



No.209 / March 2007

Presidential Succession and Democratic Transitions

Alexander Baturu

Political Science Department, Trinity College Dublin



IIS Discussion Paper No. 209

Presidential Succession and Democratic Transitions

**Alexander Baturu,
Political Science Department, Trinity College Dublin**

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed here are those of the author(s) and not those of the IIS.
All works posted here are owned and copyrighted by the author(s).
Papers may only be downloaded for personal use only.

Presidential Succession and Democratic Transitions

Alexander Baturu
Lecturer
Trinity College Dublin
Political Science Department
2-3 College Green, Dublin 2, Ireland
Email: abaturo@tcd.ie
Phone: +353-1896-3483

February 25, 2007

Abstract

Why might presidential succession in partly- and non-democratic regimes render the probability of democratic transition more likely? Many presidential regimes in developing world are highly personalist and their stability depends on the strength of their rulers. Transitions are often initiated and driven by elite splits, and the process of presidential succession triggers these splits and uncertainty along the chain of command. Building upon previous work on liberalizing elections (Howard and Roessler 2006), I find that presidential designated successors lose elections more often than the long-standing incumbents, which increases the probability of democratic change, since the former compete against the pro-democratic opposition in a recent, 1990-2004 period. I also find that the presence of hegemonic parties mitigates these effects.

I would like to thank Marc M. Howard and Philip Roessler for generously sharing their data on liberalizing electoral outcomes with me. I also wish to thank Ken Benoit, Jos Elkink, Julia Gray, Slava Mikhailov and Matthew Wall for their insightful comments.

Introduction

After nearly two decades in office, on 7 January 2001 President Rawlings of Ghana stepped down, passing power to the pro-democratic opposition after his designated successor and Vice-President Atta Mills lost a second round of the December 2000 presidential election, despite the support of the ruling party, military, media and the outgoing president himself. One of the most important elements of this contest was that the charismatic incumbent Rawlings who won two elections in the past did not run due to term limits (Gyimah-Boadi 2001, 107). Indeed, in the 2000 elections ‘a great wave of excitement swept the country with President Rawlings no longer on the ballot paper, and the scent of change in the air.’¹ The hopes of the Ghanian electorate were not unfounded, as Rawlings’s successor indeed lost, and, following the election, Ghana’s Freedom House ranking was changed from ‘Partly Free’ to ‘Free’. Does presidential succession in partly- and non-democratic regimes render the probability of democratic transition more likely and why?

Throughout history, the failure to achieve smooth transitions of power brought havoc to the governments. The need to transfer power has been an important component of promoting the rise of new political patterns (Burling 1974, 2). Political stability, long-term economic policy and growth, international alliances, and, as this paper argues, the very success of transitions to democracy are affected by political decisions that rulers take during succession and how they depart from power.

In this paper I focus on one important aspect of transition in presidential regimes: the effects of presidential succession on democratic change. I investigate whether successors are more likely to lose elections than the long-standing incumbents and whether it affects the

¹*IRIN*. 2004, November 26. ‘Kufuor Likely to Be Re-elected in Ghana’.

probability of democratic transitions. When presidents the world over present themselves for re-election, they are more likely to win. But when incumbents step down, very often they designate their successors in their stead. They can select from the ranks of their own party (Mexico under PRI), their relatives (Azerbaijan 2003, Syria 2000), public officials or people they share business interests with (Ukraine 2004). But they often do so at the peril of their regime.

I argue that, when presidents appoint successors in nondemocratic or partly democratic regimes, the uncertainty in the ruling coalition over whether rents will continue to be distributed as well as over whether designated successors are strong enough to deter or punish potential challengers often causes elite splits. This, in turn, makes an opposition victory more likely. Transitions to democracy almost always result from splits within authoritarian regimes, as many researchers have noted (Di Palma 1990; Karl 1990; Kitschelt 1986; Meyer 2004; Przeworski 1991; Stepan 1986). I test this argument empirically, focusing on 90 elections in partly- and non-democratic presidential regimes, from 1990 to 2004. I find that longstanding incumbents obtain more votes and are less likely to lose elections than their designated successors, and that democratic transitions occur more often when incumbents step down and successors run in elections in their stead. I also find that the presence of hegemonic parties somewhat reduces the handicaps of successors.

The findings of this paper suggest that defeats at so-called ‘stunning elections’ are driven not only by the opposition’s mobilization, but also by the absence of incumbent that reduces the costs of the collective action. This follows the work of Geddes (1999) and Huntington (1991), who have argued that the absence of a leader due to the incapacity or death of a personalist ruler often precipitates elite splits and eases collective action problems within the opposition. The broader implication is that democracy practitioners

should focus their attention not only on free and fair elections, but also on the executive tenure restrictions and the observance thereof.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, I elaborate on the process of presidential succession and why it affects democratic transitions in presidential regimes in developing world. To put it simply, I expect incumbents to win, and designated successors to lose. To put it simply, I expect incumbents to win, and designated successors to lose. Next I discuss how I build upon the data on liberalizing electoral outcomes (Howard and Roessler 2006) and present the results of logit and OLS estimations and discuss the impact of incumbency on the probability of democratic change. I then focus on the outlier cases in which incumbents ran and lost or successors ran and won in order to illuminate the causal mechanism and see whether theory holds under adverse conditions.

Succession, Incumbency and Democratic Transitions

The most dangerous time in office for the presidents is the first one or two years in office (Bienen and Van der Walle 1991). Earlier studies on political survival found that leaders, once they survive the initial stage in office, have an incumbency advantage over their challengers (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Bienen and van der Walle 1991). Likewise, Cheibub and Przeworski (1999) found that among presidents who faced elections without impending term limits only 27 per cent were defeated, and the rest either won them or did not run. It seems that incumbents are more difficult to defeat in elections than other electoral candidates. Incumbent reelection goes beyond the personal concerns of presidents and their challengers, however, and has larger implications for the fate of the country's political system.

Democracy is the only form of government that is designed to arrange for an orderly succession of leaders. In contrast, when a dictator dies, very often ‘war of all against all’ follows and the strongest contender emerges as a new dictator. The difference between succession in dictatorships as described by the public choice literature (e.g., Kurrild-Klitgaard 2000; Tullock 1987) and succession in modern presidential regimes lies in the fact that the latter is legitimated by elections. Often described as electoral authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way 2002; Ottaway 2003; Schedler 2002), these, unlike democratic regimes, in which ex ante electoral uncertainty is one of the inherent features of democracy (Przeworski and Limongi 1997), are designed to prevent electoral defeats through fraud or intimidation of the opponents (Schedler 2002, 37). When incumbents step down for whatever reason, elections are supposed to facilitate an orderly succession by conferring legitimacy on the new ruler. These regimes oscillate between democracy and dictatorship, and can gravitate to either, or remain in between. The outcomes of succession impact on their future democratic development.

The issue of succession is the most severe problem for dictatorships throughout recorded history and the hereditary succession is the most stable form of succession for dictatorships (Egorov and Sonin 2005; Kurrild-Klitgaard 2000; Tullock 1987). A dictator cannot appoint his successor in advance without undermining his own authority. If it were, everyone would coordinate around the latter and then the first position would be endangered (Burling 1974).

In the majority of cases, the inherent uncertainty of succession triggered infighting and political instability. When Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi decided not to participate in the 2002 elections and obey term limits, he designated Uhuru Kenyatta as his successor. The absence of incumbent running made the president himself and the regime insiders

less motivated to spend large amounts of money on the electoral campaign and led to splits within the governing party, KANU, among those who wanted to choose their own presidential candidate and those standing by the incumbent's choice (Howard and Roessler 2006; Throup 2003). Presidential succession in Zambia was even messier, with two former vice presidents — Godfrey Miyanda and Genearl Christon Tembo — running against another former vice president, Mwanawasa, who was selected as the governing party's presidential candidate for the 2001 elections (Burnell 2001). Similarly, despite appointing his Prime Minister as his successor in Ukraine in 2004, President Leonid Kuchma failed to transfer his enormous powers to the former and remained in firm control until his departure. The united and strong opposition increased the costs of suppression, while regime elites became split between supporters of the designated successor and those that hesitated up until the last moment. This ultimately led to a democratic breakthrough in Ukraine.

Thus, I put forward the following hypothesis:

- H_1 : *Successors are more likely to lose elections than incumbents.* The corollary of this hypothesis is that I expect successors to gain lower number of votes than incumbents, all things being equal.

In the absence of strong institutions in personalist presidential regimes, rewards and the access to rents depend on the access to a president, in the words of Robert Bates (2001, 72), “the fountain of privilege.” If some elite groups are not confident in their continuing access to rents under a new ruler, or unsure of a new ruler's ability to provide rents, they are likely to designate an alternative candidate instead, or even place bets on several likely winners.

However, the very uncertainty of elections creates focal point for societal coordination

and enables the horizontal communication that is needed for the collective action (Barzel 2002). In turn, the latter often produces the so-called 'stunning elections' phenomenon, in which a suddenly mobilized opposition inflicts a surprising defeat on a non-democratic regime (Huntington 1991, 175-80; Markoff 1996, 113-4; Thompson and Kuntz 2004).

