I

Introduction and Theory

1 Introduction

The end of the Cold War posed a fundamental challenge to authoritarian regimes. Single-party and military dictatorships collapsed throughout Africa, post-communist Eurasia, and much of Asia and Latin America in the late 1980s and early 1990s. At the same time, the formal architecture of democracy – particularly multiparty elections – diffused across the globe.

Transitions did not always lead to democracy, however. In much of Africa and the former Soviet Union, and in parts of Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Americas, new regimes combined electoral competition with varying degrees of authoritarianism. Unlike single-party or military dictatorships, post–Cold War regimes in Cambodia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Russia, Serbia, Taiwan, Ukraine, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere were competitive in that opposition forces used democratic institutions to contest vigorously – and, on occasion, successfully – for power. Nevertheless, they were not democratic. Electoral manipulation, unfair media access, abuse of state resources, and varying degrees of harassment and violence skewed the playing field in favor of incumbents. In other words, competition was real but unfair.[1] We characterize such regimes as *competitive authoritarian*. Competitive authoritarian regimes proliferated after the Cold War. By our count, 33 regimes were competitive authoritarian in 1995 – a figure that exceeded the number of full democracies in the developing and post-communist world.[2]

The study of post–Cold War hybrid regimes was initially marked by a pronounced democratizing bias.[3] Viewed through the lens of democratization, hybrid regimes were frequently categorized as flawed, incomplete, or "transitional" democracies.[4] For example, Russia was treated as a case of "protracted"

[1] On post–Cold War hybrid regimes, see Carothers (2002), Ottaway (2003), Schedler (2006a), and the cluster of articles in the April 2002 *Journal of Democracy*.

[2] See, for example, the scoring of Diamond (2002: 30–1) and Schedler (2002b: 47).

[3] For a critique, see Carothers (2002).

[4] See Collier and Levitsky (1997).

democratic transition during the 1990s,[5] and its subsequent autocratic turn was characterized as a "failure to consolidate" democracy.[6] Likewise, Cambodia was described as a "nascent democracy" that was "on the road to democratic consolidation"[7]; Cameroon, Georgia, and Kazakhstan were labeled "democratizers"[8]; and the Central African Republic and Congo-Brazzaville were called "would-be democracies."[9] Transitions that did not lead to democracy were characterized as "stalled" or "flawed." Thus, Zambia was said to be "stuck in transition"[10]; Albania was labeled a case of "permanent transition"[11]; and Haiti was said to be undergoing a "long,"[12] "ongoing,"[13] and even "unending"[14] transition.

Such characterizations are misleading. The assumption that hybrid regimes are (or should be) moving in a democratic direction lacks empirical foundation. Hybrid regimes followed diverse trajectories during the post–Cold War period. Although some of them democratized (e.g., Ghana, Mexico, and Slovakia), most did not. Many regimes either remained stable (e.g., Malaysia and Tanzania) or became increasingly authoritarian (e.g., Belarus and Russia). In other cases, autocratic governments fell but were succeeded by new authoritarians (e.g., Georgia, Madagascar, and Zambia). Indeed, some regimes experienced two or more transitions without democratizing.[15] As of 2010, more than a dozen competitive authoritarian regimes had persisted for 15 years or more.[16] Rather than "partial," "incomplete," or "unconsolidated" democracies, these cases should be conceptualized for what they are: a distinct, nondemocratic regime type. Instead of assuming that such regimes are in transition to democracy, it is more useful to ask why some democratized and others did not. This is the goal of our study.

This book examines the trajectories of all 35 regimes that were or became competitive authoritarian between 1990 and 1995.[17] The study spans five regions, including six countries in the Americas (the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Mexico, Peru, and Nicaragua); six in Eastern Europe (Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia); three in Asia (Cambodia, Malaysia, and Taiwan); six in the former Soviet Union (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine); and 14 in Africa (Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe).

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5 This view of Russia was widely shared in the 1990s. This quote comes from McFaul (1999); see also Colton and Hough (1998); Aron (2000); Nichols (2001).

6 Smyth (2004).

7 Brown and Timberman (1998: 14) and Albritton (2004).

8 Siegle (2004: 21).

9 Chege (2005: 287).

10 Rakner and Svasand (2005).

11 Kramer (2005).

12 Gibbons (1999: 2).

13 Erikson (2004: 294).

14 Fatton (2004).

15 Examples include Georgia, Haiti, Madagascar, and Moldova.

16 These include Armenia, Botswana, Cambodia, Cameroon, Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

17 Thus, cases of competitive authoritarianism that emerged after 1995, such as Nigeria and Venezuela, are not included in the study.

The book asks why some competitive authoritarian regimes democratized during the post–Cold War period, while others remained stable and authoritarian and still others experienced turnover without democratization. Our central argument, which is elaborated in Chapter 2, focuses on two main factors: ties to the West and the strength of governing-party and state organizations. Where linkage to the West was high, competitive authoritarian regimes democratized. Where linkage was low, regime outcomes hinged on incumbents' organizational power. Where state and governing party structures were well organized and cohesive, regimes remained stable and authoritarian; where they were underdeveloped or lacked cohesion, regimes were unstable, although they rarely democratized.

This introductory chapter is organized as follows. The first section defines competitive authoritarianism and presents the case for a new regime type. The second section examines the rise of competitive authoritarianism. It attributes the proliferation of competitive authoritarian regimes to the incentives and constraints created by the post–Cold War international environment. The third section shows how competitive authoritarian regime trajectories diverged after 1990 and provides an overview of the book's central argument and main theoretical contributions.

WHAT IS COMPETITIVE AUTHORITARIANISM?

"Politics . . . is not like football, deserving a level playing field. Here, you try that and you will be roasted."

– Daniel arap Moi, President of Kenya[18]

Competitive authoritarian regimes are civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions exist and are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which incumbents' abuse of the state places them at a significant advantage vis-à-vis their opponents. Such regimes are competitive in that opposition parties use democratic institutions to contest seriously for power, but they are not democratic because the playing field is heavily skewed in favor of incumbents. Competition is thus real but unfair.

Situating the Concept

Competitive authoritarianism is a hybrid regime type, with important characteristics of both democracy and authoritarianism.[19] We employ a "midrange" definition of democracy: one that is procedural but demanding.[20] Following Dahl, scholars have converged around a "procedural minimum" definition of democracy that includes four key attributes: (1) free, fair, and competitive elections;

[18] Quoted in Munene (2001: 24).

[19] For discussions of hybrid regimes, see Karl (1995), Collier and Levitsky (1997), Carothers (2002), Diamond (2002); Levitsky and Way (2002), Schedler (2002a, 2002b, 2006a, 2006b); Ottaway (2003), and Howard and Roessler (2006).

[20] See Diamond (1999: 13–15).

(2) full adult suffrage; (3) broad protection of civil liberties, including freedom of speech, press, and association; and (4) the absence of nonelected "tutelary" authorities (e.g., militaries, monarchies, or religious bodies) that limit elected officials' power to govern.[21] These definitions are essentially "Schumpeterian" in that they center on competitive elections.[22] However, scholars have subsequently "precised" the concept of democracy by making explicit criteria – such as civil liberties and effective power to govern – that are implicitly understood to be part of the overall meaning and which are viewed as necessary for competitive elections to take place.[23]

Although we remain committed to a procedural-minimum conception of democracy, we precise it by adding a fifth attribute: the existence of a reasonably level playing field between incumbents and opposition.[24] Obviously, a degree of incumbent advantage – in the form of patronage jobs, pork-barrel spending, clientelist social policies, and privileged access to media and finance – exists in all democracies. In democracies, however, these advantages do not seriously undermine the opposition's capacity to compete.[25] When incumbent manipulation of state institutions and resources is so excessive and one-sided that it seriously limits political competition, it is incompatible with democracy.[26]

A level playing field is implicit in most conceptualizations of democracy. Indeed, many characteristics of an uneven playing field could be subsumed into the dimensions of "free and fair elections" and "civil liberties." However, there are at least two reasons to treat this attribute as a separate dimension. First, some aspects of an uneven playing field – such as skewed access to media and finance – have a major impact between elections and are thus often missed in evaluations of whether elections are free and fair. Second, some government actions that skew the playing field may not be viewed as civil-liberties violations. For example, whereas closing down a newspaper is a clear violation of civil liberties, de facto governing-party control of the private media – achieved through informal proxy or patronage arrangements – is not. Likewise, illicit government–business ties that create vast resource disparities vis-à-vis the opposition are not civil-liberties violations per se. Attention to the slope of the playing field thus highlights how regimes may be undemocratic even in the absence of overt fraud or civil-liberties violations.

It is important to distinguish between competitive and noncompetitive authoritarianism. We define *full authoritarianism* as a regime in which no viable

[21] See Dahl (1971), Huntington (1991: 5–13), Schmitter and Karl (1991), Collier and Levitsky (1997), Diamond (1999: 7–15), and Mainwaring, Brinks, and Pérez-Liñan (2001). Other scholars, including Przeworski and his collaborators (Alvarez et al. 1996; Przeworski et al. 2000), employ a more minimalist definition that centers on contested elections and turnover.

[22] See Schumpter (1947) and Huntington (1989).

[23] On conceptual precising, see Collier and Levitsky (1997).

[24] See Levitsky and Way (2010).

[25] Thus, although district-level competition in U.S. congressional elections is marked by an uneven playing field, incumbents of both major parties enjoy these advantages.

[26] Greene (2007) describes this as "hyper-incumbency advantage."

channels exist for opposition to contest legally for executive power.[27] This category includes closed regimes in which national-level democratic institutions do not exist (e.g., China, Cuba, and Saudi Arabia) and hegemonic regimes in which formal democratic institutions exist on paper but are reduced to façade status in practice.[28] In hegemonic regimes, elections are so marred by repression, candidate restrictions, and/or fraud that there is no uncertainty about their outcome. Much of the opposition is forced underground and leading critics are often imprisoned or exiled. Thus, in post–Cold War Egypt, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, elections served functions (e.g., a means of enhancing regime legitimacy, generating information, or distributing patronage) other than determining who governed[29]; opponents did not view them as viable means to achieve power.

Competitive authoritarian regimes are distinguished from full authoritarianism in that constitutional channels exist through which opposition groups compete in a meaningful way for executive power. Elections are held regularly and opposition parties are not legally barred from contesting them. Opposition activity is above ground: Opposition parties can open offices, recruit candidates, and organize campaigns, and politicians are rarely exiled or imprisoned. In short, democratic procedures are sufficiently meaningful for opposition groups to take them seriously as arenas through which to contest for power.

What distinguishes competitive authoritarianism from democracy, however, is the fact that incumbent abuse of the state violates at least one of three defining attributes of democracy: (1) free elections, (2) broad protection of civil liberties, and (3) a reasonably level playing field.[30]

Elections

In democracies, elections are *free*, in the sense that there is virtually no fraud or intimidation of voters, and *fair*, in the sense that opposition parties campaign on relatively even footing: They are not subject to repression or harassment, and they are not systematically denied access to the media or other critical resources.[31] In fully authoritarian regimes, multiparty elections are either nonexistent or noncompetitive. Elections may be considered noncompetitive when (1) major candidates are formally barred or effectively excluded on a regular basis[32]; (2) repression or legal controls effectively prevent opposition parties from running public campaigns; or (3) fraud is so massive that there is virtually no observable relationship between voter preferences and official electoral results.

