Political Institutions and Democracy

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The study of political institutions is one of the core parts of comparative politics. We describe and analyze political institutions not (just) because they are intrinsically interesting as objects of scientific inquiry. We study institutions because we believe that they matter for other things we care about—accountability, responsiveness, good governance, quality of life, etc. They do so by shaping the incentives and capabilities of economic and political actors, and by influencing which of those actors have a seat at the decision-making table. Among the outcomes of chief interest to political scientists and institutional engineers is democracy. Do certain kinds of political institutions make democracy more or less durable? Are some configurations of institutions more or less conducive to democracy? To what extent do political institutions influence the degree or quality of democracy? Generations of scholars and practitioners have grappled with these questions, from Weber and Madison, to Dahl and Lijphart.

The result of this rich literature is an abundance of theorizing, accompanied by a less than abundant and often inconsistent empirical record. Many studies of the effects of institutions analyze the role that institutions played in a small number of cases of democratic breakdown or maintenance. See, for example, work on the contribution of political institutions to the breakdown of democracy under the Weimar Republic,[1] or the failure of presidential democracy in Latin America (Linz and Valenzuela 1994). When scholars have attempted to look at the effect of institutions in a broader, comparative context, using quantitative data, the results have often been inconsistent and inconclusive.

The challenge with empirically connecting political institutions to democratic outcomes led one well-known political scientist to conclude that institutions may be endogenous and epiphenomenal (Przeworski 2004, 528-9). And, in fact, a large literature on democratization and democratic durability assigns most of the causal weight to non-institutional factors such as economic development and (in)equality (Boix 2003; Przeworski 2005; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Svolik 2008; Ansell and Samuels 2014). But even so, some scholars in this camp acknowledge that institutions might play a role in facilitating collective action to deter would-be democratic defectors (Boix 2003, Acemoglu and Robinson 2006) or facilitate democracy-sustaining cooperation and coordination between key actors (Svolik 2012).

In this chapter we review some of the prominent arguments regarding the relationship between political institutions and democracy. In keeping with the theme of this volume we use data from the Varieties of Democracy Project to (re)evaluate these arguments. Specifically, we focus on two primary outcomes of interest—the durability of the democracy/likelihood of breakdown, and the quality or level of democracy. Using V-Dem data has at least two chief advantages. First, V-Dem provides a much longer time series with which we can evaluate our theories. Many of the most prominent institutionalist theories were derived from studies of particular eras—e.g. the breakdown of the democracies in inter-war Europe, or the collapse of 2nd wave democracies in Latin America. And, out of necessity, most quantitative work on the topic has focused on a limited period of time (post WWII, post-1970, post-1990, etc.). As a result, there is uncertainty about the degree to which the literature's findings (or lack thereof) depend on the time period they examine.

[1] See Shugart and Carey (1992) for a summary.

Second, V-Dem supplies multiple continuous measures of democracy. All studies of democratic durability/breakdown, whether they are quantitative or qualitative, have to pick a cut-off or threshold for what they consider democratic and non-democratic. One has to decide where the line between democracy and non-democracy lies, and, by extension, which countries are on either side of that line. Decisions about where to locate that cutoff (a Polity score of 5, or 6, or 7?) are somewhat arbitrary, but very few studies consider whether results are sensitive to where we draw the line. Does the answer we get depend on our choice of cut-off? The continuous nature of the V-Dem data allows us to selection multiple cut-offs and observe whether the results we get are sensitive to where we draw the line.

If V-Dem data allow us to better evaluate the effects of political institutions, the obvious question is: which institutions? The list of potential institutions is lengthy, from rule of law to the judiciary. Were we more ambitious we could also examine institutions that have an indirect effect on democracy through their influence on things like economic growth and development—for example, property rights, or an independent central bank. However, in the interests of tractability, we have chosen to focus on three broad categories of institutions: state capacity, executive regime type (i.e. presidential v. parliamentary), and the party system. For each of these categories there is a developed theoretical and empirical literature on which we can draw, with clear (though not uncontroversial) predictions about how these institutions should shape democratic outcomes.