The absence of a long-standing ruler compounds uncertainty and increases the probability of democratic change through the following process. Firstly, rulers are at their weakest in the initial period (Bienen and Van der Walle 1991), when they still have to prove their strength, neutralize challengers, accumulate resources for their coalitions and gain experience in office. Designated successors are about to live through this dangerous period and hence are more vulnerable than longer-serving rulers. Secondly, in the absence of strong institutions in personalist presidential regimes (later on I also check whether hegemonic parties ease the costs of succession), rewards and the access to rents depend on the access to a leader (Bates 2001; Geddes 1999). If some elite groups are not confident in their continuing access to rents under the new ruler, or unsure of a new ruler's ability to provide rents, they are likely to designate an alternative candidate instead. Thirdly, ambitious politicians could feel they are capable of defeating a weaker candidate and gaining office for themselves, something that they would not dare under the old ruler. For example, politicians that failed to obtain party presidential nomination represented very serious threat to hegemonic party regime in Mexico (Magaloni 2006, 258). In turn, elite splits will compound the electoral uncertainty and increase chances for regime's defeat. Finally, elite splits and succession could affect the chances for democratic change indirectly, via easing the collective action and breaking the apathy of a population through the novelty effects of new candidates.

Why would this process necessarily lead to a democratic transition? The incumbents or

their designated successors, as representatives of the status quo (stability of partly- or non-democratic regime), run against the opposition that, in turn, challenges this status quo. Most of the time, and especially after the end of the Cold War this challenge came from the groups espousing democratic values rather than socialist, nationalist or pro-independence creeds, like they did in earlier periods (McFaul 2002; Przeworski in Munck and Snyder 2007).²

If designated successors are more likely to lose, then the absence of incumbents can be seen as the cause of democratic change during elections. However, if rulers step down because they simply cannot run, then their absence is the result of increasing regime democratization rather than its cause. While some presidents do not face restrictions on the number of terms they can serve (Syria, Egypt), the majority face term limits and have to step down. However, many term-bound presidents extend their terms and proceed to win elections: for example, in Uganda in 2005, Belarus in 2004, Gabon in 2003 or Togo in 2002. These rulers did not designate successors, elite splits were absent and democratic change did not occur. If these rulers had stepped down and initiated succession, the likelihood of transition would have gone up only because of their absence, as argued above.

The absence of incumbents, however, is also a manifestation of the overall regime liberalization. Presidential succession causes elite splits but it also, as described by an observer of the Ghanaian politics in the beginning of this paper, changes the expectations about the likely electoral outcomes and the overall political environment. On average, the Freedom House civil liberties index in a two-year period before an “incumbent” election is 5.1 and

²McFaul (2002) proposed that the origins of democracy as the ideology of opposition could be understood if one took into account the balance of ideologies in the international system at the time (1980-90s). Likewise, Adam Przeworski contemplated that after the disastrous experience with the military dictatorships in Latin America, the opposition (the left) came to realize the importance of democracy as the value in itself (Przeworski cited in Munck and Snyder, 2007 forthcoming, 24). Similar argument was advanced by Castaneda (1993).

with “successor” it is 4.2, where higher values represent less open environment. If ruler steps down, he or she does not subvert the constitutional process by extending the term, which also contributes to overall liberalization, for which I account in the empirical section of this paper. It is also in the interests of the departing ruler to leave office for a more democratic setting where his interests as a private citizen are not at the mercy of the all-powerful ruler to be. In this sense, while the absence of incumbent is both the cause of the electoral breakthrough and the manifestation of the overall democratization, it is the multifaceted process of presidential succession that causes democratic change directly and indirectly.

This leads us to a further hypothesis:

- H_2 : The fact of *successors running in elections (executive turnover) increases the probability of democratic transitions*. Since successors are more likely to lose than incumbents, and since they are most likely to lose to the opposition groups espousing democratic ideas, the fact whether an incumbent runs or not affects the probability of successful democratic transition.

What conditions might allow succession to take place in a more mannered fashion? In the first half of the 20th century, only a few rulers managed their orderly succession in developing world (Herz 1952). However, succession does not always have to be unruly. Sometimes it proceeds smoothly as a successor consolidates his or her power and becomes a new incumbent (e.g., Russia 2000, Syria 2000, Azerbaijan 2003). The paradigmatic case of a long-standing regime with an orderly presidential succession is Mexico. Indeed, while Mexico has remained non-democratic for most of the 20th century, its presidents were replaced every six years in Mexico. Castaneda (2000) described how Mexican presidents chose their successors in a process called the *dedazo* (the finger tap): the former picked

the ruler to be at his will, so that the incumbent was the only ‘voter’ deciding on the next president.

If the presidents possessed such broad powers over succession, why did not they remain incumbents and *dedazo* themselves instead? The 1917 constitution banned presidential re-election, and when president Alvaro Obregon (1920-24) avoided this ban, winning a second term, he was subsequently assassinated in 1928. Following this, the Mexican elites established a new umbrella party, PRI, as a collective agreement to prevent one single individual from becoming dictator (Hall 1990). The assassination of Obregon created a powerful focal point for coordination against possible reelection attempts in the future (Magaloni 2006, 8). The all-powerful party, combined with the specific institutional agreement, placed insurmountable constraints on the executive should the latter decide to prolong his rule, lowered the stakes of losing office, and, by making regime elites into stakeholders of the status quo, largely prevented the splits during succession.

Brownlee (2004) focused on regime stability and breakdown as functions of elite unity and defections, which, in turn, depended on whether ruling political parties were capable of mediating inter-elite conflicts. Magaloni (2006) and Smith (2005) explored the determinants of stability of hegemonic party regimes and found that hegemonic parties mediated elite conflicts and perpetuated these regimes beyond the lives of individual rulers.

We can state these propositions in our last hypothesis:

- *H₃: Hegemonic parties reduce probability of democratic transition during presidential succession.*

To sum it up, elite splits are almost always precipitate transition to democracy. Pres-

idential succession often generates these splits, as elites are less likely to split under a long-standing ruler than under designated successor. The fact whether incumbent or his successor runs in elections affects the probability of democratic change: successors are more likely to lose than incumbents and they do so to the pro-democratic opposition. I also expect that the presence of hegemonic parties mitigates these effects.

Domestic and International Determinants of Transitions to Democracy

I define incumbents as presidents that have been in office for at least one year prior to elections. Successors are presidential candidates from the same party as presidents, relatives, or all those designated as successors and/or campaigned for by the departing presidents. In all but three elections analyzed in this paper I was able to identify designated successors. The exceptions are cases in which incumbent presidents were ousted in coups or were forced to resign and thus neither participated in elections nor designated successors. Prime Ministers, Vice Presidents or other officials of the incumbent regime that run for the presidency are defined as successors.

In order to investigate the impact of incumbency on the probability of democratic transitions, and to control for other determinants, I build upon a model from a recent paper by Howard and Roessler (2006) that investigates the occurrences of so-called liberalizing electoral outcomes in competitive authoritarian regimes.³ Their paper takes into account both the actor-driven and structural parameters that are likely to influence democratic transitions. Crucially, one of the parameters in their model is the incumbent turnover —

³I would like to thank Marc M. Howard for generously sharing these data.

whether an incumbent is present at elections or not.

Their sample contains 50 elections held in parliamentary and presidential electoral autocracies in the period of 1990-02. Howard and Roessler operationalize competitive autocracies by excluding those countries that received Freedom House (henceforth *FH*)'s score of 2 or lower (democracies) — indeed, democracies do not need to democratize — on the one hand, and those with the worst *FH*'s score of 7 ('closed' autocracies), and also those where the winning party or candidate received over 70 per cent of the vote, on the other hand (ibid, 368). That is, the authors focus on competitive, and exclude hegemonic authoritarian regimes. They also exclude foundational elections. Some of the elections occur in the same country twice or even three times. The dependent variable is liberalizing electoral outcome (increases in the levels of democracy scores in election year: at least by 1 on *FH* score and by 3 on Polity score).

I build upon this dataset in the following manner. Firstly, I exclude elections in non-presidential regimes (e.g., Albania, Singapore and Malaysia). Secondly, to the 35 presidential elections held in 1990-2002 I add 55 more elections from 1990-2004. The modified data include 90 elections in all presidential regimes, even those with incumbents gaining more than 70 per cent of votes. The sample now includes hegemonic authoritarian regimes, such as Egypt, Uzbekistan or Tajikistan. The reason behind the inclusion is twofold. Firstly, the opposition might boycott certain elections, which would inflate executive vote shares but does not necessarily render such regimes uncompetitive. For example, in 1996 elections in Zimbabwe the incumbent Mugabe gained 92.8 per cent after two main contenders withdrew from the race in protest. Later, in the 2002 election, Mugabe gained 56.2 per cent, even though the *FH* democracy scores deteriorated from 5 in 1996 to 6 in 2002. Secondly, the 70 per cent cut point is rather arbitrary. Kyrgyzstan was not included in

Howard and Roessler's (2006) study, yet President Akayev, who gained 74.5 per cent in 2000 elections (above the 70 per cent threshold), was subsequently ousted after the 2005 elections in a splendid example of a liberalizing electoral outcome. The presidential succession of 2003 in Azerbaijan nearly resulted in another liberalizing electoral outcome despite its high executive vote margins.

These broader criteria, however, leads to the inclusion of several non-competitive plebiscite "elections" (Syria, Egypt), where the chances for democratic breakthrough are minuscule. I additionally estimate the sample of elections below 75 per cent margins separately. Also, I match the executive turnover with leaders at the time of elections and identify incumbents and their designated successors. There are only three elections with both incumbents and their designated successors absent (following military coups). I examine every election and report the name of the incumbent and successor (Gleditsch, Goemans and Chiozza 2006), as well as their electoral performance. Variable definitions and data sources are described in appendix.

Thus, I re-estimate and re-specify the Howard and Roessler (2006) model, focusing on succession in presidential regimes, and add hegemonic party and international democracy diffusion variables. I also estimate an OLS regression, with votes cast for incumbent/successor as the dependent variable and using a number of new parameters that are likely to affect the vote.