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[27] Our category of full authoritarianism thus includes a wide range of authoritarian regimes, including monarchies, sultanistic regimes, bureaucratic authoritarianism, and single-party regimes. The differences among these regimes are vast and of considerable theoretical importance (Snyder 2006). For the purposes of this study, however, all of them lack significant legal contestation for power.

[28] We borrow the distinction between closed and hegemonic regimes from Schedler (2002a). See also Howard and Roessler (2006).

[29] See Lust-Okur (2007) and Blaydes (forthcoming).

[30] For a full operationalization of competitive authoritarianism, see Appendix I.

[31] See Elklit and Svensson (1997).

[32] Effective exclusion occurs when physical repression is so severe or the legal, administrative, and financial obstacles are so onerous that most viable candidates are deterred from running.

Competitive authoritarian regimes fall in between these extremes. On the one hand, elections are competitive in that major opposition candidates are rarely excluded, opposition parties are able to campaign publicly, and there is no massive fraud. On the other hand, elections are often unfree and almost always unfair. In some cases, elections are marred by the manipulation of voter lists, ballot-box stuffing, and/or falsification of results (e.g., the Dominican Republic in 1994 and Ukraine in 2004). Although such fraud may alter the outcome of elections, it is not so severe as to make the act of voting meaningless.[33] Elections also may be marred by intimidation of opposition activists, voters, and poll watchers, and even the establishment of opposition "no-go" areas (e.g., Cambodia and Zimbabwe). However, such abuse is not sufficiently severe or systematic to prevent the opposition from running a national campaign. In other cases (e.g., Botswana), voting and vote-counting processes are reasonably clean but an uneven playing field renders the overall electoral process manifestly unfair. In these cases, unequal access to finance and the media as well as incumbent abuse of state institutions make elections unfair even in the absence of violence or fraud.[34] Thus, even though Mexico's 1994 election was technically clean, skewed access to resources and media led one scholar to compare it to a "soccer match where the goalposts were of different heights and breadths and where one team included 11 players plus the umpire and the other a mere six or seven players."[35]

Civil Liberties

In democracies, civil liberties – including the rights of free speech, press, and association – are protected. Although these rights may be violated periodically, such violations are infrequent and do not seriously hinder the opposition's capacity to challenge incumbents. In fully authoritarian regimes, basic civil liberties are often violated so systematically that opposition parties, civic groups, and the media are not even minimally protected (e.g., Egypt and Uzbekistan). As a result, much opposition activity takes place underground or in exile.

In competitive authoritarian regimes, civil liberties are nominally guaranteed and at least partially respected. Independent media exist and civic and opposition groups operate above ground: Most of the time, they can meet freely and even protest against the government. Yet, civil liberties are frequently violated. Opposition politicians, independent judges, journalists, human-rights activists, and other government critics are subject to harassment, arrest, and – in some cases – violent attack. Independent media are frequently threatened, attacked, and – in some cases – suspended or closed. In some regimes, overt repression – including the arrest of opposition leaders, the killing of opposition activists, and the violent repression of protest – is widespread, pushing regimes to the brink of full authoritarianism.[36]

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[33] For example, vote fraud in Serbia in 2000 and Ukraine in 2004 accounted for about 10% of the vote, which was large enough to alter the results but small enough to make voting meaningful.

[34] See Greene (2007) and Levitsky and Way (2010).

[35] Castañeda (1995: 131).

[36] Examples include Cambodia, Zimbabwe, and Russia under Putin.

More frequently, assaults on civil liberties take more subtle forms, including "legal repression," or the discretionary use of legal instruments – such as tax, libel, or defamation laws – to punish opponents. Although such repression may involve the technically correct application of the law, its use is selective and partisan rather than universal. An example is Putin's Russia. After Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the owner of Russia's largest oil company, began to finance opposition groups in 2003, the government jailed him on tax charges and seized his company's property and stock.[37] On a more modest scale, the Fujimori government in Peru "perfected the technique of 'using the law to trample the law,'"[38] transforming judicial and tax agencies into "a shield for friends of the regime and a weapon against its enemies."[39] Rivals – often internal ones – also may be prosecuted for corruption. In Malaysia, Mahathir Mohammad used corruption and sodomy charges to imprison his chief rival, Anwar Ibrahim; in Malawi, President Bingu wa Mutharika had his chief rival, ex-President Bakili Muluzi, arrested on corruption charges; and in Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma used corruption charges to derail Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko's presidential candidacy.[40]

Perhaps the most widespread form of "legal" repression is the use of libel or defamation laws against journalists, editors, and media outlets. Thus, in Malaysia, the Mahathir government entered into a "suing craze" in the wake of the 1998–1999 political crisis, making widespread use of defamation suits to silence critical reporting[41]; in Cameroon, more than 50 journalists were prosecuted for libel in the late 1990s and several newspapers were forced to close due to heavy fines[42]; and in Croatia, independent newspapers were hit by more than 230 government-sponsored libel suits as of 1997.[43] In some cases (e.g., Belarus, Cambodia, and Russia), the repeated use of costly lawsuits led to the disappearance of many independent media outlets. In other cases (e.g., Malaysia and Ukraine), the threat of legal action led to widespread self-censorship.

Although "legal" and other repression under competitive authoritarianism is not severe enough to force the opposition underground or into exile, it clearly exceeds what is permissible in a democracy. By raising the cost of opposition activity (thereby convincing all but the boldest activists to remain on the sidelines) and critical media coverage (thereby encouraging self-censorship), even intermittent civil-liberties violations can seriously hinder the opposition's capacity to organize and challenge the government.

An Uneven Playing Field

Finally, nearly all competitive authoritarian regimes are characterized by an uneven playing field.[44] Obviously, a degree of incumbent advantage exists in all democracies. Indeed, many new democracies in Eastern Europe and

[37] Goldman (2004, 2008).
[38] Youngers (2000a: 68).
[39] Durand (2003: 459, 463).
[40] Darden (2001).
[41] Felker (2000: 51).
[42] Fombad (2003: 324).
[43] Pusic (1998).
[44] For discussions of uneven playing fields in hybrid regimes, see Schedler (2002a, 2002b), Mozaffar and Schedler (2002), Ottaway (2003: 138–56), Greene (2007), and Levitsky and Way (2010).

Latin America are characterized by extensive clientelism and politicization of state bureaucracies. To distinguish such cases from those of unfair competition, we set a high threshold for unfairness. We consider the playing field uneven when (1) state institutions are widely abused for partisan ends, (2) incumbents are systematically favored at the expense of the opposition, *and* (3) the opposition's ability to organize and compete in elections is seriously handicapped. Three aspects of an uneven playing field are of particular importance: access to resources, media, and the law.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES. Access to resources is uneven when incumbents use the state to create or maintain resource disparities that seriously hinder the opposition's ability to compete.[45] This may occur in several ways. First, incumbents may make direct partisan use of state resources. In a few cases, this funding is legal. In Guyana and Zimbabwe in the 1980s, governing parties were financed by special public ministries and/or official state subventions to the exclusion of other parties. More frequently, state finance is illicit. In Mexico, for example, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) reportedly drew $1 billion in illicit state finance during the early 1990s[46]; in Russia, tens of millions of dollars in government bonds were diverted to Yeltsin's 1996 reelection campaign.[47] Incumbents also may systematically deploy the machinery of the state – for example, state buildings, vehicles, and communications infrastructure – for electoral campaigns, and public employees and security forces may be mobilized en masse on behalf of the governing party. In former Soviet states such as Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine, this mobilization included not only low-level bureaucrats but also teachers, doctors, and other professionals.[48] In underdeveloped countries with weak private sectors, such abuse can create vast resource advantages.

Incumbents also may use the state to monopolize access to private-sector finance. Governing parties may use discretionary control over credit, licenses, state contracts, and other resources to enrich themselves via party-owned enterprises (e.g., Taiwan), benefit crony- or proxy-owned firms that then contribute money back into party coffers (e.g., Malaysia), or corner the market in private-sector donations (e.g., Mexico and Russia). In Malaysia and Taiwan, for example, governing parties used control of the state to build multibillion-dollar business empires.[49] The state also may be used to deny opposition parties access to resources. In Ukraine, for example, businesses that financed the opposition were routinely targeted by tax authorities.[50] In Ghana, entrepreneurs who financed

[45] For a sophisticated discussion of how incumbent abuse of state resources shapes party competition, see Greene (2007).

[46] Oppenheimer (1996: 88).

[47] Hoffman (2003: 348–51).

[48] See Allina-Pisano (2005) and Way (2005b). In Guyana and Peru, soldiers were mobilized for electoral campaigns; in Serbia, the security apparatus provided logistical support for the "anti-bureaucratic revolution" movement that helped Milošević consolidate power (LeBor 2002: 200–201).

[49] On Malaysia, see Gomez (1990, 1991) and Searle (1999); on Taiwan, see Guo, Huang, and Chiang (1998) and Fields (2002). Similarly, in Mexico, the PRI raised hundreds of millions of dollars in donations from business magnates who had benefited from government contracts, licenses, or favorable treatment in the privatization process (Oppenheimer 1996; Philip 1999).

[50] As a former head of Ukraine's security services stated, "If [your business is] loyal to the authorities, they will ignore or overlook

opposition parties "were blacklisted, denied government contracts, and [had] their businesses openly sabotaged"[51]; in Cambodia, the opposition Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) was "starved for funds by a business community told by [the government] that financing SRP was committing economic suicide."[52]

In these cases, resource disparities far exceeded anything seen in established democracies. In Taiwan, the $200 million to $500 million in annual profits generated by the $4.5 billion business empire of the Kuomintang (KMT) gave the party a financial base that was "unheard of . . . in any representative democracy,"[53] which allowed it to outspend opponents by more than 50-to-1 during elections.[54] In Mexico, the PRI admitted to spending 13 times more than the two major opposition parties *combined* during the 1994 election, and some observers claim that the ratio may have been 20-to-1.[55] In Russia, the Yeltsin campaign spent between 30 and 150 times the amount permitted the opposition in 1996.[56]

ACCESS TO MEDIA. When opposition parties lack access to media that reaches most of the population, there is no possibility of fair competition. Media access may be denied in several ways. Frequently, the most important disparities exist in access to broadcast media, combined with biased and partisan coverage. In many competitive authoritarian regimes, the state controls all television and most – if not all – radio broadcasting. Although independent newspapers and magazines may circulate freely, they generally reach only a small urban elite. In such cases, if radio and television are state-run and state-run channels are biased in favor of the governing party, opposition forces are effectively denied access to the media. Thus, even after the Banda dictatorship in Malawi gave way to elected President Bakili Muluzi, incumbent control of the media was such that one journalist complained, "Before it was Banda, Banda, Banda – every day. Now it is Muluzi, Muluzi, Muluzi."[57]

In other cases, private media is widespread but major media outlets are linked to the governing party – via proxy ownership, patronage, and other illicit means. In Ukraine, for example, President Kuchma controlled television coverage through an informal network of private media entities. The head of the Presidential Administration, who also owned the popular 1+1 television station, issued orders ("temnyki") to all major stations dictating how events should be covered.[58] In Malaysia, all major private newspapers and private television stations were controlled by individuals or firms linked to the governing *Barisan Nasional* (BN).[59] In Alberto Fujimori's Peru, private television stations signed "contracts" with the state intelligence service in which they received up to $1.5 million a month in exchange for limiting coverage of opposition parties.[60]

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anything. If you are disloyal, you or your business will be quashed immediately" (Way 2005b: 134).