We acknowledge that our focus on these three broad categories of institutions excludes some institutions that many scholars deem important. The clearest example of this is the rich literature on consensus/powersharing versus centripetal/majoritarian institutions (Lijphart 1977, 1984, 1999; Reilly 2012; Selway and Templeman 2012; Graham et al. 2017), a careful review of which could easily fill an additional chapter in this volume. Other institutions we exclude because the literature on these institutions and their relationship to democratic outcomes is less abundant (but by no means, non-existent). This includes federalism (Boix 2003, Myerson 2006), judicial independence (Reenock et al. 2013), and legislative institutions (Fish 2006; Sing 2010). We also ignore institutions for which the main effect is theorized to be an indirect one—e.g. electoral institutions, property rights, and rule of law.[2]

In the remainder of this chapter we first review the theoretical reasoning connecting state capacity, executive regime type, and the party system to democratic outcomes. For each category, we also review the relevant empirical literature and discuss the state of the field as we see it. Finally, we re-evaluate the strength of these theories based on data from V-Dem. We find strong support for the role of state capacity, but mixed or no support for executive regime type or party system variables. Finally, we conclude by discussing the important role of electoral experience in many of our models.

[2] We also leave aside work on the effect of institutions in non-democracies. For work on the role of legislatures and/or elections see: Gandhi (2008); Boix and Svolik (2013); Gandhi and Przeworski (2007). For work on authoritarian regime type see: Geddes et al. (2014); Knutsen and Nygard (2015); Teorell (2010); Hadenius and Teorell (2007). For work on institutionalized parties see: Brownlee (2007), Magaloni (2006), Magaloni and Kricheli (2010).

INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRACY

At a fundamental level it is impossible to think of democracy without thinking about political institutions. To a large extent, political institutions *define* what we consider a democracy, and what we do not. Most definitions hold free and fair elections to be a minimal requirement for democracy (Dahl 1972). Liberal conceptions of democracy add to the electoral criterion a requirement that there also be constraints on executive power in the form of checks and balances. But beyond this definitional role, what is the relationship between political institutions and democratic quality and stability? Do certain institutions lead to a greater risk of democratic breakdown? Is the level or quality of democracy in part a function of the kinds of institutions a state adopts? We consider three categories of institutional theories that examine these questions: state capacity, executive regime type, and party systems.

State Capacity

Modern democratic consolidation requires a functioning state and "useful" state bureaucracy (Linz and Stepan 1996, 11). Without a functioning state it becomes more difficult to detect and deter potential defectors from the democratic bargain. A dysfunctional state bureaucracy is also associated with poor governance, less provision of public goods, and higher levels of grievance among both citizens and elites. The link between state capacity and the stability and quality of democracy has been drawn again and again by scholars (e.g. Bratton and Chang 2006; Mansfield and Snyder 2007; Bäck and Hadenius 2008; Møller and Skanning 2011; Fortin 2012; Cornell and Lapuente 2014; Anderson et al. 2014b).[3] Scholars differ, however, in how they conceptualize state capacity, and in how they choose to operationalize their concepts.[4]

In general, scholars have conceptualized state capacity as consisting of a number of dimensions: *coercive capacity, administrative capacity,* and *legitimacy*.[5] Rooted in Weber (1965) and Tilly (1975) one approach is to conceptualize state capacity as *coercive capacity*, or the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force within its territory (Anderson et al. 2014a). Where states lack coercive capacity, destabilizing irredentist movements will be more common, and "conflicts are more likely to spin out of control and undermine democratic regimes." (Anderson et al. 2014b, 1307) In addition, where states lack coercive capacity, *administrative capacity* and *state legitimacy* are likely to be threatened as well.

A second way to conceptualize state capacity is as *administrative capacity*, also referred to as administrative effectiveness. Administrative capacity concerns the capacity of the bureaucracy to design and effectively implement public services and regulations across a country's territory

[3] A related line of work reverses the causal arrows and examines how democratization shapes state capacity (Bäck and Hadenius 2008; Carbone and Memoli 2015), or considers how the two interact or co-evolve or (Bratton and Chang 2006; Fortin 2012; Mazzuca and Munck 2014; Fukayama 2014).
[4] See Anderson et al. 2014a for a review.
[5] Many authors, including Linz and Stepan (1996) and Anderson et al. (2014a) refer to "stateness" rather than state capacity. Anderson et al. (2014a) consider *coercive capacity, administrative capacity,* and *legitimacy* to be dimensions of stateness. Some scholars also treat *fiscal capacity* as its own separate dimension (others consider it a part or consequence of administrative capacity) while recent work has by Brambor et al. identifies *information capacity* as a possible additional dimension (forthcoming).