The liberalizing electoral outcome is a function of whether a successor or an incumbent runs (*Successor*), opposition unity (*Opposition coalition*), the average number of anti-governmental demonstrations in year prior to election and election year (*Opposition mobilization*), economic factors (*Growth*), international and global factors (*FDI flows and*

Foreign Aid per capita, both averaged as above), *Democracy* as the regime's average *FH* civil liberties score for the two years prior to the election; *Prior Liberalization*: whether regimes experienced changes on democracy score 5 years prior to elections. I refer the reader to Howard and Roessler (2006) article for a more detailed discussion (ibid, 370-74). Their major explanatory variable is the *Unity of the Opposition*. Thus, the model includes actor-centered parameters, as well as economic and political structural factors and is well-suited to test the impact of presidential succession on democratic transition while controlling for other parameters.

The diffusion of ideas and policies across borders is a topic that has been of concern to social sciences in the past several decades and has recently been tackled by political methodologists.⁴ In a recent paper on diffusion of democracy, Gleditsch and Ward (2006) employ a battery of parameters to measure diffusion, such as the proportion of democracies locally and globally, as well as democratic transitions locally.

To account for the demonstration effects of 'stunning elections', I add two new variables: *Regional Liberalization* and *Regional Transitions*. I count the number of liberalizing outcomes in the region, 3 years prior to election.⁵ Clearly, the opposition's efforts to mobilize and win elections in one country were triggered and mobilized by the successful efforts in other countries; the opposition activists traveled and shared their methods and practices, international donor programs were designed according to the successfully implemented ones, etc.⁶ (Carothers 2003; McFaul 2005).

[FIGURE 1 IS ABOUT HERE]

⁴Beck et al. 2006; Cederman and Gleditsch 2004; Darmofal 2006; Franzese and Hays 2006; Gleditsch and Ward 2000, 2006; O'Loughlin et al. 1998.

⁵Regional groups are West Africa, Middle Africa, South Africa, East Africa, Middle East and North Africa, CEE/NIS, Central America, South America, and Asia

⁶*Washington Post*. 2003, November 25. Tbilisi's "Revolution of Roses" Mentored by Serbian Activists: Foes of Milosević Trained Georgians, (by Peter Baker) Page A22.

Figure One is a two-by-two matrix that plots the occurrence of democratic transitions depending on whether incumbent or successor is running in elections. Four elections in quadrants are included for illustrative purposes. In 67 elections, or 74 per cent of cases, incumbents run in elections, and in 23 elections (26 per cent) incumbents do not run for one reason or another. As can be seen, when an incumbent runs, a liberalizing electoral outcome occurs in only 12 per cent of elections (8 cases) in presidential regimes (1990-2004). In contrast, democratic breakthrough occurs in 52 per cent of elections (12 cases) in which an incumbent does not run.

Comparing vote shares, we can see that even if incumbents lose, they still gain 7 per cent more than losing successors, and when the former win, they perform better by 11 per cent, than winning successors. Overall, incumbents obtain 68.6 (18) v. successors' 49.9 (21) per cent of popular vote in the first and/or only round. This difference could be attributed to the fact that successors are weaker and thus gain fewer votes: because they cannot commit electoral fraud on a sufficiently large scale; or they lack resources to rally and buy their supporters or to provide goods for their winning coalition; or because of unusually high international pressure.

While the size of fraud is difficult to estimate, the Database of Political Institutions, DPI (Beck et al. 2001) includes a variable coded as 1 if allegations of fraud were reported. On average, incumbents win 71.5 v. 66.1 per cent in fraudulent v. 'clean' elections, while successors gain 49 in 'clean' and only 43.8 per cent in fraudulent elections. While we should treat these data with caution, it could also indicate that successors are less adept at manipulating the ballot when there is uncertainty along the chain of command.

Model Estimation and Discussion

Models 1 – 4 are specified as logit regressions, with a binary dependent variable denoting democratic change or not. Model 5 is an OLS regression with per cent of votes cast for the executive (incumbent or his successor) in first and or only round (Beck et al. 2001) as the dependent variable. Models 1 – 3 are estimated on the same estimation sample. All four models are specified with robust (cluster-adjusted) standard errors. Unit of analysis is election.

The first, ‘base’ model follows the specification in the original Howard and Roessler (2006) article, extending the sample to 90 elections in presidential regimes, with robust (cluster-adjusted) standard errors. Like in their estimation, the unity of the opposition, incumbent turnover and mobilization have statistically significant effects. In fact, in all three logit models (1 – 3), when *Successor* runs instead of incumbent, the probability of democratic change increases. Likewise, when the opposition is united, the probability increases in all three specifications. Economic growth exerts a negative influence on democratic transitions: economic performance helps to sustain regimes in power the world over (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, 302-9). Likewise, low levels of democracy reduce the chances for change — no doubt, democratic breakthrough was much nigher in Ukraine of 2004, with democracy levels of 4 (on a seven-point scale, with the 7 being the worst score), than in neighboring Belarus with its score of 6.

[TABLE 1 IS ABOUT HERE]

Models Two and Three are estimated on the basis of the same sample of 90 elections in presidential regimes (1990-2004). In Model Two I test the impact of the hegemonic party on electoral outcomes. Clearly, the presence of the hegemonic party reduces the chances

for democratic change. The effects of *Successor* remain significant, however, whether the former runs in a hegemonic-party regime or not. In Model Three I add two ‘diffusion’ parameters, indicating overall regional levels of democracy and instances of democratic transitions in the region. Clearly, demonstration effects do seem to be at work: the *Regional Transitions* variable is positively significant, indicating that successful ‘stunning’ elections in the region affect the probability of similar elections nearby. Interestingly enough, preceding transitions in the region seem to cancel the effects of preceding mobilization in the country — the effects of this variable become insignificant. The overall degree of *Regional Liberalization* does not affect democratic change, however. I perform the likelihood-ratio test on these three models and the results indicate that the prediction is improved with each new specification. Model 4 is estimated on a more ‘democratic sample’ – elections in which winners obtain less than 75 per cent. As can be seen, the latter estimation produces results very similar to the more inclusive models.

Finally, I employ OLS regression (Model Five) in order to test whether successors are expected to obtain fewer votes. In this model I include all variables from Model Two apart from *Prior Liberalization*. If binary models are capable of predicting whether regime elites win or lose, the OLS model with a similar specification should predict votes cast for the incumbents/successors. If the latter obtain less than 50 per cent in majoritarian elections, they lose. I expect successors to obtain fewer votes, the unity of opposition should decrease votes cast for regime representative, growth should improve vote shares, and lower democracy scores should be associated with the larger shares.

I also included several variables that are expected to influence votes cast: *Political Constraints* (Henisz 2002), *Fraud* (Beck et al. 2005) and vote cast for the executive in previous elections (*Previous Vote*). Political constraints make it more difficult to commit

fraud and amass large margins. They also account for the overall institutionalization (yet they also are correlated with *Democracy*). Reported fraud indicates that votes margins are probably inflated. Votes cast in the past election are included for two reasons: to control for the typical executive vote in a country as an additional control for the degrees of democracy, and also because regime elites coordinate election returns on the basis of past performance so as not to look weaker than in the past. The ratio of votes cast to votes cast in previous election is 1.03; for incumbents it is 1.1 and for successors it is 0.85: overall, the executives tend to gain more in each consecutive elections, while successors gain less than the outgoing rulers. Simpser (2005) and Magaloni (2006) explain possible reasons behind amassing large margins of victory: to discourage opposition supporters from voting, establish and signal a long-term dominance and co-opt the opposition. Large margins can also result from the competition between regional operators as to who could deliver the largest vote, etc.⁷

Results of Model 5 indicate that *Previous Vote* affects the proportion of votes cast for incumbent at present, *Democracy* is also highly significant: more dictatorial rulers do gain more votes. Economic *Growth* is also conducive for gaining more votes in presidencies throughout the world. Likewise, the fact of *Successor* running decreases the vote share received by the representative of the regime.

[FIGURE 2 IS ABOUT HERE]

Figure 2 visualizes results. I plot the predicted values of democratic transition during elections (*liberalizing electoral outcome, LEO*) and *Democracy* (Freedom House score, 2

⁷In 1999 elections in Kazakhstan, regional governors responsible for rallying the voters to polling stations and ensuring required turnout, apparently competed against each other on who would be able to ‘deliver’ the highest vote for the president. As a result, Nazarbaev gained unprecedented 91.15 per cent of vote cast. One journalist rather appropriately called him ‘Nursultan the Ninety-Two Percent.’

years prior to elections, averaged), weighted by votes cast for incumbent/successor. Points filled with colour represent observations where democratic transitions actually occur. The graph shows that the probability of transition is lowest for big-vote-winning incumbents, they also tend to be more authoritarian. In both categories of incumbents and successors, there is a slight evidence of a mild negative relationship between levels of *Democracy* and probability. Evidently, the model predicts that incumbents will succeed.

Finally, holding all independent variables at their means, I calculate first differences to assess the influence of changes in parameters of interest on the probability of democratic breakthrough (Model 3) and calculate expected values for votes cast for the regime representatives (Model 5).⁸ Figure 3 plots the predicted changes in probabilities and values. The lines represent 95 per cent confidence intervals, and all included parameters are statistically significant.

[FIGURE 3 IS ABOUT HERE]

The overall probability that the dependent variable takes on the value of 1 is 8 percent (s.e. = 4) holding all predictors at their means. I find that all things being equal, the probability of transition increases by 34.8 per cent (s.e. = 15) when the incumbent does not run. Interestingly enough, when a successor runs in the hegemonic party regime, the former still increases the chances for change, but with less magnitude: by 13.3 per cent.