[51] Oquaye (1998: 109).

[52] Heder (2005: 118).

[53] Chu (1992: 150); see also Fields (2002: 127).

[54] Wu (1995: 79).

[55] Oppenheimer (1996: 110); Bruhn (1997: 283–4).

[56] McFaul (1997: 13).

[57] *Africa Report*, November–December 1994, 57.

[58] Human Rights Watch (2003c); Kipiani (2005).

[59] Nain (2002); Rodan (2004: 25–6).

[60] Bowen and Holligan (2003: 360–1).

BIASED REFEREES: UNEVEN ACCESS TO THE LAW. In many competitive authoritarian regimes, incumbents pack judiciaries, electoral commissions, and other nominally independent arbiters and manipulate them via blackmail, bribery, and/or intimidation. As a result, legal and other state agencies that are designed to act as referees rule systematically in favor of incumbents. This allows incumbents to engage in illicit acts – including violations of democratic procedure – with impunity. It also ensures that critical electoral, legal, or other disputes will be resolved in the incumbent's favor. Thus, in Malaysia, a packed judiciary ensured that a schism in the ruling United Malays National Organization (UMNO) was resolved in Prime Minister Mahathir's favor in 1988; a decade later, it allowed Mahathir to imprison his main rival, Anwar Ibrahim, on dubious charges. In Peru, Fujimori's control over judicial and electoral authorities ensured the legalization of a constitutionally dubious third term in 2000. In Belarus in 1996, the constitutional court terminated an impeachment process launched by parliamentary opponents of President Lukashenka, which facilitated Lukashenka's consolidation of autocratic rule. In Venezuela, the electoral authorities' 2003 ruling invalidating signatures collected for a recall referendum against President Hugo Chavez delayed the referendum long enough for Chavez to rebuild public support and survive the referendum.

Competition without Democracy: Contestation and Uncertainty in Nondemocracies

Table 1.1 summarizes the major differences among democratic, full authoritarian, and competitive authoritarian regimes (for a full operationalization, see Appendix I). As suggested in the table, a distinguishing feature of competitive authoritarianism is *unfair competition*. Whereas full authoritarian regimes are characterized by the absence of competition (and, hence, of uncertainty) and democracy is characterized by fair competition, competitive authoritarianism is marked by competition that is real but unfair. Opposition parties are legal, operate aboveground, and compete seriously in elections. However, they are subject to surveillance, harassment, and occasional violence; their access to media and finance is limited; electoral and judicial institutions are politicized and deployed against them; and elections are often marred by fraud, intimidation, and other abuse. Yet such unfairness does not preclude serious contestation – or even occasional opposition victories.[61] Stated another way, whereas officials in full authoritarian regimes can rest easy on the eve of elections because neither they nor opposition leaders expect anything but an incumbent victory, incumbents in competitive authoritarian regimes cannot. Government officials fear a possible opposition victory (and must work hard to thwart it), and opposition leaders believe they have at least some chance of victory. In competitive authoritarian regimes, incumbents are forced to sweat.

[61] Examples include opposition electoral victories in Nicaragua in 1990; Zambia in 1991; Guyana in 1992; Belarus, Malawi, and Ukraine in 1994; Albania in 1997; Croatia in 2000; and Kenya in 2002. Indeed, even violent regimes, such as Cambodia, Serbia, and Zimbabwe, may be quite competitive.

TABLE 1.1. *Comparing Democratic, Competitive Authoritarian, and Closed Regimes*

	Democracy	Competitive Authoritarianism	Full Authoritarianism
Status of Core Democratic Institutions (Elections, Civil Liberties)	Systematically respected. Widely viewed as only route to power.	Exist and are meaningful, but systematically violated in favor of incumbent. Widely viewed as primary route to power.	Nonexistent or reduced to façade status. Not viewed as a viable route to power.
Status of Opposition	Competes on more or less equal footing with incumbent.	Major opposition is legal and can compete openly, but is significantly disadvantaged by incumbent abuse.	Major opposition banned, or largely underground or in exile.
Level of Uncertainty	High	Lower than democracy but higher than full authoritarianism.	Low

What this suggests is that uncertainty and even incumbent turnover are not defining features of democracy. Influential scholars, particularly Adam Przeworski and his collaborators, have argued that uncertainty of outcomes and the possibility of electoral turnover are what distinguish democratic from nondemocratic regimes.[62] Such a conceptualization ignores the real possibility that serious violation of democratic procedure may occur in competitive elections. At times during the 1990–2008 period, elections in Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Cameroon, Cambodia, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Russia, Ukraine, Zambia, and Zimbabwe were characterized by considerable uncertainty and, in some cases, incumbent defeat. However, none of them was democratic and some were not even remotely so. We therefore must be able to conceptualize regimes that are sufficiently competitive to generate real uncertainty (and even turnover) but which fall short of democracy. As this book demonstrates, such regimes were widespread during the post–Cold War period.

Alternative Conceptualizations of Hybrid Regimes: Do We Need a New Subtype?

Scholars should create new regime subtypes with caution. Studies of democratization in the 1980s and 1990s generated hundreds of new subtypes of democracy.[63] As Collier and Levitsky warned, such an "excessive proliferation of new terms and

[62] See Przeworski (1986, 1991) and Alvarez et al. (1996); see also McFaul and Petrov (2004: 5–6). Przeworski famously characterized democracy as a "system in which parties lose elections" (1991: 10).

[63] Collier and Levitsky (1997).

concepts" is likely to result in "conceptual confusion."[64] Similarly, Richard Snyder has called for a "conservative bias with regard to concept formation." Rather than fall prey to the "naturalists' temptation to proclaim the discovery, naming, and classification of new political animals," Snyder argues, scholars should "carefully evaluate the null hypothesis that the political phenomena of interest . . . are actually *not* sufficiently novel to warrant new categories and labels."[65]

We contend that competitive authoritarianism *is* a new phenomenon and that no existing term adequately captures it.[66] First, these regimes routinely proved difficult for scholars to categorize during the post–Cold War period. For example, the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua was described as "a hybrid perhaps unique in the annals of political science"[67]; Fujimori's Peru was said to be a "new kind of hybrid authoritarian regime"[68]; and the PRI regime in Mexico was labeled a "hybrid, part-free, part authoritarian system" that does "not conform to classical typologies."[69]

Which existing regime categories might be appropriate for these cases? One scholarly response has been simply to label them as democracies. Regimes in Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Peru, Russia, Ukraine, and Zambia were routinely labeled democracies during the 1990s. Even extreme cases such as Belarus, Cambodia, Haiti, and Russia under Putin occasionally earned a democratic label.[70] The problem with such a strategy is straightforward: Regimes with serious electoral irregularities and/or civil-liberties violations do not meet procedural minimum standards for democracy. To label such regimes democracies is to stretch the concept virtually beyond recognition.

Another conceptual strategy has been to use generic intermediate categories, such as hybrid regime,[71] semi-democracy,[72] or Freedom House's "partly free,"[73] for cases that fall between democracy and full authoritarianism. The problem with such categories is that because democracy is multidimensional, there are multiple ways to be partially democratic. Competitive authoritarianism is only one of several hybrid regime types. Others include (1) *constitutional oligarchies* or *exclusive republics*, which possess the basic features of democracy but deny suffrage to a major segment of the adult population (e.g., Estonia and Latvia in the early 1990s)[74]; (2) *tutelary regimes*, in which elections are competitive but the power of elected governments is constrained by nonelected religious (e.g., Iran), military (e.g., Guatemala and Pakistan), or monarchic (e.g., Nepal in the 1990s) authorities; and (3) *restricted* or *semi-competitive* democracies, in which elections are free but a major party is banned (e.g., Argentina in 1957–1966 and Turkey in

[64] Collier and Levitsky (1997: 451). For a similar critique, see Armony and Schamis (2005).
[65] Snyder (2006: 227).
[66] See Diamond (1999: 25; 2002), Carothers (2000a, 2002), Linz (2000: 33–4), and Schedler (2002b, 2006b).
[67] Leiken (2003: 183).
[68] Burt (1998: 38).
[69] Cornelius (1996: 25).
[70] On Belarus, see Korosteleva (2006); on Cambodia, see Brown and Timberman (1998: 14) and Langran (2001: 156); on Haiti, see Gibbons (1999: 2) and Shamsie (2004: 1097); on Russia, see Nichols (2001: v–vii).
[71] Karl (1995).
[72] Mainwaring, Brinks, and Pérez-Liñan (2001).
[73] See Freedom House (http://www.freedomhouse.org).
[74] See Roeder (1994).

the 1990s). The differences among these regimes – and between them and competitive authoritarianism – are obscured by categories such as semi-democratic or partly free. For example, El Salvador, Latvia, and Ukraine were classified by Freedom House as partly free – with a combined political and civil-liberties score of 6 – in 1992–1993.[75] Yet, whereas in Latvia the main nondemocratic feature was the denial of citizenship rights to people of Russian descent, in El Salvador it was the military's tutelary power and human-rights violations. Ukraine possessed full citizenship and civilian control over the military, but it was competitive authoritarian. "Semi-democratic" and "partly free" are thus residual categories that reveal little about regimes other than what they are not.

Another strategy is to classify hybrid regimes as subtypes of democracy.[76] For example, Larry Diamond used the term *electoral democracy* to refer to cases in which reasonably fair elections coexist with a weak rule of law and uneven protection of human and civil rights, such as in Colombia, Brazil, India, and the Philippines.[77] Similarly, Fareed Zakaria applied the term *illiberal democracy* to "democratically elected regimes" that "routinely ignore constitutional limits on their power and [deprive] their citizens of basic rights and freedoms."[78] Subtypes such as "defective democracy," "managed democracy," and "quasi-democracy" are employed in a similar manner.[79] However, the value of such labels is questionable. As Andreas Schedler argued, many hybrid regimes:

> . . . violate minimal democratic norms so severely that it makes no sense to classify them as democracies, however qualified. These electoral regimes . . . are instances of authoritarian rule. The time has come to abandon misleading labels and to take their nondemocratic nature seriously.[80]

Similarly, Juan Linz argued that although scholars "might positively value some aspects" of hybrid regimes, they "should be clear that they are not democracies (even using minimum standards)." To avoid confusion, Linz proposed "the addition of adjectives to 'authoritarianism' rather than to 'democracy.'"[81]

Competitive authoritarianism does not easily fit existing subtypes of authoritarianism (e.g., "post-totalitarianism" and "bureaucratic authoritarianism") in large part because these regimes are noncompetitive. As Diamond noted, none of Linz's seven principal types of authoritarianism even remotely resembles competitive authoritarianism – and "for good reason. This type of hybrid regime, which is now so common, is very much a product of the contemporary world."[82]

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[75] See Freedom House (http://www.freedomhouse.org).

[76] See Collier and Levitsky (1997).

[77] Diamond (1999: 9–10; 2002: 27–31). Although Diamond (2002: 27–9) considers such regimes less democratic than "liberal democracies," he treats them as fully competitive – and therefore distinct from competitive and other authoritarian regimes.

[78] Zakaria (1997: 22–3). Zakaria applies this term loosely, including everything from democracies (Argentina) to closed regimes (Kazakhstan) to collapsed states (Sierra Leone).

