben Ali has used the Islamist threat in particular as a means to divide the legalized political parties and the outlawed Islamist *an-Nah-dah*. From a bottom-up perspective, the project aims to analyze civil society and its' relations with political parties. Langohr (2004) has argued that in the entire region, citizen activism is more oriented towards civil society organizations rather than political parties, which has negative consequences for democratic reform. Tunisia used to have a quite vibrant civil society, especially a strong trade union movement, but it has now been severely weakened due to co-optation and repression (Bellin 2002; Sadiki 2002).

**Taiwan**, under KMT-rule, was held to be a textbook case of a stable, authoritarian development state. However, long-term economic and social dynamics undermined the authoritarian order. A key to the development of a vital opposition in the 1980s and 1990s was the existence of a non-state sanctioned "secret" civil society – referred to in the economic sphere

referred to as “guerrilla capitalists”. It had developed in connection to the needs, related to capital scarcity, of the export-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises (Kuo 1998). Another important background factor, we would argue, was the dramatic expansion of rural industrialization that took place in the 1960s as a result of a successful agricultural transformation that had been underway since the 1930s, and which formed the basis of a business sector that was not directly allied with the KMT or dependent on state support (Andersson and Gunnarsson 2003). In consequence, the large segment of native Taiwanese, who had silently opposed the KMT, was empowered. This transformation rested on the successful application of new productivity enhancing technologies and efficient rural organizations, but ultimately the scale of success was determined by the relatively equal distribution of land and access to productive resources that the pattern of small family farms made up (Gunnarsson 1993). Hence, the successful political development of Taiwan could illustrate how economic and social underpinnings affect the conditions of democratic change.

The empirical inquiries will be carried out through fieldwork in the countries in case. To a large degree, information will be gathered by interviews with representatives of opposition groups, actual as well as potential ones – concentrating on the business community, organized labor and certain issue-groups in civil society. We will also draw on information provided by independent local analysts (such as academics and journalists). In addition, we will gather available statistical information about economic and other conditions of relevance. As for the case of Taiwan the study will also follow up on and utilize

data previously gathered for other purposes by members of the research team (Andersson and Gunnarsson).

The aim of the project is to make a contribution to the front-line scholarly debate on authoritarian rule and conditions of democratization. Our findings will be presented at international conferences, and we will strive to have them published in renowned international journals. We aim, moreover, to give out a joint volume, with a good international publishing house. Here the lessons learnt from the country studies will be compared and summarized.

### Researchers involved

Participants from Lund are (from political science) Professor Axel Hadenius, Associate Professor Jan Teorell and a PhD student, and (from economic history) Professor Christer Gunnarsson and PhD Martin Andersson. Furthermore, Associate Professor Lust-Okar, Yale University, and Assistant Professor Lucan Way, University of Toronto, will be involved. These have both established themselves as internationally well-recognized researchers in the field of study, with a focus on the Middle East and Eastern Europe, respectively.

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