Also, the shift from the closed authoritarian regime to electoral democracy (from 7 to 2.5 on *Democracy* scale in 2 years prior to election) results in the drop of probability of transition by 24 per cent. This is a rather extreme counterfactual scenario, as such significant improvement can hardly occur. Note, however, that Benin democratized very

⁸See King et al. 2000; Tomz et al. 2003.

rapidly: from $FH = 7$ in 1989 to 2.5 in 1991. There is no surprise that during this opening the incumbent president Kerekou suffered defeat at elections. Likewise, successful democratic breakthrough in the region gives the boost for democratization in this region by 5.5 per cent, but 3 successful ‘stunning’ elections in a row increase it by 31 per cent. Indeed, electoral revolutions in Slovakia 1998, Croatia 1999, Serbia 2000, Georgia 2003, Ukraine 2004 and Kyrgyzstan in 2005 was inspired by successes of their neighbors.⁹ All things being equal, incumbency gives additional 8.3 per cent of votes in a first round. Comparing successors’ performance in hegemonic and non-hegemonic party regimes, the former are expected to gain 3 per cent more than the latter, however.

Incumbents, Successors and Democratic Transitions

In the theoretical section of this paper, I proposed the hypotheses that successors are more likely to lose elections than incumbents and this fact increases the probability of democratic transitions. The results of my statistical analyses support these hypotheses: successors gain a smaller proportion of votes than incumbents, and their participation in election increases the chances of democratic transition. Indeed, when an incumbent runs, breakthrough occurs in only 12 per cent of such elections (8) and does not occur in 88 per cent (59). When a successor runs, a liberalizing outcome occurs in 52 per cent (12) and does not occur in 48 per cent (11).

The hypotheses stipulated in the beginning of this paper predicted that the incumbents should win and successors lose. Since we live in a probabilistic world, the quadrants representing these outcomes in Figure 1 are not empty. In an ideal world, every time an

⁹E.g., *Eurasian Daily Monitor*. 2004, October 13. “Ukrainian Authorities Target Student Youth Election-Monitoring Groups” 1 (104).

incumbent runs, there is no democratic change, and every time a successor runs, there is a change. In other words, the upper left and the lower right quadrants of this figure should be empty. In order to test under what conditions theory does not hold, in this section I focus on outliers: elections when incumbents run and lose, and successors run and win.

Incumbents Run and Lose

Incumbents run and lose only in 12 per cent of cases in the sample (8 out of 67). A closer look at these elections could reveal what it takes to defeat a standing incumbent in elections in the developing world. I discard three cases in which presidents either did not participate in elections or did not lose, even though democratic change occurred (see note to Figure 1). Altogether, five incumbent presidents lost: the incumbent president Ion Iliescu of Romania lost in 1996 (only to retain office back in 2000); President Noriega of Nicaragua lost reelection in 1990 (the only Latin American ‘reelection loser’ according to Cheibub and Przeworski 1999) - only to return to office in 2006; in Benin the multiparty elections were introduced after a long one-party rule and incumbent Kerekou quite unexpectedly failed to win the first round of 2001 presidential elections and lost in the second round (to return to office in 1996) (Decalo 1997); Slobodan Milošević of Yugoslavia lost in 2000 in a democratic revolution (‘Serbian October’), and President Abdou Diouf of Senegal lost to Abdoulaye Wade in 2000.

The defeats of Milošević in Serbia and of Diouf in Senegal indicate that long-standing incumbents are extremely difficult to unseat. In the latter case, Diouf has won 4 reelections as a president with an unlimited mandate since 1981, yet each time with smaller margins. Finally, in 2000 he lost. ‘Many analysts were predicting that Diouf would prevail again, with Wade being confirmed as the eternal front-runner among the challengers’ (Ottaway

2003, 101). In February of 2000 Diouf was able to win the first round of the presidential election, yet he was unable to garner the necessary majority of the popular vote required to prevent a run-off election. It is very likely that if incumbents fail to win a first round, they fail to win the second, as their failure mobilizes their opposition and signals their weakness – the opposition became united for a second round only after Diouf failed to win in a first round. The former minister Niasse joined the second-runner Wade in exchange for the promise of a prime ministerial post. Through a series of political arrangements in the opposition camp and following a series of protests, the opposition candidate Abdoulaye Wade was finally able to defeat President Diouf in a second round.

While these cases indicate that incumbents are not immune to losing, these are also examples of the extraordinary efforts that are necessary to unseat the standing presidents: all five cases can be counted as ‘watershed’ or ‘stunning’ elections (Huntington 1991). It is easier to defeat successors. One can also view transitions in these elections as the result of the accumulation of random hazards (Przeworski and Limongi 1997) – the long-standing rulers could have failed because they encountered more problems and made more errors than usual — in other 59 elections, incumbents prevail.

Incumbents Do Not Run, Successors Win

There are 11 elections recorded as successors running and winning (the upper left quadrant). I discard three cases in which either there were no successors or they lost, even if not to the pro-democratic opposition (see note to Figure 1).

There are eight elections (out of 23, or 35 per cent), which successors won. In 2 cases the designated successors had a very early start and consolidated their power base in advance and managed to prevent possible elite splits during succession. In Russia an aging

and highly unpopular President Yeltsin appointed Prime Minister Putin as his designated successor in 1999 well in advance of the forthcoming 2000 poll. Then Yeltsin retired three months prior to the 2000 elections so that Putin became the de facto president for the crucial pre-election period, and was able to consolidate his power base. In Azerbaijan in 2003, terminally ill incumbent president, Heidar Aliev, began the electoral campaign but then at the last moment withdrew in favor of his son, Ilham. Having a designated successor prevented elite splits and uncertainty.¹⁰ Like in Russia, Aliev junior had an unusually early start and had been a de facto incumbent president prior to the vote. Together with Azerbaijan in 2003, Syria in 2000 represents another case of dynastic succession, in which Bashar Al-Assad succeeded his father, endorsed by a plebiscite. Elite were assured that the status quo would remain not only by the family ties between the rulers, but also by the presence of the hegemonic party.

Likewise, in five more elections presidential succession was facilitated by a strong hegemonic party (Mexico 1994, Malawi 2004, Djibouti 1999, Mozambique 2004 and the Zambia 2001). I elaborated on Mexican exceptionalism and the stringent adherence to the no re-election rule in the theoretical section. In Mexico in 1994 president Salinas honored term limits and stepped down, like all Mexican presidents had done for 60 years prior to him. The election of Zedillo ensued, even though he was not the expected successor. In Djibouti, 82-year-old president Gouled stepped down in favor of his nephew, Gulleh, who promptly became the new ruler. The hegemonic People's Rally for Progress party ensured a smooth succession. Likewise, in Malawi, having failed to extend his term, the outgoing president Muluzi appointed Bingu wa Mutharika, Minister of Economic Planning and Development and his opponent in 1999 presidential elections, as his successor for 2004 elections, which

¹⁰There were reports that the President Aliev was actually dead while running for the Presidency. *Al-Ahram International Edition*. 2003, August 7-13. "Like Father, Like Son". No. 650.

the latter won.¹¹ (VonDoepp 2005). In Mozambique president Chissano appointed Armando Guebuzo as his successor and the candidate from the ruling, Frelimo party, and stepped down, following the victory of Guebuzo.

In Zambian elections of 2001 the outgoing President Chiluba did not support Mwanawasa, a former vice president, who was selected as the governing party, MMD's presidential candidate for 2001 elections. The splits within the ruling elite were so severe that two more former vice presidents, Godfrey Miyanda and General Christon Tembo, ran against each other and another former vice president, Mwanawasa (Burnell 2002). The designated successor was endorsed by the governing party, however, and prevailed.

To sum up, out of eight cases of successors running and 'winning' (no democratic change), six successors won elections with the help of the hegemonic parties and two were appointed well in advance, so that they could consolidate their early incumbency advantage. In fact, two were sons of the incumbent presidents. In all eight cases elite splits did not occur, successors remained in control, displaying all the characteristics of standing incumbents, and proceeded to win the elections. The opposition failed to coordinate the collective action and to mobilize for the 'stunning elections.' These exceptions suggest that under certain circumstances, successors do not have to lose and succession can proceed in an orderly manner. The process of presidential succession seems to be mitigated by the presence of strong hegemonic parties: institutions ensure the continuation of careers and policies of regime elites despite the uncertainty of executive turnover (Brownlee 2004). Strong, hegemonic parties are able to engineer the ex post elite contracting, and the early delegation of power that signals that successors are in control and de facto incumbents, facilitates presidential succession.

¹¹ *Chronicle*. 2003, July 7. "Malawi: Dictatorship Defeated!"

Conclusions and Future Research

Clearly, the absence of incumbents is important for democratic transitions: it increases the probability of a successful democratic breakthrough by 35 per cent during elections in presidential regimes. Controlling for other factors, when incumbent presidents are absent, successors are more likely to lose elections. Thus, they obtain 8 per cent less than the longer-standing rulers irrespective of the degree of authoritarianism. Successors in hegemonic-party regimes tend to perform better, however. Because since 1990 partly- and non-democratic regimes are challenged by the pro-democratic opposition, rather than by the pro-Soviet, nationalist, fascist or other anti-system forces of the earlier periods, defeat at elections is very likely to lead to democratization.

The findings in this paper indicate that we should not neglect the dynamics of succession in presidential regimes when we try to understand and predict democratic transitions. Using statistical analyses and a careful examination of all the outlier observations, I found that the stipulated hypotheses hold: presidential succession does increase the chances for democratic breakthrough in the developing world. The process of democratic transition thrives on uncertainty and elite splits. Presidential succession often triggers these splits and uncertainty, because successors are relatively weak and have yet to consolidate their incumbency advantage. As the experience of battling with Milošević in 2000 and Abdu Diouf in 2000 suggests, defeating a standing incumbent is possible, but extremely difficult.