(Anderson et al. 20014a, 1209). The idea that a well-functioning state bureaucracy is a necessary condition for a stable and well-functioning democracy can be traced to Weber and Schumpeter. Weber famously argued that bureaucracies were crucial institutions in the modern state (democratic or autocratic) (1968). Schumpeter tied the state bureaucracy to the viability of democracy itself, including a professional bureaucracy as one of his five conditions for democratic order (1949, 206). Taking their cue from Schumpeter most scholars consider meritocratic recruitment as the *sine qua non* of administrative capacity.[6]

There are at least three separate arguments connecting administrative capacity to democratic outcomes. First, administrative capacity is positively correlated with information—where capacity is high the government is able to gather better information about public needs, brewing conflicts, and threats to peace and order. Second, high capacity states perform better at the tasks related to democratic governance, including providing public goods, running free and fair elections, and maintaining order. Third, a professional bureaucracy serves as a constraint on opportunistic actions by incumbents, including attempts to centralize power, and thus, also serves as a reassurance to wary opponents who might otherwise be tempted to launch pre-emptive actions, such as a military coup (Cornell and Lapuente 2014).

Finally, some scholars introduce a third dimension of stateness or state capacity—*legitimacy*. Legitimacy refers to agreement by the citizenry about the boundaries of the state and the rules for inclusion and exclusion. Given the difficulty in operationalizing legitimacy most empirical studies focus on administrative or coercive capacity, and we do the same in this chapter.[7]

Regardless of which dimension of state capacity we focus on, the argument is that high levels of state capacity should be positively correlated with better, more stable democracies. The empirical work largely bears this out. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods scholars have found that state capacity is positively associated with stronger, more durable democracies (e.g. Bratton and Chang 2006; Bäck and Hadenius 2008; Møller and Skanning 2011; Fortin 2012; Cornell and Lapuente 2014). Scholars disagree about which dimension of state capacity is most important, and how to best measure the concept, but there is a strong consensus that state capacity increases regime durability, whether that regime is democratic or autocratic (Slater and Fenner 2011; Anderson et al. 2014b; van Ham and Seim 2018).

[6] There is disagreement about whether bureaucratic autonomy increases or decrease administrative capacity.

[7] Rustow, for example, argues that a pre-condition of democracy is that "the vast majority of citizens in a democracy-to-be must have no doubt or mental reservations as to which political community they belong to." (1970, 350) Anderson et al. set as a minimal condition that "people within the territory accept the supremacy of the state and communion with fellow citizens." (2014a, 1209). Where such consensus about the legitimacy of the state is lacking, any government, whether democratic or authoritarian, will be imperiled. But this may be especially true for democracies (Mazzuca and Munck 2014), where competitive elections can spark violence and social division (Bates 1983).

Executive Regime Type

When it comes to democratic stability, perhaps no institution has received greater attention than executive regime type. Juan Linz, based on his analysis of democratic collapse in Latin America, forcefully argued that presidentialism was inimical to democratic stability (Linz 1990). Two features of presidential systems were to blame. First, the popular election of both president and the legislature produces a system of dual, and sometimes competing, democratic legitimacy. Second, the fact that both the president and legislature sit for fixed terms, with the survival of each independent of the other, means that presidential systems are inherently rigid.

These two features combine to imperil presidential regimes through three related logics. First, while the requirement for legislative majorities exists in parliamentary system, this same imperative is lacking in presidential regimes. As a result, presidential regimes are more likely to have presidents with minority cabinets, leading to a greater risk of deadlock between the president and legislature. Second, because of separate survival there are weaker incentives for cooperation and party discipline in presidential regimes, compared to their parliamentary counterparts. Finally, the fact that decision making is more decentralized under presidential systems means that there is more conflict and a greater likelihood of deadlock/paralysis.

While many found Linz's argument persuasive there was strong pushback from other comparative scholars. As Elgie notes in his review of the literature, the counter-arguments can be grouped into two different types of critiques (Elgie 2005).[8] The first wave of responses to Linz argued that the effect of regime type is contingent on other institutions.[9] Specifically, the likelihood of breakdown is greatest when presidential systems are paired with a highly fragmented party system, undisciplined parties, or where the president is extremely powerful (Shugart and Carey 1992; Mainwaring 1993; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997). Outside of these configurations, however, presidential regimes are no more likely to break down. A second wave of critiques focused on the variation within parliamentary and presidential regimes, noting that the actual institutional and operational details within each regime type are varied and complex (Cheibub and Limongi 2002; Chaisty et al. 2014). Some of these scholars attempted to move beyond the dichotomous categorization of regime type and build more general theories that could apply across regime types—e.g. veto players (Tsebelis 1995) or chains of delegation (Strom 2000).