[79] On managed democracy, see Colton and McFaul (2003); Balzer (2003) uses the term managed pluralism; on quasi-democracy, see Villalón (1994). On defective democracy, see Croissant and Merkel (2004).

[80] Schedler (2002b: 36).

[81] Linz (2000: 34). See also Brown (2005: 2).

[82] Diamond (2002: 24). See also Linz (2000: 33–4).

Newer subtypes of authoritarianism, such as electoral authoritarianism and semi-authoritarianism, are closer to ours in that they refer to nondemocracies with multiparty elections.[83] However, they have generally been defined broadly to refer to *all* authoritarian regimes with multiparty elections – both competitive and hegemonic.[84] Thus, the concept of electoral authoritarianism encompasses both competitive authoritarian regimes and noncompetitive regimes such as those in Egypt, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

Our conceptualization is more restrictive. We limit the category to regimes in which opposition forces use democratic institutions to contest seriously for executive power. Such a narrow definition is not a mere exercise in conceptual hair-splitting. Competitiveness is a substantively important regime characteristic that affects the behavior and expectations of political actors. As we argue later in this chapter, governments and opposition parties in competitive authoritarian regimes face a set of opportunities and constraints that do not exist in either democracies or other forms of authoritarian rule. Furthermore, competitive authoritarianism is widespread. More than 40 countries – including Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Serbia, Taiwan, and Venezuela – were competitive authoritarian at some point after 1989. Indeed, competitive authoritarian regimes easily outnumbered democracies in Africa and the former Soviet Union. Thus, the conceptual space we are carving out – that of competitive nondemocracies – may be narrow, but it is both densely populated and substantively important.

THE RISE OF COMPETITIVE AUTHORITARIANISM

"[Why liberalize?] When you see your neighbor being shaved, you should wet your beard. Otherwise you could get a rough shave."

– Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania[85]

"Don't you know how these Westerners are? They will make a fuss [about electoral fraud] for a few days, and then they will calm down and life will go on as usual."

– Eduard Shevardnadze, President of Georgia[86]

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[83] Schedler (2006b: 3) defines electoral authoritarianism as a regime that is "minimally pluralistic," "minimally competitive," and "minimally open" but which "violate[s] the liberal-democratic principles of freedom and fairness so profoundly and systematically as to render elections instruments of authoritarian rule." Thus, elections are "minimally competitive" but opposition parties are "denied victory" (2006b: 3). On semi-authoritarianism, see Carothers (2000a) and Ottaway (2003).

[84] For example, Schedler (2002b: 47) distinguishes between "competitive" electoral authoritarian regimes, in which the electoral arena is a "genuine battleground in the struggle for power," and "hegemonic" electoral authoritarian regimes, in which elections are "little more than a theatrical setting," but he finds it useful to "collapse both into one broad category." See also Ottaway (2003) on semi-authoritarianism. Hyde and Marinov (2009) similarly conceptualize competitive authoritarianism to include both competitive and noncompetitive regimes.

[85] Quoted in Morna (1990: 24).

[86] Quoted in Karumidze and Wertsch (2005: 24).

Competitive authoritarianism is a post–Cold War phenomenon. Although a few competitive authoritarian regimes existed during the interwar and Cold War periods,[87] they proliferated after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This was not a coincidence. Beginning in the late 1980s, major changes in the international environment undermined the stability of many closed regimes and encouraged the rise of electoral ones. First, the end of the Cold War led to a withdrawal of external support for many superpower-sponsored dictatorships. Soviet-backed Leninist regimes and U.S.-backed anti-communist regimes faced a precipitous decline in external military and economic assistance. In many cases, the elimination of Cold War subsidies coincided with mounting economic crises, which undermined the stability of many autocracies. States became bankrupt, patronage resources disappeared, and – in many cases – coercive apparatuses began to disintegrate, leaving autocrats with little choice but to liberalize or abandon power.[88]

The collapse of the Soviet Union also led to a marked shift in the global balance of power, in which the West – particularly the United States – emerged as the dominant center of economic and military power. In the post–Cold War era, as in interwar Eastern Europe,[89] the disappearance of a military, economic, and ideological alternative to the liberal West had a major impact on peripheral states. For example, it created an "almost universal wish to imitate a way of life associated with the liberal capitalist democracies of the core regimes,"[90] which encouraged the diffusion of Western democratic models.[91] Yet diffusion was also rooted in an instrumental logic: The primary sources of external assistance were now located almost exclusively in the West. Effectively "[r]eading the handwriting on the (Berlin) wall," many autocrats adopted formal democratic institutions in an effort to "position their countries favorably in the international contest for scarce development resources."[92]

The end of the Cold War was also accompanied by a major shift in Western foreign policy.[93] With the disappearance of the Soviet threat, the United States and other Western powers stepped up efforts to encourage and defend democracy through a combination of external assistance, military and diplomatic pressure, and unprecedented political conditionality.[94] In 1990, the United States, United

[87] In interwar Eastern Europe, competitive authoritarian regimes emerged in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania. During the Cold War period, cases of competitive authoritarianism included Argentina under Perón (1946–1955); Zambia in the late 1960s; the Dominican Republic during the 1970s; Senegal after 1976; and postcolonial Guyana, Malaysia, and Zimbabwe.

[88] See Herbst (1994) and Joseph (1997). Outside of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, regimes that were particularly hard hit by the end of the Cold War include those in Benin, Cambodia, Guyana, Haiti, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Nicaragua.

[89] See Janos (2000).

[90] Whitehead (1996b: 21).

[91] See Sharman and Kanet (2000), Schmitz and Sell (1999), and Kopstein and Reilly (2000).

[92] Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 182–3). See also Joseph (1999a).

[93] See Carothers (1991, 1999), Diamond (1992), Burnell (2000a), von Hippel (2000), and Schraeder (2002a).

[94] U.S. funding for democracy-assistance programs "took off" (Burnell 2000b: 39–44), increasing from near zero in the early 1980s to $700 million at the turn of the century (Carothers 1999: 6; Burnell 2000b: 49).

Kingdom, and France announced that they would link future economic assistance to democratization and human rights. Western governments and multilateral institutions began to condition loans and assistance on the holding of elections and respect for human rights.[95] Although it was never applied consistently, the "new political conditionality" induced many autocrats to hold multiparty elections.[96]

Political conditionality was accompanied by efforts to create permanent international legal frameworks for the collective defense of democracy.[97] Thus, the 1990s saw the emergence of an "international architecture of collective institutions and formal agreements enshrining both the principles of democracy and human rights."[98] These efforts went farthest in Eastern Europe, where full democracy was a requirement for European Union (EU) membership.[99] However, they also were seen in the Americas, where the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted new mechanisms for the collective defense of democracy.[100]

Finally, the post–Cold War period saw the emergence of a transnational infrastructure of organizations – including international party foundations, election-monitoring agencies, and a plethora of international organizations (IOs) and nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) – that were committed to the promotion of human rights and democracy.[101] Strengthened by new information technologies such as the Internet, transnational human-rights and democracy networks drew international attention to human-rights abuses, lobbied Western governments to take action against abusive governments, and helped protect and empower domestic opposition groups.[102] Due to the presence of these networks, rights abuses frequently triggered a "boomerang effect:" they were widely reported by international media and human rights groups, which often led Western powers to take punitive action against violating states.[103] At the same time, the growing number and sophistication of international election-observer missions helped call international attention to fraudulent elections, which deterred an increasing number of governments from attempting fraud.[104]

These changes in the international environment raised the external cost of authoritarianism and created incentives for elites in developing and post-communist countries to adopt the formal architecture of Western-style democracy, which – at a minimum – entailed multiparty elections. The change

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95 See Nelson and Eglinton (1992) and Stokke (1995a).

96 The term *new political conditionality* is taken from Callaghy (1993: 477). See also Clinkenbeard (2004).

97 Farer (1996a), Schraeder (2002b), and Pevehouse (2005).

98 Diamond (1995: 38).

99 Pridham (2005) and Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005).

100 See Farer (1993, 1996b) and Halperin (1993).

101 See Sikkink (1993), Keck and Sikkink (1998), Middlebrook (1998), Carothers (1997b, 1999, 2000b), Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink (1999), Burnell (2000b), Florini (2000), and Ottaway and Carothers (2000).

102 Keck and Sikkink (1998) and Risse and Sikkink (1999).

103 Keck and Sikkink (1998: 12–13).

104 See McCoy, Garber, and Pastor (1991), Rosenau and Fagen (1994), Carothers (1997b), Chand (1997), and Middlebrook (1998).

was particularly striking in sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of *de jure* single-party regimes fell from 29 in 1989 to zero in 1994,[105] and in post-communist Eurasia, where only one *de jure* one-party regime (Turkmenistan) endured through the 1990s.

Yet if the post–Cold War international environment undermined autocracies and encouraged the diffusion of multiparty elections, it did not necessarily bring democracy. External democratizing pressure was limited in several ways. First, it was applied selectively and inconsistently, with important countries and regions (e.g., China and the Middle East) largely escaping pressure.[106] Second, external pressure was often superficial. In much of the world, Western democracy promotion was "electoralist" in that it focused almost exclusively on multiparty elections while often ignoring dimensions such as civil liberties and a level playing field.[107] As Zakaria observed:

> In the end . . . elections trump everything. If a country holds elections, Washington and the world will tolerate a great deal from the resulting government. . . . In an age of images and symbols, elections are easy to capture on film. (How do you televise the rule of law?).[108]

The international community's focus on elections left many autocrats – both old and new – with considerable room to maneuver.[109] Governments "learned that they did not have to democratize" to maintain their international standing.[110] Partial liberalization – usually in the form of holding passable elections – was often "sufficient to deflect international system pressures for more complete political opening."[111] In short, the post–Cold War international environment raised the minimum standard for regime acceptability, but the new standard was multiparty elections, not democracy.

Even in the post–Cold War international environment, therefore, full democratization often required a strong domestic "push." Where favorable domestic conditions such as a strong civil society and effective state institutions were absent (e.g., much of the former Soviet Union and sub-Saharan Africa), transitions were more likely to result in regimes that combined multiparty elections with some form of authoritarian rule.[112] In other words, they were likely to result in competitive authoritarianism.

The proliferation of competitive authoritarian regimes in the early 1990s was striking. In 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev became the Soviet leader, only a

[105] See Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 8) and Joseph (1997).

[106] See Nelson and Eglinton (1992), Carothers (1999), Lawson (1999), and Crawford (2001).

[107] On electoralism, see Karl (1986). See also Carothers (1999), Diamond (1999: 55–6), Lawson (1999), and Ottaway (2003).

[108] Zakaria (1997: 40).

[109] See Stokke (1995b), Joseph (1997, 1999a), Carothers (2000b), and Ottaway (2003).

[110] Joseph (1999a: 61).

[111] Young (1999a: 35). As Carothers (1997a: 90–1) wrote, governments learned how to "impose enough repression to keep their opponents weak and maintain their own power while adhering to enough democratic formalities that they might just pass themselves off as democrats."