Incumbent turnover occurs, however, only if incumbents do not run for one reason or another. In the sample, 23 elections record executive turnover. Out of these 23 cases, 3 presidents were ousted in coups or forced to resign and could not run, 4 died in office, 4 stepped down even though they could stand, and 12 presidents stepped down because of

term limits. In this paper, I treated executive turnover as an independent variable, but it would be interesting to explore in the future what makes some presidents obey their constitutions and step down when required, and others to attempt and extend their rule. Out of those 12 in the sample that honored term limits, two presidents clearly flirted with the idea of a third term, but in the end stepped down: Chiluba of Zambia and Muluzi of Malawi.¹² In a number of elections turnover did not occur because presidents scrapped restrictions: for example, in Gabon in 2003 or Togo in 2002. Clearly, what determines presidential decision-making during succession is something to explore in the future, both theoretically and empirically.

Term limits can be observed because of a very powerful precedent and the agreement among elites, like the example of single six-year terms in Mexico illustrates. Recent literature argues that institutions matter in dictatorships (Gandhi and Przeworski 2006; Brownlee 2004): they can provide guarantees to the groups whose support is often necessary for a ruler to stay in power, serve as a contract between members of the winning coalition, coopt potential challengers, etc. Also, rulers could introduce and obey term limits in the process of self-imposed liberalization and signalling their ‘type’ to the international community.

The succession behaviour and its outcomes have direct effects on the prospects of democracy in many developing countries. To measure the affinity between incumbents and their successors and to map this affinity to the outcomes of succession is an interesting project to study in the future. Likewise, the presence of hegemonic parties seems to reduce the uncertainty and costs of succession in presidential regimes. There are other possible factors influencing how succession interacts with transition. Magaloni stipulates that when presidential elections take place concurrently with legislative elections, stakes can be lower for

¹² *Times of Zambia (Lusaka)*. 1998, October 13. “Will Chiluba Desire Another Third Term.” 13 October 1998; *Chronicle*. 2003, July 7. “Malawi: Dictatorship Defeated!”; VonDoepp (2005).

incumbent elites because they can lose presidential office, but still retain legislative seats (Magaloni 2006, 231-233). Indeed, I find that 60 per cent of democratizing elections in this sample are concurrent (legislative and presidential), while only 40 per cent of regular elections are. Further studies should focus on the interaction of incentives and institutions during succession and study which institutions and elite pacts could ease the ex post contracting in order to ensure transition to and consolidation of democracy in developing world.

References

- Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Banks, Arthur. 2005. *Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive, 1815-2003*. Binghamton, New York: Arthur S. Banks, CD-ROMs.
- Barzel, Yoram. 2002. *A Theory of the State: Economic Rights, Legal Rights, and the Scope of the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bates, Robert H. 2001. *Prosperity and Violence: the Political Economy of Development*. New York, W. W. Norton.
- Beck, N., Gleditsch, K. S. and Beardsley, K. C. 2006. "Space is more than Geography: Using Spatial Econometrics in the Study of Political Economy." *International Studies Quarterly* 50(1): 27-44.
- Beck, Thorsten, George Clarke, Alberto Groff, Philip Keefer, and Patrick Walsh, 2001. "New Tools in Comparative Political Economy: The Database of Political Institutions." *World Bank Economic Review*. 15(1): 165-176 (version DPI 2004).
- Bienen, Henry, and Nicolas Van de Walle. 1991. *Of Time and Power: Leadership Duration in the Modern World*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Brownlee, Jason. 2004. "Ruling Parties and Durable Authoritarianism", Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, September 2-5, 2004.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Alastair Smith, Randolph Siverson, James Morrow. 2003. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Burkhart R.E. and Michael S. Lewis-Beck. 1994. "Comparative Democracy-the Economic Development Thesis." *American Political Science Review* (88): 903-910.
- Burling, Robbins. 1974. *The Passage of Power: Studies in Political Succession*. New York: Academic Press.
- Burnell, Peter. 2002. "Zambia's 2001 Elections: the Tyranny of Small Decisions, "Non-decisions" and "Not Decisions." *Third World Quarterly* 23(6).
- Carothers, Thomas. 2003. "Why Dictators Aren't Dominoes." *Foreign Policy*.
- Castaneda, Jorge. 1993. *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War*. New York: Knopf.
- Castaneda, Jorge. 2000. *Perpetuating Power: How Mexican Presidents Were Chosen*. New York: The New York Press.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik and Kristian Gleditsch. 2004. "Conquest and Regime Change: an Evolutionary Model of the Spread of Democracy and Peace." *International Studies Quarterly* 48(3): 7296-7303.
- Cheibub, Jose and Adam Przeworski. 1999. "Accountability for Economic Outcomes". In *Democ-*

- racy, Accountability, and Representation*, edited by Adam Przeworski, Susan Stokes, Bernard Manin. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Colomer, Josep. 2000. *Strategic Transitions: Game Theory and Democratization*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Darmofal, D. 2006. "Spatial Econometrics and Political Science." Working paper, University of South Carolina.
- Decalo, Samuel. 1997. 'Benin: First of the New Democracies.' In John F. Clarke and David E. Gardiner. (Eds.) *Political Reform in Francophone Africa*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 4161.
- Deutsch, Karl. 1961. "Social Mobilization and Political Development." *American Political Science Review* 55 (3): 493-510.
- Di Palma, Giuseppe. 1990. *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Diamond, Larry J. 1993. "Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered." *American Behavioral Scientist* (35).
- Egorov, George, Konstantin Sonin. 2005. "The Killing Game: Reputation and Knowledge in Non-Democratic Succession." *mimeo*.
- Epstein, David, Robert Bates, Jack Goldstone, Sharyn O'Halloran and Ida Kristensen. 2006. "Democratic Transitions". *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3): 551-569.
- Franzese, Robert and Jude Hays. 2006. "Strategic Interaction among EU Governments in Active Labor Market Policy-making: Subsidiarity and Policy Coordination under the European Employment Strategy." *European Union Politics* 7(2): 167-189.
- Franzese, Robert J. 2002. *Macroeconomic Policies of Developed Democracies*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gandhi, Jennifer and Adam Przeworski. 2006. "Cooperation, Cooptation, and Rebellion under Dictatorships." *Economics and Politics* 18(1): 1-26.
- Gleditsch, Kristian and Michael Ward. 2006. "Diffusion and the International Context of Democratization." *International Organization* 60: 911-933.
- Gleditsch, Kristian, Hein Goemans and Giacomo Chiozza. 2006. *Archigos: A Data Base on Leaders 1875 - 2004*.
- Gleditsch, Kristian and Michael Ward. 2000. "Peace and War in Time and Space: the Role of Democratization." *International Studies Quarterly* 43: 1-29.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2001. "A Peaceful Turnover in Ghana." *Journal of Democracy* (12) 2: 103-117.
- Hall, Linda. 1981. *Alvaro Obregon: Power and Revolution in Mexico, 1911-1920*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.
- Henisz, Witold. 2002. "The Institutional Environment for Infrastructure Investment." *Industrial and Corporate Change* 11(2) (POLCON 2005 Release).

- Herz, John H. 1952 "The Problem of Successorship in Dictatorial Regimes; A Study in Comparative Law and Institutions." *Journal of Politics* 14 (1). 19 - 40.
- Howard, Marc, Philip Roessler. 2006. "Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes". *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2): 365-381.
- Huntington, Samuel. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Karklins, Rasma and Roger Petersen. 1993. "Decision Calculus of Protesters and Regimes - Eastern-Europe 1989." *Journal of Politics* 55(3): 588-614.
- Karl, Terry. 1990. "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America". *Comparative Politics* 23(9).
- King, Gary, Michael Tomz, and Jason Wittenberg. 2000. "Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation." *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 2 (April): 347-61.
- Kitschelt, Herbert P. 1986. "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest – Antinuclear Movements in 4 Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 16: 57-85.
- Kuran, Timur. 1991. "Now Out of Never: the Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44(1): 7-48.
- Kurrild-Klitgaard, Peter. 2000. "The Constitutional Economics of Autocratic Succession." *Public Choice* 103: 63-84.
- Lerner, D. 1958. *The Passing of Traditional Society*. NY: Free Press Glencoe.
- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism". *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 51-65.
- Lipset, S. M. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy." *American Political Science Review* 53: 69-105.
- Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McAdam, Doug, Sidney G. Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McFaul, Michael. 2005. "Transitions from Postcommunism." *Journal of Democracy* 16 (3).
- McFaul, Michael. 2002. "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World". *World Politics* 54: 212-44.
- Meyer, David S. 2004. "Protest and Political Opportunities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 125-145.
- Muller, Edwin N. 1995. "Economic Determinants of Democracy." *American Sociological Review* 60, 966-982.
- Munck, Gerardo L. and Richard Snyder. 2007 forthcoming. *Passion, Craft and Method in Comparative Politics*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

- O'Loughlin, J., M. Ward, C. Lofdahl, J. Cohen, D. Brown, D. Reilly, K. Gleditsch and M. Shin. 1998. "The Diffusion of Democracy, 1946-1994." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88 (4).
- Ottaway, M. 2003. *Democracy Challenged: the Rise of Semi-authoritarianism*. Washington, D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Przeworski, Adam. 1991. *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Przeworski, Adam, Jose Cheibub, Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-being in the World, 1950-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Przeworski, A., Fernando Limongi 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49: 155-84.
- Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, Evelyn H. Stephens and John D. Stephens. 1992. *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Schedler, A. 2002. "The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2):36-50.
- Shugart, Matthew and John Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Simpser, Alberto. 2005. "Making Votes Not Count: Strategic Incentives for Electoral Corruption". PhD dissertation, Stanford University.
- Smith, Benjamin. 2005. "Life of the Party: the Origins of Regime Breakdown and Persistence under Single-Party Rule." *World Politics* 57: 421-51.
- Stepan, Alfred. 1986. "Paths Towards Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations". In O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead (eds.). *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Outcomes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Thompson, Mark and Philipp Kuntz. 2004. "Stolen Elections: The Case of the Serbian October." *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4):159-172.
- Throup, David. 2003. "The Kenya General Election: December 27, 2002." *CSIS: Africa Notes*, No. 14. Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- Tomz, Michael, Jason Wittenberg, and Gary King. 2003. *CLARIFY: Software for Interpreting and Presenting Statistical Results*. Version 2.1. Stanford University, University of Wisconsin, and Harvard University.
- Tsebelis, George .2002. *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work*. New York: Russell Sage and Princeton University Press.
- Tullock, Gordon. 1987. *Autocracy*. Boston: Kluwer Academic.
- VonDoepp, P. 2005. "The Problem of Judicial Control in Africa's Neopatrimonial Democracies: Malawi and Zambia". *Political Science Quarterly* 120 (2): 275-301.