Efforts to test Linz's argument have yielded mixed results. In Table 1 we catalogue attempts to test the effect of presidentialism on democratic quality or longevity in the literature. We found 24 separate studies that attempt to empirically evaluate the effect of presidentialism on democracy (though in some cases, executive regime type was not the main variable of interest). In 70 percent of these studies (17/24) authors found either no effect for executive regime type, or found that the effect of presidentialism was contingent.[10] Only 7 of the 24 studies found a negative effect of

[8] While we agree with Elgie's general classification scheme, we differ somewhat on where we assign individual scholars.

[9] Critics also question Linz on case selection grounds, arguing both that Linz relied too heavily on the Latin American experience, and that presidential systems tend to be the institution of choice by countries facing severe governance challenges (Horowitz 1990; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997).

[10] The nature of contingency is varied. For example, Boix (2003) finds that the effect of presidentialism on democratic survival depends on an unfavorable type and distribution of

presidentialism that was consistent with Linz's argument. In general, those studies that pay closer attention to selection effects and confounding variables tend to find null or contingent effects. Even when the empirical findings are broadly supportive of Linz, the conclusions that authors draw are often quite nuanced. For example, both Madea (2010) and Svolik (2015) find that presidentialism has no effect on the risk of a coup, but it does raise the risk that elected incumbents will try and end democracy from the inside. Cheibub and Limongi also find a negative association, but then cast doubt on the most popular causal mechanisms and suggest that the relationship may in fact not be causal at all (2002).

In short, the relationship between executive regime type and democracy remains a contested one, both theoretically and empirically. As we will discuss in more detail below, with V-Dem data we can address one of the most common critiques in this literature—i.e. that Linz's argument and subsequent empirical findings are driven by Latin American cases in a particular period of history. Re-analyzing this question using different data allows us to supplement these summaries of past results with something in the spirit of a meta-analysis.

economic assets, but find finds no independent, negative effect of presidentialism. Svolik (2008) finds that presidentialism reduces the odds of survival only in the presence of low levels of economic development, but that the overall effect is small compared to economic indicators. Bernhard et al. (2001) look into the relationship between economic shocks and democratic breakdown and consider whether institutions mediate the effect of such shocks. They find that the effect of regime type depends on the nature of the party system. Parliamentary regimes with few parties are more resilient to shocks than presidential regimes with lots of parties. However, when times are good, presidential regimes with lots of parties are more robust.

Table 1. Empirical Evaluations of Executive Regime Type

Authors	Relationship between Presidentialism and Democracy
Shugart and Carey 1992	Contingent
Riggs 1993	Negative
Stepan and Skach 1993	Negative
Mainwaring 1993	Contingent
Mainwaring and Shugart 1997	Contingent
Power and Gasiorowski 1997	No relationship
Alvarez 1998	Negative
Przeworski et. al. 2000	Negative
Bernhard et. al. 2001	Contingent
Cheibub and Limongi 2002	Negative*
Boix 2002	Contingent
Saideman et al. 2002	No relationship
Bernard et al. 2003	No relationship
Bernard et al. 2004	No relationship
Cheibub 2007	No relationship
Svolik 2008	Contingent
Hiroi and Omori 2009	Contingent
Maeda 2010	Negative
Sing 2010	No relationship
Aleman and Young 2011	No relationship
Chaisty et. al. 2014	Contingent
Svolik 2015	Negative
Bernard et al. 2015	No relationship
Cornell et al. 2016	No relationship

Parties and Party Systems

In many ways political parties are *the* key institutions in modern democracies (Schattschneider 1942). As such, it is no surprise that parties and party systems have received their fair share of scrutiny for their contribution to democratic stability and breakdown. Two particular variables have received the bulk of attention: *party system fragmentation*, and *party/party system institutionalization*.

A common refrain from early scholars of democracy and democratic breakdown was that party system fragmentation increased the risk of democratic breakdown. Linz was among the first to make the argument that a high degree of party system fragmentation contributed to the failure of democracy in Latin American (1978). Sartori expanded on this idea, arguing that while party system fragmentation is problematic for democratic stability, the most acute threat comes from the combination of party system fragmentation and political polarization. The resulting polarized multipartism is associated with centrifugal politics and a corresponding tendency towards extremism, all of which raise the risk of instability. As discussed in the prior section, other scholars argued that fragmentation was particularly problematic when combined with presidentialism (Mainwaring 1993).