[112] See Carothers (1997a, 2000a, 2002), Joseph (1999a), and Ottaway (2003).

handful of competitive authoritarian regimes existed in the world.[113] By 1995, nearly three dozen countries were competitive authoritarian. Thus, although the end of the Cold War triggered a wave of democratization, it also triggered a wave of hybridization. The "fourth wave" was at least as competitive authoritarian as it was democratic.[114]

DIVERGING OUTCOMES: COMPETITIVE AUTHORITARIAN REGIME TRAJECTORIES, 1990–2008

Competitive authoritarian regimes are marked by an inherent tension. The existence of meaningful democratic institutions creates arenas of contestation through which oppositions may legally – and legitimately – challenge incumbents. At times, authoritarian governments manage these arenas of contestation without difficulty. When incumbents enjoy broad public support (e.g., Botswana and Peru in the mid-1990s) and/or face very weak opposition (e.g., Tanzania), they may retain power without egregiously violating democratic institutions. However, the existence of multiparty elections, nominally independent legislatures, judiciaries, and media creates opportunities for periodic challenges, and when incumbents lack public support, these challenges may be regime-threatening. Most frequently, opposition challenges take place at the ballot box, as in Serbia (2000), Kenya (2002), Ukraine (2004), and Zimbabwe (2008). However, they also may emerge from parliament (e.g., Russia in 1993 and Belarus in 1996) or the judiciary.[115]

Such contestation poses a serious dilemma for incumbents. On the one hand, thwarting the challenge often requires a blatant assault on democratic institutions (i.e., stealing elections or closing parliament). Because such challenges are legal and generally perceived as legitimate (both at home and abroad), openly repressing them may be quite costly. On the other hand, if incumbents allow democratic procedures to run their course, they risk losing power. In effect, such challenges force incumbents to choose between egregiously violating democratic rules, at the cost of international isolation and domestic conflict, and allowing the challenge to proceed, at the cost of possible defeat. The result is often a regime crisis, as occurred in Cambodia and Russia in 1993, the Dominican Republic in 1994, Armenia in 1996, Malaysia in 1998–1999, Peru and Serbia in 2000, Madagascar in 2001, Ukraine in 2004, Kenya in 2007, and Zimbabwe in 2008. It is perhaps for this reason that Huntington wrote that "liberalized authoritarianism" is "not a stable equilibrium. The halfway house does not stand."[116]

Yet competitive authoritarian regimes were not bound to collapse; in fact, many of them proved strikingly robust. In several cases, incumbents either

[113] Cases included Botswana, Gambia, Guyana, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Senegal, and Zimbabwe.

[114] The term "fourth wave" is taken from McFaul (2002).

[115] Examples include the Constitutional Tribunal's 1997 ruling against Fujimori's bid for a third term in Peru and the Zimbabwean Supreme Court's 2000 ruling against the Mugabe government's land-reform program.

[116] Huntington (1991: 137). See also Howard and Roessler (2009).

TABLE 1.2. *Competitive Authoritarian Regime Trajectories, 1990–2008*

Democratization	Unstable Authoritarianism	Stable Authoritarianism
Benin	Albania	Armenia
Croatia	Belarus	Botswana
Dominican Republic	Georgia	Cambodia
Ghana	Haiti	Cameroon
Guyana	Kenya	Gabon
Macedonia	Madagascar	Malaysia
Mali	Malawi	Mozambique
Mexico	Moldova	Russia
Nicaragua	Senegal	Tanzania
Peru	Zambia	Zimbabwe
Romania		
Serbia		
Slovakia		
Taiwan		
Ukraine		

repeatedly thwarted opposition challenges or maintained such effective control that no serious challenge emerged. In other cases, incumbents were defeated by opposition challenges but successors ruled in a competitive authoritarian manner – in other words, the government changed but the regime did not. Indeed, 19 of our 35 cases remained competitive authoritarian for 15 years or more,[117] a lifespan that is comparable to even the most durable bureaucratic authoritarian regimes in South America.[118] Hence, it appears that many halfway houses *do* stand.

Competitive authoritarian regimes followed three distinct paths between 1990 and 2008 (Table 1.2). The first is *democratization*, or the establishment of free and fair elections, broad protection of civil liberties, and a level playing field.[119] Democratization may be overseen by authoritarian governments, as in Ghana, Mexico, and Taiwan, or they may occur after those governments fall from power,

[117] The lifespan of all 35 competitive authoritarian regimes in our sample are Albania (1991–), Armenia (1992–), Belarus (1992–1999), Benin (1990–2006), Botswana (1966–), Cambodia (1992–), Cameroon (1991–), Croatia (1992–2000), Dominican Republic (1986–1996), Gabon (1990–), Georgia (1992, 1995–), Ghana (1991–2000), Guyana (1985–1992), Haiti (1994–2004, 2006–), Kenya (1991–), Macedonia (1991–2007), Madagascar (1989–1993, 1997–), Malawi (1993–), Malaysia (1957–), Mali (1992–2002), Mexico (1982–2000), Moldova (1992–), Mozambique (1992–), Nicaragua (1983–1990), Peru (1992–2000), Russia (1992–2007), Romania (1990–1996, 2000–2004), Senegal (1976–), Serbia (1990–2003), Slovakia (1993–1998), Taiwan (1991–2000), Tanzania (1992–), Ukraine (1992–2004), Zambia (1990–), and Zimbabwe (1980–).

[118] Military regimes in Brazil and Chile survived for 21 and 16 years, respectively.

[119] We score outcomes as democratic if regimes remain democratic for at least three presidential/parliamentary terms and/or were democratic at the end of 2008.

as in Croatia, Nicaragua, Peru, Serbia, and Slovakia. Although the removal of authoritarian incumbents is not necessary for democratization,[120] all of our democratizing cases experienced turnover. Between 1990 and 2008, 15 of our 35 cases democratized: Benin, Croatia, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Guyana, Macedonia, Mali, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Taiwan, and Ukraine.

The second outcome is *unstable authoritarianism*, or cases that undergo one or more transition but do not democratize. In these cases, authoritarian incumbents were removed at least once but new governments were not democratic. Successors inherited a skewed playing field and politicized state institutions, which they used to weaken and/or disadvantage their opponents.[121] Ten cases fell into the unstable authoritarian category: Albania, Belarus, Georgia, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Senegal, and Zambia.

The third outcome is *stable authoritarianism*. In these cases, authoritarian incumbents or their chosen successors remained in power for at least three presidential/parliamentary terms following the establishment of competitive authoritarian rule.[122] This category includes cases that became more closed over time (e.g., Russia). During the 1990–2008 period, 10 of our 35 cases remained stable and nondemocratic: Armenia, Botswana, Cambodia, Cameroon, Gabon, Malaysia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Russia, and Zimbabwe.

This diversity of outcomes challenges the democratizing assumptions that underlie much of the post–Cold War literature on regime change. Neither the breakdown of authoritarian regimes nor the holding of multiparty elections necessarily led to democratization during the post–Cold War period.[123] Indeed, most (20 of 35) of our cases failed to democratize between 1990 and 2008. These regime patterns suggest that – *contra* Lindberg and others – multiparty elections are not by themselves an independent cause of democratization.[124] They also make it clear that electoral turnover – even where longtime autocrats are removed – should not be equated with democratic transition. In many cases – from Albania, Belarus, Malawi, Moldova, Ukraine, and Zambia in the 1990s to Georgia, Kenya, Senegal, and Madagascar in the 2000s – the removal of

[120] Arguably, democratization occurred in Mexico and Taiwan before incumbents lost elections.

[121] Cases of brief democratization followed by a reversion to competitive authoritarianism (e.g., Madagascar 1993–1997) are scored as unstable authoritarian.

[122] Cases in which incumbents remained in power but three full terms had not yet been completed as of December 2008 (e.g., Cameroon and Tanzania) are scored as stable.

[123] Carothers (2002) and Brownlee (2007a) make similar points.

[124] See Lindberg (2006a, 2006b, 2009a, 2009b). See also Rigger (1999, 2000). All of our regimes held regular multiparty elections, and some did so for three (Zimbabwe), four (Senegal), and even five (Malaysia and Mexico) decades without democratizing. The holding of elections thus cannot explain why some competitive authoritarian regimes democratized whereas others did not. Neither can they explain why Guyana, Mexico, and Taiwan democratized via elections during the 1990s but not during previous decades. More generally, Brownlee (2007a) has shown that holding of multicandidate elections has no independent causal impact on authoritarian stability.

autocratic incumbents brought little institutional change, and successor parties did not govern democratically. Such cases are too numerous to be ignored or treated as exceptions.

EXPLAINING DIVERGENT OUTCOMES: THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

This book explains the diverging trajectories of competitive authoritarian regimes since 1990. As a starting point, we assume that incumbents seek to retain power and that they are willing to use extralegal means to do so. We argue that incumbents' capacity to hold onto power – and the fate of competitive authoritarian regimes more generally – hinges primarily on two factors: (1) *linkage to the West*, or the density of ties (economic, political, diplomatic, social, and organizational) and cross-border flows (of capital, goods and services, people, and information) between particular countries and the United States and the EU; and (2) incumbents' *organizational power*, or the scope and cohesion of state and governing-party structures.

We make a three-step argument. First, where linkage to the West was extensive, as in Eastern Europe and the Americas, competitive authoritarian regimes democratized during the post–Cold War period. By heightening the international salience of autocratic abuse, increasing the likelihood of Western response, expanding the number of domestic actors with a stake in avoiding international isolation, and shifting the balance of resources and prestige in favor of oppositions, linkage raised the cost of building and sustaining authoritarian rule. High linkage created powerful incentives for authoritarian rulers to abandon power, rather than crack down, in the face of opposition challenges. It also created incentives for successor governments to rule democratically. Among high-linkage cases, not a single authoritarian government remained in power through 2008 and nearly every transition resulted in democracy. This outcome occurred even where domestic conditions for democracy were unfavorable (e.g., Guyana, Macedonia, and Romania).

Where linkage was low, as in most of Africa and the former Soviet Union, external democratizing pressure was weaker. Consequently, regime outcomes were driven primarily by domestic factors, particularly the organizational power of incumbents. Where state and/or governing parties were well organized and cohesive, as in Malaysia and Zimbabwe, incumbents were able to manage elite conflict and thwart even serious opposition challenges (both in the streets and at the ballot box), and competitive authoritarian regimes survived. Indeed, in nearly all low-linkage cases in which incumbents had developed coercive and/or party organizations, autocrats or their chosen successors remained in power through 2008.

Where state and governing-party structures were underdeveloped and lacked cohesion, regimes were less stable. Because incumbents lacked the organizational and coercive tools to prevent elite defection, steal elections, or crack down on protest, they were vulnerable to even relatively weak opposition challenges. Consequently, regimes were more open to contingency than in other cases.

In this context, a third factor – states' vulnerability to Western democratizing pressure (which we call *Western leverage*) – was often decisive. Where countries' strategic or economic importance inhibited external pressure (e.g., Russia), or where assistance from counter-hegemonic powers blunted the impact of that pressure (e.g., Cameroon, Gabon, and post-1994 Belarus), even relatively weak regimes survived. Where Western leverage was high, such governments were more likely to fall. In these cases, turnover created an opportunity for democratization. Indeed, fragile democracies emerged in Benin, Mali, and Ukraine. However, in the absence of close ties to the West or a strong domestic push for democracy, transitions frequently brought to power new authoritarian governments (e.g., Georgia, Malawi, and Zambia). In low-linkage cases, therefore, low organizational power was associated with unstable competitive authoritarianism.