Variable Definitions and Data Sources

Democratic Change (*Liberalizing Electoral Outcome*) 1 if $\Delta\text{POLITY} \geq 3$ and $\Delta\text{FH} \geq 1$ (democratization) in election year, 55 new presidential elections are added to H&R data.

Vote share Per cent of votes in the 1st/only round, cast for incumbent/successor, DPI.

Successor 0 if incumbent, 1 if successor (incumbent does not run, or president served < 1 year prior to elections). Every effort was made to identify the designated successor in cases in which incumbents do not run. Table 1 in Appendix lists all incumbent presidents and their successors.

Opposition Coalition 1 if Opposition united, 0 otherwise. The author followed the coding by H&R, 55 new obs. are added.

Opposition Mobilization The average number of anti-governmental demonstrations, a year preceding elections and election year, added from Banks.

Growth GDP growth per capita, per cent, averaged 2 years prior to elections, WDI.

FDI FDI as per cent of GDP, averaged 2 years prior to elections, WDI.

Foreign Aid Aid per capita, averaged 2 years prior to elections, WDI.

Democracy Averaged FH civil liberties score, 2 years prior to elections, FH.

Prior Liberalization 0 if $\text{FH}_{t-5} \geq \text{FH}_{t-1}$, 1 otherwise, FH.

Hegemonic Party 1 if regime is hegemonic party autocracy at the time of the election, as coded in Magaloni (2006, 36–41): (1) regularized multiparty competition, (2) the chief executive and legislature are elected, (3) the incumbent held office for more than 20 y., (4) the ruling party never lost elections. I cross-check these regimes and add those coded as the single-party regimes in Smith (2005, 424).

Regional Transitions Number of transitions ($\text{DV} = 1$) in the region (West Africa, Middle Africa, South Africa, East Africa, Middle East and North Africa, CEE/NIS, Central America, South America, and Asia), 3 years prior to an election.

Regional Liberalization Averaged FH score in the region, year preceding election and election year.

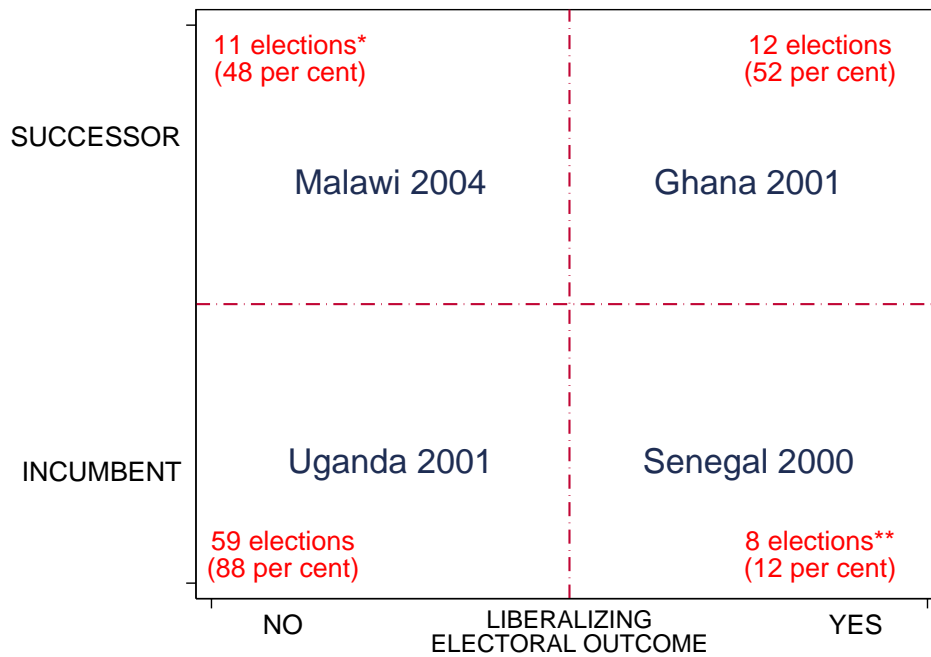
Previous Vote Vote share cast for the winner of the previous elections, DPI.

Political Constraints *PolconIII*: the feasibility of policy change on the [0, 1] scale, where 0 is the unlimited authority, Henisz (2002).

Electoral Fraud *Fraud* reported in elections, yes (1) or no (0), DPI.

Data sources: H&R: Howard and Roessler (2006); FH: Freedom House (various years); DPI: Database of Political Institutions (Beck et al. 2001); WDI: World Development Indicators (World Bank); GFD: Global Financial Data (GFD database); Banks: Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive (Banks 2005).

Figure 1: Incumbency and Democratic Transitions



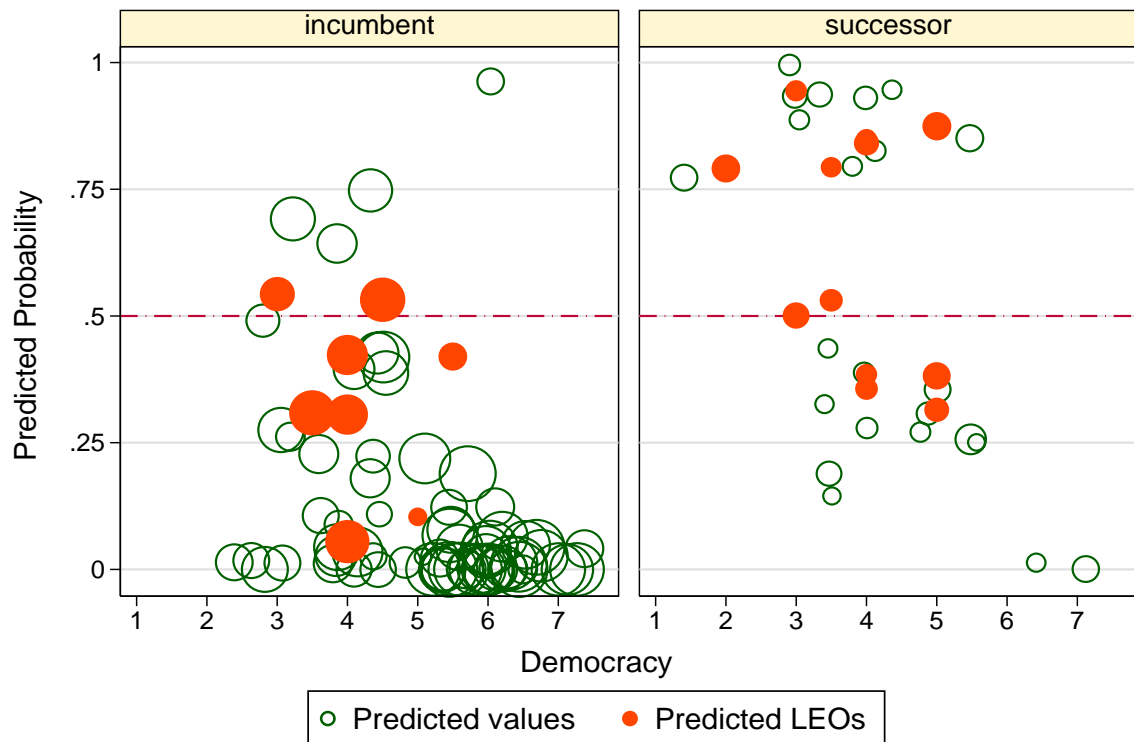
*Even though the executive turnover and no transition were observed, in 3 cases successors either lost or there were no successors. In Guinea-Bissau following the coup neither incumbent Veiera nor his successor participated in elections. In Guatemala of 1990 designated successor Cabrera Hidalgo did not even get past the first round. In Iranian elections of 1997 president Rafsanjani stepped down and his conservative 'successor' lost to the 'reformist' candidate Khatami. If we discard these 3 cases, the proportion goes down to 35 per cent (8 elections) **In Peru 2000 the incumbent Fujimori ran for a third term, and, proper speaking, won. He was subsequently ousted in a series of post-election protests. 'Rose revolution' in Georgia in 2003 followed the parliamentary elections in which incumbent did not run. In Ghana in 1996 the opposition made advances in the legislative elections, yet the incumbent president Rawlings won presidential contest that same year, so this case is not an incumbent's defeat as such. If we leave out these 3 cases, the proportion changes to 8 per cent (5 elections).

Table 1: Democratic Transitions During Elections in Presidential Regimes

	Logit	Regression	(1 – 4)	OLS (5)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Base	with	with Party	Excluding	Vote Share
	Model	Party	& Diffusion	votes > .75	(OLS)
Successor	2.377*** (.599)	3.080*** (.920)	2.919*** (.766)	2.888*** (.586)	-8.190** (1.636)
Opp. Coalition	1.983** (.870)	2.257** (.962)	1.719** (.723)	1.948*** (.705)	-3.908 (2.884)
Opp. Mobilization	.462*** (.066)	.365*** (.048)	.162 (.163)	.223 (.343)	-1.336 (1.055)
Growth	-.049* (.030)	-.075** (.025)	-.103** (.032)	-.123* (.048)	.419** (.155)
Foreign Aid	.001 (.007)	.003 (.006)	.008 (.009)	.001 (.006)	-.021 (.032)
FDI	-.102 (.117)	-.138 (.184)	-.118 (.161)	-.039 (.074)	-.012 (.203)
Democracy (FH)	-.702** (.356)	-.873** (.349)	-.670** (.293)	-.397* (.233)	6.341** (1.610)
Prior Liberalization	.447 (.713)	.239 (.742)	.530 (.824)	.700 (.825)	–
Hegemonic Party	–	-2.044** (.951)	-2.138** (.934)	-2.375** (.895)	2.066 (2.270)
Regional Transitions	–	–	.928** (.386)	.893** (.438)	–
Regional Liberalization	–	–	-.749 (.714)	-.489 (.765)	–
Previous Vote	–	–	–	–	.376** (.075)
Political Constraints	–	–	–	–	-12.224 (11.493)
Electoral Fraud	–	–	–	–	1.906 (2.863)
Intercept	-.073 (1.395)	1.014 (1.266)	3.109 (3.276)	1.126 (3.541)	11.661 (11.037)
N	90	90	90	60	90
Log-Likelihood	-29.195	-26.495	-24.003	-21.703	F = 22.71
Pseudo R^2	.39	.44	.50	.43	$R^2 = .62$

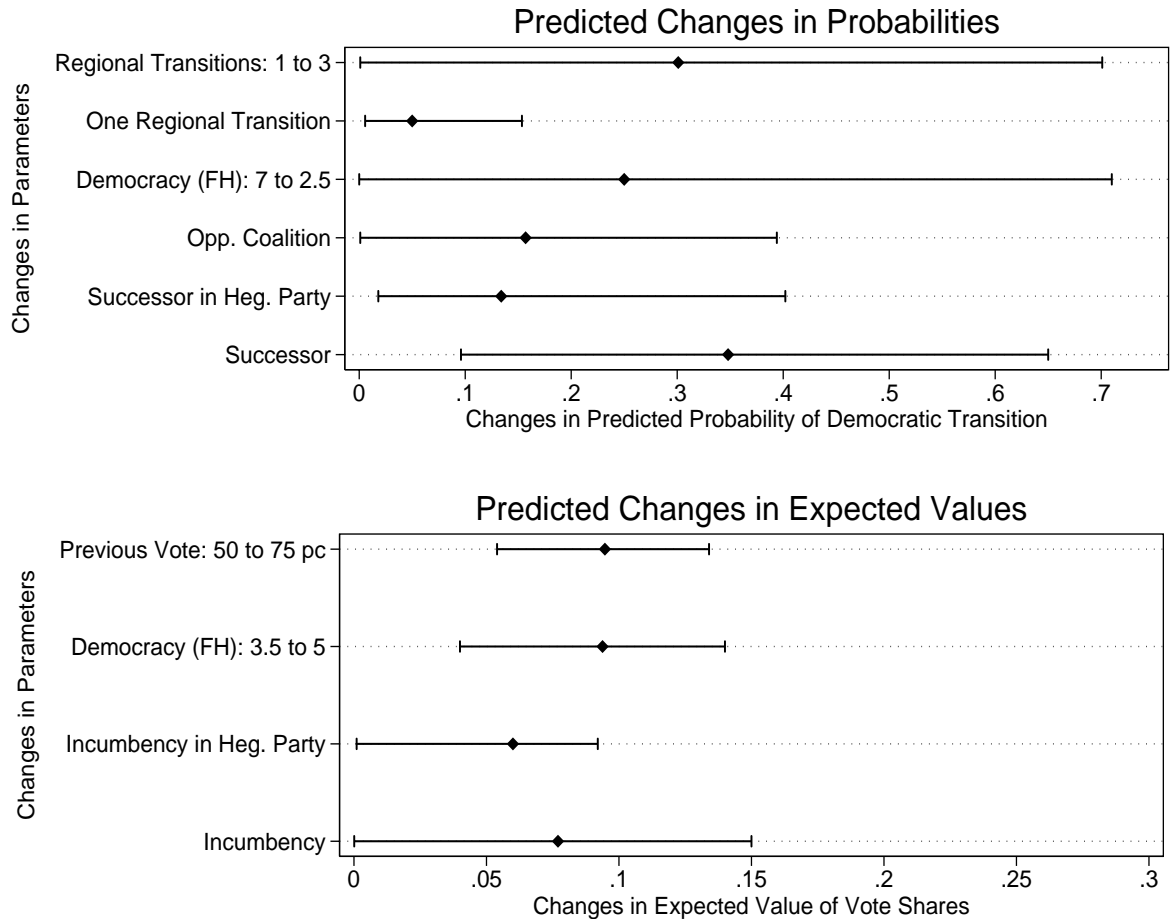
Models 1 - 4 estimate the probability of democratic transition during elections, 1990-2004, logit regression, with robust (cluster-adjusted) standard errors. Model 5 estimates the vote share cast for incumbent or successor in first/only round, OLS regression, with robust (cluster-adjusted) standard errors. *Significant at .1 level, **significant at .05 level, *** significant at .01 level. Robust (cluster-adjusted) standard errors in parentheses. Adjustments are made for within-region correlation, regions are specified as follows: West Africa, Middle Africa, East Africa, South Africa, Middle East and North Africa, NIS/CEE, Central America, South America, Asia.

Figure 2: Predicted Democratic Transitions, Incumbents and Successors



Plot of predicted values of democratic transition during elections and democracy (Freedom House averaged score, 2 years prior to elections), weighted by votes cast for incumbent/successor in first/only round, based on the results of Model 3. Points filled with colour represent observations where democratic transitions actually occur. If they are located above .5 probability line, they are deemed to be predicted correctly. Larger circles represent larger vote shares, in [23, 99] interval. The graph shows that the probability of transition is lowest for big-vote-winning authoritarian incumbents. The model predicts 13 transitions correctly, and fails to predict 7. Overall, the model predict 88 per cent of observations correctly ($p > .5$ and transition; $p < .5$ and no transition).

Figure 3: Simulated Effects on the Dependent Variable



Simulated effects represent the change in the predicted probability of the dependent variable using Model 3 (predicted probabilities of democratic transition) and Model 5 (expected values of votes cast for president/successor in first/only round), given changes in particular predictors. For example, the fact of successor running in elections (rather than incumbent) increases predicted probability of democratic change by 34.8 per cent. However, when incumbent runs in the hegemonic party regime, it increases the probability by only 13 per cent. Likewise, incumbent is expected to obtain 8 per cent more than successor, but successors hegemonic party system gain 3 more than successors in regular regimes.

Appendix

Table 1: Incumbents, Successors and Transitions

Transition	Incumb.	Election	Leader	Vote Share	Prev. Leader
transition	incumbent	Benin 1991	Kerekou	27.2	
no	incumbent	Burkina Faso 1998	Campaore	87.5	
transition	successor	Cote d'Ivoire ¹ 2000	Guei	32.7	Bedie
no	incumbent	Gambia 1996	Jammeh	55.76	
no	incumbent	Gambia 2001	Jammeh	52.6	
transition	incumbent	Ghana 1996	Rawlings	58.3	
transition	successor	Ghana 2000	Atta-Mills	44.8	Rawlings
no	incumbent	Guinea 1998	Conte	56.1	
no	incumbent	Guinea 2003	Conte	95.6	
no	successor	Guinea-Bissau 1999 ²	Kumba Yala	56.11	Vieira
no	incumbent	Mauritania 1997	Taya	90.1	
no	incumbent	Mauritania 2003	Taya	66.7	
no	incumbent	Niger 2004	Tandja	40.7	
no	incumbent	Nigeria 2003	Obasanjo	61.8	
no	incumbent	Senegal 1993	Diouf	73	
transition	incumbent	Senegal 2000	Diouf	41.6	
no	incumbent	Sierra Leone 2002	Kabbah	70.1	
no	incumbent	Togo 1998	Eyadema	52.1	
no	incumbent	Togo 2003	Eyadema	57.8	
no	incumbent	CAR 1999	Patasse	51.6	
no	incumbent	Cameroon 1997	Biya	92.6	
no	incumbent	Cameroon 2004	Biya	75.2	
no	incumbent	Chad 2001	Deby	67.3	
no	incumbent	Congo 2002	Sassou-Nguesso	89.4	
no	incumbent	Eq. Guinea 1996	Obiang	99	
no	incumbent	Eq. Guinea 2002	Obiang	99	
no	incumbent	Gabon 1998	Bongo	51.18	
no	successor	Djibouti 1999	Guelleh	72.02	Gouled
no	incumbent	Kenya 1997	D. arap Moi	40.6	
transition	successor	Kenya 2002	Kenyatta	30.6	Moi
no	incumbent	Malawi 1999	Muluzi	52.4	
no	successor	Malawi 2004	Mutharika	35.9	Muluzi
no	incumbent	Mozambique 1999	Chissano	52.3	
no	successor	Mozambique 2004	Guebuza	65	Chissano
no	incumbent	Rwanda 2003	Kagame	95	
no	incumbent	Uganda 1996	Museveni	75.5	
no	incumbent	Uganda 2001	Museveni	74.2	
no	successor	Zambia 2001 ³	Mwanawasa	72.5	Chiluba
no	incumbent	Zimbabwe 1990	Mugabe	83.5	
no	incumbent	Zimbabwe 1996	Mugabe	92.7	
no	incumbent	Zimbabwe 2002	Mugabe	56.2	
no	incumbent	Algeria 2004	Bouteflika	85	
no	incumbent	Egypt 1999 ⁴	Mubarak	99	
no	incumbent	Iran 1993	Rafsanjani	94.5	