Like all theories of regime change, ours cannot explain all cases. Regime outcomes are influenced by a variety of factors – including economic performance, the strength and strategies of opposition movements, leadership, and historical contingency – that lie outside of our theoretical framework. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the regimes analyzed in this study follow trajectories not predicted by our theory (e.g., democratization in Benin, Ghana, and Ukraine). Nevertheless, linkage, leverage, and organizational power explain a striking number of cases.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Our research has a range of implications for the study of contemporary political regimes and regime change. For example, it contributes to the emerging literature on the international dimension of regime change. The massive wave of democratization that swept across the developing world in the 1980s and 1990s defied nearly all established theories of democratization. Framed in terms of Dahl's cost of toleration versus cost of suppression,[125] many leading theories expect stable democracy to emerge when either (1) increased societal wealth or equality reduces the cost of toleration[126]; or (2) a strengthening of civil society or opposition forces – often a product of socioeconomic modernization – increases the cost of repression.[127] Neither of these phenomena occurred on a large scale prior to the transitions in Latin America, Africa, or communist Eurasia. What *did* change was the international environment. Changes in the post–Cold War international environment heightened the cost of suppression in much of the developing world. Thus, it was an externally driven shift in the cost of suppression, not changes in domestic conditions, that contributed most centrally to the demise of authoritarianism in the 1980s and 1990s.[128]

This book presents a new framework for analyzing the international influences on regime change. The recent literature highlights a dizzying array of international influences including diffusion, demonstration effects, conditionality,

[125] Dahl (1971: 15).

[126] Lipset (1959/1981); Dahl (1971); Przeworski and Limongi (1997); Boix (2003); Acemoglu and Robinson (2005).

[127] See Dahl (1971) and Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992).

[128] We thank David Waldner for drawing our attention to this point.

transnational civil society, and new information technologies. We organize these various mechanisms into two dimensions: Western *leverage* and *linkage* to the West. This framework enables us to capture cross-national variation in the nature and degree of external democratizing pressure. We find that the impact of the international environment varied considerably across cases and regions, and that this variation was rooted, to a large degree, in the extent of countries' ties to the West. Where linkage was high (e.g., Eastern Europe and the Americas), regimes often democratized – even in the absence of favorable domestic conditions; where it was low (e.g., Africa and the former Soviet Union), domestic factors predominated. Moreover, we find that although political conditionality and other forms of direct (or leverage-based) pressure may be effective, the democratizing impact of conditionality is far greater in countries with extensive linkage to the West.

Second, this book highlights the role of incumbent organizational power in shaping regime outcomes. Recent studies of democratization have given considerable attention to the role of societal or opposition-centered factors, including civil society,[129] organized labor,[130] mass protest,[131] and opposition cohesion,[132] in undermining authoritarianism and/or installing democracy. However, in much of post-Cold War Africa, Asia, and post-communist Eurasia, civil societies and opposition parties were weak and fragmented; as a result, the societal push for democratization was meager.[133] In many of these cases, regime outcomes were rooted less in the character or behavior of opposition movements than in incumbents' capacity to thwart them. Where incumbents possessed a powerful coercive apparatus and/or party organization, even well-organized and cohesive opposition challenges often failed. By contrast, where incumbents lacked the organizational tools needed to steal elections, co-opt opponents, or crack down on protest, transitions occurred even when oppositions were weak. Indeed, this book shows that successful opposition movements were often rooted in state and party weakness. Much of the financial and organizational muscle behind successful opposition challenges in Zambia (1990–1991), Kenya (2002), Georgia (2003), and Ukraine (2004) was provided by ex-government officials who had defected only weeks or months before the transition.

Two implications are worth noting. First, although strong parties and states are widely – and correctly – viewed as critical to democratic stability, they also are critical to stable authoritarianism.[134] Where incumbents lacked strong state and party organizations, they rarely survived during the post–Cold War period. In a competitive authoritarian context, therefore, successful state- or party-building (e.g., Zimbabwe in the 1980s, Armenia and Cambodia in the 1990s, and Russia in the 2000s) may contribute not to democratization but rather to authoritarian

[129] See Fish (1995), Diamond (1999), and Howard (2003).

[130] See Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992), Collier (1999a), and Bellin (2000).

[131] See Bratton and van de Walle (1997), Beissinger (2002, 2007), Thompson and Kuntz (2004, 2005), Bunce and Wolchik (2006a, b), and Tucker (2007).

[132] Howard and Roessler (2006).

[133] On the weakness of civil society in post-communist countries, see Howard (2003). On opposition weakness in Africa, see Rakner and van de Walle (2009).

[134] See Huntington (1968, 1970) and, more recently, Way (2005a), Brownlee (2007a), and Slater (forthcoming).

consolidation. Second, many post–Cold War transitions were rooted more in the weakness of incumbent governments than in the strength, strategies, or mobilization of opposition forces. Such transitions were marked by a paradox: The weakness of state and governing-party organizations made it more likely that an autocrat would be forced from power but *less* likely that the transition would result in democracy. Transitions by collapse generally occurred in a context of weak states, parties, and civil societies – conditions that were hardly propitious for democratization. Because both institutional and societal checks on successor governments tended to be weak, transitions often gave rise to new authoritarian incumbents.

This book also speaks to the emerging literature on political parties and authoritarian stability. Scholars such as Barbara Geddes, Jason Brownlee, and Beatriz Magaloni have highlighted the role that parties play in maintaining elite cohesion, which is widely viewed as central to authoritarian stability.[135] For these scholars, parties manage elite conflict mainly through the organization and distribution of patronage. By providing institutional mechanisms for rulers to reward loyalists and by lengthening actors' time horizons through the provision of future opportunities for career advancement, parties encourage elite cooperation over defection.[136]

Not all ruling parties are alike, however. As our study demonstrates, authoritarian parties vary considerably in their organizational strength and cohesion. This variation has important implications for regime stability. Indeed, our case analyses show that strictly patronage-based parties – even institutionalized ones – are often vulnerable to collapse during periods of crisis. During the post–Cold War period, established ruling parties in Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, and Zambia were decimated by defection in the face of economic and/or succession crises. By contrast, cohesion is greater in parties that are bound by salient ethnic or ideological ties or a shared history of violent struggle, such as revolutionary or liberation movements (e.g., Frelimo in Mozambique, the FSLN in Nicaragua, and ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe). Such nonmaterial bonds often help hold parties together even in the face of declining patronage resources. Frelimo, the FSLN, and ZANU remained intact despite severe economic crises and serious threats to their hold on power. Thus, parties that combined patronage with nonmaterial ties – such as those rooted in violent conflict or struggle – provided the most robust bases for authoritarian rule during the post–Cold War era.

THE DISTINCTIVE LOGIC OF COMPETITIVE AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS

This book also highlights the importance of taking seriously the dynamics of contemporary authoritarian regimes.[137] Until recently, the assumption that hybrid regimes were "in transition" to democracy biased analyses in important ways.

[135] Geddes (1999); Brownlee (2007a); Magaloni (2008). See also Smith (2005).

[136] Geddes (1999) and Brownlee (2007a).

[137] Here, we echo the calls of Linz (2000: 32–8), Brown (2005), Schedler (2006b), and Snyder (2006).

Scholars gave disproportionate attention to factors that shaped the performance and stability of democracy, such as constitutional design, executive–legislative relations, electoral and party systems, and voting behavior. As a result, the factors that contribute to building and sustaining contemporary nondemocracies, as well as the internal dynamics of these regimes, were left underexplored.[138] In treating competitive authoritarian regimes as "transitional" democracies, scholars often assumed that political processes (e.g., candidate selection, electoral campaigns, and legislative politics) worked more or less as they do under democracies. Yet such assumptions are often misguided. The coexistence of meaningful democratic institutions and authoritarian incumbents creates distinctive opportunities and constraints for actors, which – in important areas of political life – generate distinct patterns of political behavior. We examine some of these areas in the following sections.

Informal Institutions

One characteristic of competitive authoritarianism is the centrality of informal institutions.[139] Informal institutions exist in all regimes but, given the disjuncture between formal (i.e., democratic) rules and actual behavior that is inherent to competitive authoritarianism, their role in such regimes may be particularly important. Recent work suggests that actors frequently employ informal institutions as a "second-best" strategy when they cannot achieve their goals through formal institutions but find the cost of changing those institutions to be prohibitive.[140] By raising the cost of formal (e.g., single-party) authoritarian rule, the post–Cold War international environment created incentives for incumbents to employ informal mechanisms of coercion and control while maintaining the formal architecture of democracy. Because informal means of coercion are more difficult for international observers to identify than formal mechanisms of repression (e.g., press censorship or bans on opposition), they were often critical to the survival of post–Cold War autocracies.

This book highlights a range of informal rules, practices, and organizations used by incumbents in competitive authoritarian regimes. In the electoral arena, for example, incumbents who cannot cancel elections or ban opposition candidates frequently turn to illicit strategies such as vote buying, ballot-box stuffing, and manipulation of the vote count.[141] Although they are frequently ad hoc,

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[138] This lacuna began to be filled in the 2000s. See Brownlee (2002, 2007a, 2007b), Slater (2003, 2010), Way (2003, 2004, 2005a), Bellin (2004), Smith (2005, 2007), Waldner (2005), Schedler (2006a), Magaloni (2006), Greene (2007), Lust-Okar (2007), Darden (2008), Pepinsky (2009b), and Blaydes (forthcoming);

[139] Informal institutions may be defined as socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels (Helmke and Levitsky 2004). On informal institutions and political regimes, see O'Donnell (1996), Lauth (2000), Collins (2002, 2003), and Helmke and Levitsky (2004, 2006).

[140] Mershon (1994: 50–1); Helmke and Levitsky (2004).

[141] See Mozaffar and Schedler (2002), Schedler (2002b), and Hartlyn and McCoy (2006).

practices such as ballot-box stuffing (e.g., Mexico) and vote-buying (e.g., Taiwan) may be institutionalized.

Another informal institution found in many competitive authoritarian regimes is organized corruption. Bribery, blackmail, proxy ownership, and other illicit exchanges are often critical to sustaining authoritarian governing coalitions.[142] For example, in Cambodia, Peru, Russia, Ukraine, and elsewhere, corruption networks played a central role in ensuring the compliance of state actors during the 1990s.[143] In Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Senegal, Russia, and Taiwan, institutionalized corruption and patronage and proxy-ownership networks bound key economic, media, and civil-society actors to governing parties.

Competitive authoritarian governments also employ informal mechanisms of repression. For example, many of them use "legal" repression, or the discretionary use of legal instruments – such as tax authorities and libel laws – to target opposition and the media. Although such repression is formal in the sense that it entails the (often technically correct) application of the law, it is an informal institution in that enforcement is widely known to be selective. The value of this form of repression is its legal veneer: Prosecution for tax fraud or corruption can be presented to the world as enforcement of the rule of law rather than repression.

Finally, authoritarian incumbents employ informal or "privatized" violence to suppress opposition.[144] When the cost of imposing martial law or banning opposition activity is prohibitively high, incumbents may opt for violence that is "orchestrated by the state . . . but carried out by nonstate actors, such as vigilantes, paramilitaries, and militias."[145] Examples include organized war veterans in Armenia and Zimbabwe, "ethnic warriors" in Kenya, miners in Romania, party "youth wings" in Kenya and Malawi, "kick-down-the-door gangs" in Guyana, *chiméres* in Haiti, and "divine mobs" in Nicaragua. Because such thug groups are not formally linked to state security forces, they provide a "certain invisibility as far as international opinion is concerned."[146] They therefore help incumbents achieve the goal of "containing the broad popular challenge to their government, while attempting to distance themselves from human-rights abuses."[147]

Succession Politics

Competitive authoritarianism also generates distinct challenges in the realm of executive succession. Succession poses a serious challenge to most autocracies.[148] Unlike most democracies, authoritarian succession is often a high-stakes game. Outgoing incumbents often face serious risks, including possible seizure of wealth and prosecution for corruption or human-rights violations.[149] Indeed, many former rulers in competitive authoritarian regimes have been exiled or

[142] See Darden (2008).