Continued on next page

Table 1: Incumbents, Successors and Transitions (continued)

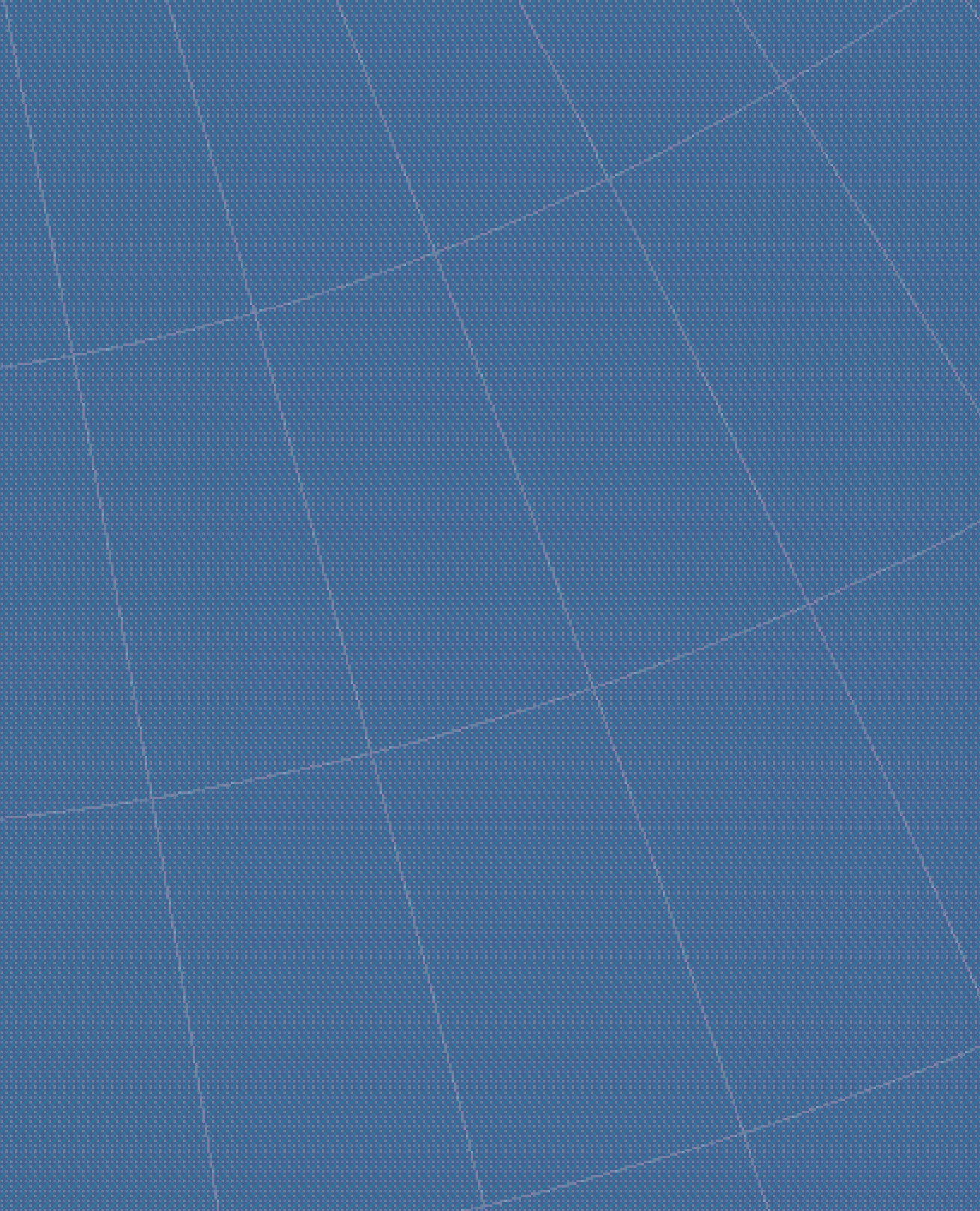
Transition	Incumb.	Election	Leader	Vote Share	Prev. Leader
no	successor	Iran 1997	Khatami	63.3	Rafsanjani
no	incumbent	Sudan 2000	Ahmad al-Bashir	86.5	
no	incumbent	Syria 1999 ⁴	Assad	99.9	
no	successor	Syria 2000 ⁴	B. Assad	99	
no	incumbent	Tunisia 1999	Ben Ali	99	
no	incumbent	Tunisia 2004	Ben Ali	94.5	
no	incumbent	Armenia 1996	Ter-Petrosian	83	
transition	successor	Armenia 1998	Kocharian	52	Ter-Petrosyan
no	incumbent	Armenia 2003	Kocharyan	48.3	
no	incumbent	Azerbaijan 1993	H. Aliev	99	
no	incumbent	Azerbaijan 1998	H. Aliev	77.6	
no	successor	Azerbaijan 2003	H. Aliev	76.8	Aliev
no	incumbent	Belarus 2001	Lukashenko	75.6	
no	incumbent	Belarus 2004 ⁵	Lukashenko	79.4	
no	incumbent	Croatia 1997	Tudjman	57	
transition	successor	Croatia 2000	Granic	26.7	Tudjman
no	incumbent	Georgia 2000	Shevarnadze	40.1	
transition	incumbent	Georgia 2003 ⁶	Shevarnadze	42.2	
no	incumbent	Kazakhstan 1999	Nazarbaev	81	
no	incumbent	Kyrgyzstan 1995	Akayev	71.6	
no	incumbent	Kyrgyzstan 2000	Akaev	74.5	
no	incumbent	Romania 1992	Iliescu	85.1	
transition	incumbent	Romania 1996	Iliescu	47.34	
no	incumbent	Russia 1996	Yeltsin	35.79	
no	successor	Russia 2000	Putin	50.6	Yeltsin
no	incumbent	Russia 2004	Putin	71.1	
no	incumbent	Tajikistan 1999	Rakhmonov	97	
no	incumbent	Ukraine 1999	Kuchma	38	
transition	successor	Ukraine 2004	Yanukovich	41.4	Kuchma
no	incumbent	Uzbekistan 2000	Karimov	91.9	
no	incumbent	Yugoslavia 1996	Milosevic	57.46	
transition	incumbent	Yugoslavia 2000	Milosevic	37.8	
transition	successor	Dominican Rep. 1996 ⁷	Reynado	36	Balaguer
no	successor	Guatemala 1990	Hidalgo	38.65	Cerezo
transition	successor	Guatemala 1995 ⁸	Arzu	42.6	Carpio
no	successor	Mexico 1994	Zedillo	50.39	Salinas
transition	successor	Mexico 2000	Labastido	36.1	Zedillo
transition	incumbent	Nicaragua 1990	Daniel Ortega	45	
no	incumbent	Peru 1995	Fujimori	44.52	
transition	incumbent	Peru 2000 ⁹	Fujimori	49.8	
transition	successor	Peru 2001 ⁹	Paniagua	49.87	Fujimori
no	incumbent	Venezuela 2004 ¹⁰	Chavez	59	
transition	successor	Sri Lanka 1994	Dissanayake	35.9	Premadasa
no	incumbent	Sri Lanka 1999	Kumaratunga	62.2	
no	incumbent	Taiwan 1996	Lee Teng-hui	54	
transition	successor	Taiwan 2000 ¹¹	Lian Chan	23.1	Lee Teng-hui

Continued on next page

Table 1: Incumbents, Successors and Transitions (continued)

Transition	Incumb.	Election	Leader	Vote Share	Prev. Leader
-------------------	----------------	-----------------	---------------	-------------------	---------------------

¹President Bedie (1993-99) was overthrown in a coup in 1999. Military junta encouraged Guéï to run in elections as its candidate but he lost. ²Military coup of 1999 ousted president Veiera. ³Although the party of President Chiluba - MMD - elected Mwanawasa as its presidential candidate for 2001 elections, Chiluba did not endorse Mwanawasa. ⁴Plebiscites (to endorse the candidate). ⁵2004 Parliamentary elections and a third term referendum. ⁶2003 Parliamentary elections, following which the incumbent was ousted. Vote share is reported for the incumbent parties. ⁷President Balaguer and his party supported Reynado in the first round of 1996 elections. ⁸Arzu defeated Carpio, who was an interim president (1993-95) after President Elias and his Vice-President were forced to resign after constitutional violations. ⁹Fujimori was the winner of 2000 elections, even though democratic transition ensued after corruption allegations. Fujimori did not have a successor in 2001 elections. ¹⁰2004 Recall referendum. ¹¹The outgoing president Lee failed to ensure the victory of his successor. It appears that he helped the opposition candidate to win instead. In 2000 Freedom House rated Taiwan as democracy, yet this election is included as it was the first alternation in power in Taiwan.



Institute for International Integration Studies

The Sutherland Centre, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin 2, Ireland