[143] On Cambodia, see Gottesman (2003). On Ukraine, see Darden (2008). On Peru, see Rospigliosi (2000), Durand (2003), and Cameron (2006).

[144] See Kirschke (2000) and Roessler (2005).

[145] Roessler (2005: 209).

[146] Holmquist and Ford (1994: 13).

[147] Roessler (2005: 211).

[148] See Brownlee (2007b).

[149] For this reason, immunity is often a central issue for departing autocrats. This was the case, for example, in Georgia, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere.

imprisoned after leaving office.[150] For this reason, incumbents often seek a successor who they can trust to protect them.[151] At the same time, however, they face a challenge that does not exist in other authoritarian regimes: the need to win competitive elections. A loyal successor is of no value if he or she loses elections. Trustworthiness and electability are often in tension with one another. On the one hand, the most electorally viable candidates are often figures with independent resources and/or support bases, which make them more difficult to control. On the other hand, regime insiders – particularly those who lack independent stature or resources – are more likely to remain loyal, particularly if their close connection to the regime makes them vulnerable to blackmail. However, such politicians often lack the voter appeal to win elections.[152]

Finding a successor who is both electable and trustworthy is often difficult. In Malawi (1994), Kenya (2002), and Ukraine (2004), outgoing rulers erred on the side of safety, choosing loyal but weak candidates who lost elections. In Ukraine, for example, President Kuchma chose Viktor Yanukovych – a corrupt official with a criminal past – apparently because he could be controlled via blackmail, but the unpopular Yanukovych lost the 2004 election. By contrast, in Malawi (2004) and Zambia (2001), successors won elections but subsequently turned on their patrons. In Peru, the inability to find a viable successor contributed to Fujimori's decision to seek an illegal (and, ultimately, ill-fated) third term in 2000.

Party Behavior

Finally, party behavior is distinct under competitive authoritarian regimes. As Scott Mainwaring has noted, standard assumptions about party behavior – for example, that parties are vote-maximizing – hold only where elections are the "only game in town."[153] In such a context, parties take the political regime as given and work within it: They participate in elections, seeking to maximize votes; if they lose, they turn to parliamentary opposition. In unconsolidated democracies and hybrid regimes, however, parties often play a "dual game" that encompasses both electoral and regime objectives.[154] In other words, conventional vote-maximizing strategies are complemented – and sometimes trumped – by strategies aimed at shoring up or undermining the existing regime.

Parties clearly play a dual game in competitive authoritarian regimes.[155] On the one hand, unlike most authoritarian regimes, parties must take seriously elections and other democratic institutions; their ability to gain or maintain power

[150] Former presidents who were prosecuted after leaving office include Fatos Nano in Albania, Levon Ter-Petrosian in Armenia, Kamuzu Banda and Bakili Muluzi in Malawi, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Slobodon Milošević in Serbia, and Frederick Chiluba in Zambia. Nano, Fujimori, and Milošević were imprisoned.

[151] It is often for this reason that many autocrats opt for a dynastic solution, tapping a son or other close relative (Brownlee 2007b).

[152] It is perhaps for this reason that unlike hegemonic regimes in Azerbaijan, Jordan, North Korea, and Syria, no competitive authoritarian regime except Gabon underwent a dynastic succession between 1990 and 2010.

[153] Mainwaring (2003).

[154] Mainwaring (2003: 8–17). See also Schedler (2009a).

[155] For an insightful discussion of this dual game, see Schedler (2009a, 2009b).

hinges – at least, in part – on their ability to win votes and control legislatures. On the other hand, however, competing on a skewed playing field often requires strategies that have little to do with vote-maximization. Thus, in all but a few of our cases,[156] opposition parties combined conventional (i.e., electoral or parliamentary) strategies with extra-institutional ones. For example, oppositions may boycott elections in an effort to undermine their domestic or international legitimacy.[157] Major opposition parties boycotted at least one round of presidential or parliamentary elections in Ghana (1992), Cameroon (1992 and 1997), Haiti (1995 and 2000), Zambia (1996), Zimbabwe (1996 and 2008), Mali (1997), Serbia (1997), Peru (2000), Benin (2001), and Senegal (2007).

When opposition parties participate in elections, conditions may induce them to adopt strategies that differ markedly from those seen in democratic regimes. One is thug mobilization.[158] In a context of widespread violence or lawlessness, candidates' ability to win votes may be just as important as their ability to physically protect or deliver them. Thus, although recruiting and deploying armed thugs rarely enhances parties' electoral appeal, it can be critical to their ability to campaign and protect the vote. As Zoran Đinđić, the main architect of Serbia's "bulldozer revolution" in 2000, stated, oppositions must "clearly show they are ready to use violence to fight back in case of repression. . . . Security forces must realize they cannot resort to violence without risks."[159] Indeed, successful oppositions mobilized both votes and thugs in Benin (1991), Malawi (1994), Serbia (2000), and Kenya (2002).

Opposition strategies also differ between elections. Rather than confine its activities to parliament, oppositions in competitive authoritarian regimes may engage in mass protest aimed at toppling the government (or forcing it to undertake democratizing reform) before the end of its mandate. Such tactics were adopted in Cameroon (1991), Madagascar (1991 and 2009), Albania (1991 and 1997), Ukraine (1993), Venezuela (2002), Haiti (2003), and Georgia (2003 and 2007).

Alternatively, opposition parties may adopt a coalitional strategy, joining the government in pursuit of state resources, media access, protection, and other benefits.[160] Although often characterized as "naked opportunism,"[161] coalitional

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[156] In Botswana, the Dominican Republic, Romania, Slovakia, and post-1992 Ghana, opposition contestation was limited to constitutional (i.e., electoral and parliamentary) channels. Conventional opposition strategies generally predominate where competitive authoritarian regimes are relatively soft and opposition parties possess the resources needed to survive (usually due to the existence of a robust private sector and civil society).

[157] See especially Lindberg (2006c). In Africa, opposition parties boycotted more than a third of presidential elections between 1989 and 2003 (Lindberg 2006c: 150–1).

[158] See Ichino (2007).

[159] Tomic (2001).

[160] Such coalitions are distinct from those in democratic regimes in at least two ways. First, they are usually not necessary for and are often unrelated to the formation of parliamentary majorities. In most cases, incumbents already enjoy such majorities. Second, they generally have no programmatic or ideological bases.

[161] Ihonvbere (2003a: 47–8). Also Chege (1996: 354).

strategies may be critical to party survival. In countries characterized by extreme underdevelopment (e.g., Cambodia and Malawi) or extensive state control of the economy (e.g., Belarus and Gabon), civil society and the private sector are generally small and impoverished, leaving the opposition with limited access to resources. Unless parties have a generous external patron (e.g., Nicaragua and Slovakia) or established organizations, identities, and core constituencies (e.g., Albania, Guyana, and Malaysia), joining the government may be the only viable means of securing the resources and media access necessary to remain a viable political force.

From a vote-maximizing standpoint, coalitional strategies are often suboptimal. Joining an unpopular (and, in many cases, corrupt and repressive) government may erode opposition parties' electoral and activist bases.[162] However, where access to resources is so limited that four or five years in opposition can be tantamount to political suicide (e.g., much of Africa and the former Soviet Union), politicians may conclude that joining the governments is the best means of preserving their organizations in order to "play another day."

Coalitional strategies at times have been successful. In Ukraine, after oligarch Yulia Tymoshenko's bank accounts were frozen in the late 1990s, she abandoned the opposition and created the progovernment Fatherland Party. An alliance with the government allowed Tymoshenko to regain her assets and build a powerful organization before moving back into opposition, where she would become a major player in the Orange Revolution.[163] Similarly, the entry of Abdoulaye Wade's Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) entry into government coalitions in 1991 and 1995 brought the party access to patronage resources that it used for organization building, while other opposition parties languished.[164] Wade won the presidency in 2000. In Kenya, opposition leader Raila Odinga led his National Development Party (NDP) into a "partnership" with the Moi government during the late 1990s in exchange for police protection and access to patronage resources.[165] In 2001, the NDP joined the cabinet, which "permitted Odinga to organize dissent from within."[166] A year later, Odinga led a massive defection that helped ensure the 2002 electoral defeat of the Kenya African National Union (KANU).

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[162] For example, after Cambodia's largest opposition party, FUNCINPEC, joined the Hun Sen government in 1998, it came to be viewed as a government "lap dog" (Marston 2002: 98) and suffered electoral decline. In Cameroon, the opposition UNDP joined the government after the 1997 elections and was "all but wiped out" in the 2002 legislative election (*Africa Confidential*, August 30, 2002, pp. 1–2). In Serbia, several opposition parties aligned with the Milošević government during the 1990s to gain access to patronage, but Milošević used these alliances to discredit these parties (and thus splinter the opposition) at key moments. Indeed, Vojislav Koštunica emerged as the strongest opposition challenger in 2000 in part because he had never cooperated with Milošević.

[163] By contrast, politicians – such as Oleksandr Moroz – who remained in opposition throughout the Kuchma period remained marginal and enjoyed less electoral success.

[164] Beck 1999: (205–208).

[165] Kanyinga (2003: 112–13); Ndegwa (2003: 150).

[166] S. Brown (2004: 336); see also Odiambo-Mbai (2003: 78–80).

Under competitive authoritarianism, therefore, opposition parties play a dual game, trying to win by the existing rules while simultaneously seeking to change them. This means that although opposition parties must take seriously electoral competition and vote-maximization, they may also pursue strategies (e.g., electoral boycotts, mass protest) aimed at undermining the regime. Moreover, they may adopt strategies (e.g., thug mobilization, alliances with unpopular governments) that – although suboptimal from a vote-seeking standpoint – allow them to compete and survive on a skewed playing field.

CASE SELECTION AND METHODS

Our study examines all 35 regimes in the world that were or became competitive authoritarian between 1990 and 1995. We exclude from the analysis other types of hybrid (or "partly free") regimes, including a variety of regimes in which political competition exists but nonelected officials retain considerable power, such as (1) those in which the most important executive office is not elected (e.g., Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco)[167]; (2) regimes in which top executive positions are filled via elections but the authority of elected governments is seriously constrained by the military or other nonelected bodies (e.g., Guatemala, Pakistan, Thailand, and Turkey in the early 1990s)[168]; and (3) competitive regimes under foreign occupation (e.g., Lebanon in the early 1990s). In all of these regimes, the power of actors outside the electoral process generates a distinct set of dynamics and challenges not found under competitive authoritarianism. We also exclude "illiberal" electoral regimes, in which mainstream parties compete on a reasonably level playing field but widespread human- or civil-rights abuse – often targeting nonmainstream political parties or ethnic groups – persist (e.g., Colombia and Sri Lanka in the early 1990s). Because violations do not directly affect mainstream political competition, such hybrid regimes are not competitive authoritarian.

We also exclude cases in which competitive authoritarianism collapses before the completion of a single presidential or parliamentary term,[169] as well as cases in which state collapse makes it difficult to identify *any* kind of organized political regime.[170] Finally, we limit our study to regimes that were competitive authoritarian prior to 1995 in order to evaluate the impact of our variables over a significant period (at least 13 years). Thus, cases that became competitive authoritarian after 1995 (e.g., Nigeria and Venezuela) are excluded from the sample.[171]

Our criteria for scoring cases (and the actual coding) are elaborated in Appendix I. Our criteria for democracy are strict. Regimes "cross the line" from

[167] Likewise, Uganda is excluded from the sample because there were no elections for the executive and political parties were banned between 1990 and 1995.

[168] Other tutelary regimes during the early 1990s include Bangladesh, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nepal.

[169] Cases include Niger, where a competitive authoritarian government was toppled in a coup in 1996, and Bulgaria, where a competitive authoritarian government fell prey to mass protest in 1997.

[170] Cases include Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Zaire/Congo in the 1990s.

[171] Other regimes that might be characterized as competitive authoritarian after 1995 include Congo-Brazzaville, Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, Niger, and Uganda.

democratic to competitive authoritarian if we find evidence of centrally coordinated or tolerated electoral manipulation, systematic civil-liberties violations (i.e., abuse is a repeated rather than an exceptional event and is orchestrated or approved by the national government), or an uneven playing field (i.e., opposition parties are denied significant access to finance or mass media or state institutions are systematically deployed against the opposition).

Our method of scoring may be illustrated with reference to a few cases that fall near the border between competitive authoritarianism and democracy. During the initial period (1990–1995), we scored Botswana as competitive authoritarian due to extreme inequalities in access to media and finance; the Dominican Republic as competitive authoritarian due to the Balaguer government's packing of the electoral commission and large-scale manipulation of voter rolls; and Slovakia as competitive authoritarian due to Mečiar's abuse of media and harassment of parliamentary opposition. On the other side of the line, Brazil and the Philippines suffered serious problems of democratic governance – including extensive clientelism, corruption, and/or a weak rule of law – in the early 1990s, but we found no evidence of systematic electoral abuse, civil-liberties violations against political opposition, or skewed access to media or finance. Hence, these cases were scored as democratic and excluded from the analysis.

Turning to regime outcomes in 2008, we scored Senegal as competitive authoritarian due to harassment and arrest of opposition politicians and journalists, and we scored Georgia as competitive authoritarian due to harassment of major media in the 2004 elections and closure of television stations during the 2007 state of emergency. On the other side of the line, we scored Benin as democratic because the 2006 election was widely characterized as clean and we found no evidence of serious abuse under President Yayi Boni. Likewise, Guyana, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine were scored as democratic because – notwithstanding repeated institutional crises and serious problems of corruption – elections were clean, critics suffered no systematic harassment, and opposition parties enjoyed access to media and finance.

With respect to the line between competitive and full authoritarianism, our main criterion is whether opposition parties can use democratic institutions to compete seriously for power. If parties or candidates are routinely excluded, either formally or effectively, from competing in elections for the national executive,[172] or if electoral fraud is so extensive that voting is essentially meaningless, then regimes were scored as noncompetitive and excluded from analysis.[173] Based on these criteria, Cambodia, Serbia, and Zimbabwe in the 1990s were scored as competitive because – notwithstanding widespread state violence – opposition parties were able to seriously contest national elections. Likewise, Malaysia was scored as competitive because, despite highly institutionalized authoritarian controls, opposition parties operated legally and seriously contested nearly all

[172] Viable candidates may be effectively deterred from running via severe physical repression or the imposition of extreme legal, administrative, and financial obstacles to electoral participation.

[173] Examples include Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan in the early 1990s.

parliamentary seats. By contrast, Singapore was scored as fully authoritarian because restrictions on speech and association made it nearly impossible for opposition groups to operate publicly and because legal controls and other institutional obstacles prevented opposition parties from contesting most seats in parliament. Egypt was scored as noncompetitive because the Muslim Brotherhood was banned and thousands of its activists were imprisoned. Azerbaijan was scored as fully authoritarian because all major opposition candidates were excluded from the 1993 election, allowing Heydar Aliyev to win with 99 percent of the vote.[174]

Two points are worth noting here. First, as in any study of this type, there exist borderline cases that arguably could be included in the sample but that we judged to be either insufficiently authoritarian (e.g., Namibia and Philippines) or insufficiently competitive (e.g., Azerbaijan, Singapore, and Uganda) for inclusion. Nevertheless, few of these borderline cases appear to run counter to our theory (see Chapter 8). Second, competitive authoritarianism is a broad category that ranges from "soft," near-democratic cases (e.g., the Dominican Republic and Slovakia in the early 1990s) to "hard," or near-full authoritarian cases (e.g., Russia and Zimbabwe in the mid-2000s). Indeed, despite considerable political reform in Kenya and Senegal between 1991 and 2008, both cases were scored as competitive authoritarian throughout the given period. Although this may be unsatisfying, the problem is hardly unique to competitive authoritarianism: Germany, Sweden, El Salvador, and Mongolia were all widely considered democracies in 2008.

The medium-n analysis employed in this study has both limitations and advantages. Our analysis is bounded in two ways. First, it is bounded by regime type. The fact that our sample includes only competitive authoritarian regimes – and thus is not representative of the broader universe of regimes – limits our ability to make general claims about the effects of linkage and organizational power. We do not, therefore, offer a general theory of regime change. Second, our study is bounded historically. Our theory of linkage's democratizing effects is relevant only for periods of Western liberal hegemony. We do not expect ties to the West to have had similar effects during the Cold War period. As this book suggests, the causes of democratization changed considerably after 1989, with the international dimension having a far more important role than in earlier periods. Hence, it appears that the factors that explain regime outcomes during the 19th century or the Cold War era differ from those that explain regime outcomes during the post–Cold War era. If that is the case, then the generalizability of theories based on analyses of other historical periods *also* may be limited.[175]

[174] For similar reasons, we exclude Côte d'Ivoire and Kazakhstan in the early 1990s. In this sense, our operationalization differs from that of Hyde and Marinov (2009), who classify as competitive authoritarian all regimes in which multiparty competition exists, including those in which opposition candidates stand no chance to win.

[175] For example, Przeworski and Limongi's (1997) finding that poor democracies are unlikely to endure may need to be refined in light of evidence from the post–Cold War period. Where linkage was high, as in much of Central America and the Caribbean, low-income democracies proved surprisingly robust during the 1990s and 2000. See Mainwaring and Pérez Liñan (2005).

Our research design also has important advantages. First, intensive case analysis yields greater measurement validity than is possible in most large-n cross-national studies.[176] Rather than relying on preexisting datasets that were not designed to measure competitive authoritarianism (e.g., Freedom House, Polity IV), or proxy variables whose measurement validity is often questionable (e.g., per capita military spending as a proxy for coercive capacity), we developed measures that closely approximate our concepts. The indicators used for each variable, as well as the actual coding of cases, are provided in the appendices. Thus, although our coding process is "subjective," in the sense that we make the scoring decisions in each case, it is transparent, consistent across cases and regions, and easily falsifiable – characteristics that are not shared, for example, by Freedom House.[177] This method allows us to maximize measurement validity while retaining a level of rigor and standardization that is sometimes lacking in more qualitative studies.

Second, detailed case studies allow us to examine and test for causal relationships in a way that large-n cross-national studies generally fail to do.[178] Our research design sets a high bar for testing our hypotheses. Rather than simply show a correlation between theory and outcome among the universe of competitive authoritarian regimes, we must demonstrate that the predicted causal processes are at work in each case. Thus, our case analyses show – over multiple observations – how linkage shapes actors' behavior in ways that make democratic outcomes more likely. Likewise, the case studies demonstrate the causal processes by which low state or party cohesion undermines regime stability (e.g., by preventing governments from cracking down or facilitating elite defection) during crises. Intensive case analysis also allows us to test alternative explanations by examining whether the causal mechanisms posited by rival approaches (e.g., inequality, economic crisis, institutional design) are at work.

At the same time, our medium-n analysis yields considerable variation in terms of both the dependent variable (i.e., regime outcomes) and various potential explanatory factors. Whereas most small- and medium-n analyses are limited to one or two regions, this study compares cases across five regions,[179] which

[176] See Adcock and Collier (2001) and Collier, Brady, and Seawright (2004a).

[177] As our research makes clear, Freedom House scores suffer from serious comparability problems over time and across region. For example, in 1997, Brazil – which was widely considered a full democracy – received a worse Freedom House score than either Malawi (where there were frequent attacks on the opposition and media) or Russia (where the government had bombed parliament and elections had been marred by fraud and manipulation). In the early 2000s, Botswana (where the playing field is so skewed that the opposition has never won a national election) received a better Freedom House score than Argentina and Mexico, both of which were widely considered full democracies. Inconsistencies over time are even more egregious. For example, Mexico's Freedom House score in 1979, when it was clearly authoritarian, is identical to its score in 1999, when, after a series of far-reaching electoral reforms, it was arguably a democracy.

[178] See Collier, Brady, and Seawright (2004a, 2004b).

[179] Among recent studies, Waldner's (2005) work on postcolonial regimes in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa comes closest to ours in geographic breadth.

provides variation along dimensions that are essentially controlled for in single-region studies. For example, because linkage generally does not vary much within regions but varies considerably *across* regions, regional analyses often understate its impact.[180] Similarly, the relative weakness of states and governing parties across much of Africa and the former Soviet Union – and, thus, the relative lack of variation across these cases – may lead scholars to understate the role of incumbents' organizational capacity in sustaining or undermining political regimes.[181] In summary, a comparative study of 35 cases enables us to capture considerable variation (on both the independent and dependent variables) while retaining both measurement validity and close attention to causal processes.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The remainder of the book is organized as follows. Chapter 2 describes our theory of competitive authoritarian regime change, focusing on the role of linkage to the West and incumbent state and party strength. In the chapters that follow, we examine competitive authoritarian regime trajectories in five regions. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the high-linkage regions of Eastern Europe and the Americas. In both regions, high linkage and leverage resulted in widespread democratization, even in cases with unfavorable domestic conditions for democracy. Chapter 5 (the former Soviet Union), Chapter 6 (Africa), and Chapter 7 (Asia) examine competitive authoritarian regime trajectories in regions with lower levels of linkage. In these regions, domestic factors predominated. Where states and governing parties were strong, competitive authoritarian regimes remained stable; where they were weak, regimes were more likely to break down. Finally, the conclusion evaluates the findings of the five empirical chapters, highlights the book's central theoretical argument via paired cross-regional comparisons, examines general implications of our theory, and explores additional theoretical issues raised by the case analyses.

[180] For example, recent studies of the impact of the EU have emphasized the importance of conditionality in shaping democratization (cf. Vachudova 2005b and Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005) while largely ignoring the impact of linkage. This relative inattention to how linkage enhances the effectiveness of conditionality can be traced, in part, to the fact that these studies focus almost entirely on high-linkage cases.

[181] For example, because of the ban and destruction of the Communist Party during the collapse of the Soviet Union, virtually all post-Soviet regimes had weak ruling parties. As a result, the weakness of ruling parties has largely been ignored in discussions of elite defection and instability in the region (cf. Hale 2006).