As persuasive as these arguments are, the empirical support has been mixed at best. Careful case studies have traced the contribution of high levels of fragmentation to democratic breakdown in specific historical cases—e.g. see Lepsius (2017) on the collapse of democracy in interwar Germany. And in cross national quantitative analyses some scholars have found a negative relationship between fragmentation and democratic survival under presidentialism (Mainwaring 1993; Bernhard et al. 2001; Negretto 2006). But most cross-national quantitative studies find no robust relationship between fragmentation and breakdown, either on its own, or in interaction with other institutional variables (Power and Gasiorowski 1997; Gasiorowski and Power 1998; Bernhard et al. 2003, 2004; Sing 2010; Maeda 2010; Reenock et al. 2013).

A second dimension of the party system that may bear on democratic quality and stability is party/party system institutionalization.[11] Political parties are the symbolic face and workhorses of democracy. Political parties help articulate, aggregate, and channel public demands and social pressures. They help voters hold governments accountable and raise the costs of democratic defection for would-be autocrats (Bernhard et al. 2015). They can also serve as mechanisms for balancing short-term/narrow interests and longer-term/broader interests. If they work well, voters are more likely to be content. If they do not, then the legitimacy of democracy itself can be a casualty (Mainwaring and Torcal 2005; Ufen 2008). Political parties are also the main organizational alternatives to the military in many democracies. When they are healthy and robust the military is more likely to remain in the barracks. When there are weak and dysfunctional, the resulting vacuum can prove an irresistible temptation to would-be autocrats.[12]

There is less empirical work evaluating the connection between party/party system institutionalization and democratization than there is on fragmentation, but a few studies have addressed the question. In their response to Linz, Mainwaring and Shugart (1997) argue that presidential regimes are more likely to breakdown when combined with weak, undisciplined parties. Lai and Melkonian-Hoover (2005) note the failure of most studies to consider the role of political parties in democratic transition and consolidation. They find that party competition increases the probability of a transition to democracy, and that democracies are more likely to survive where parties play a major role in the political system and there is robust party competition (Lai and Melkonian-Hoover 2005). Looking specifically at party institutionalization, Cornell et al. (2016) find that party institutionalization does not moderate the positive effects of an active civil society. Bernhard et al. (2015) also find that there is no interactive relationship between party

[11] Institutionalized parties have stable bases of support, robust organizations, and distinct party labels that are meaningful to both voters and candidates (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Levitsky 1998; Bernard et al. 2015). Party *system* institutionalization refers to the degree to which the parties in the system are themselves are institutionalized, as well as the degree to which there is stability in the pattern of inter-party competition (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). In more recent work Mainwairng (2018) narrows the definition of party system to only the stability of inter-party competition, and treats party institutionalization as a factor that contributes to party system institutionalization, rather than a defining feature (Mainwaring 2018, 4)).

[12] Scholars generally argue for a positive linear relationship between institutionalization and democracy, though some argue too much institutionalization can threaten democracy (Coppedge 1994, Roberts 1998; Stockton 2001).

institutionalization and civil society strength, but they do find that each variable independently lowers the risk of a democratic breakdown.

In summary, we've reviewed three sets of institutions that are believed to have some effect on the longevity and quality of democracy. The existing literature generally finds strong support for the positive influence of state capacity on democratic strength and stability. The findings on executive regime type are decidedly more mixed, but with most studies finding no strong independent effect for presidentialism on the probability of breakdown. The results for party systems are similarly inconsistent. Most studies find no independent effect for party system fragmentation, but some studies have found evidence that party institutionalization helps improve and stabilize democracy. We turn now to our tests of some of these theories using V-Dem data.

DATA AND METHODS

To evaluate the effect of institutions we rely on two types of models. Most of the theories about the effect of institutions on democracy are concerned with democratic durability, which suggests a survival analysis is the most appropriate model. This is consistent with the approach in most of the recent literature on institutions and democracy. As a robustness test we also conduct a secondary analysis using linear panel regression models to investigate the conditional partial correlations between institutional factors and the level of democratization of a country. Finally, in the interests of comparability with other chapters, we also examine the effects of institutions on the change in the level of democracy, as well as on upturns and downturns.

Dependent Variable

Our primary dependent variable is the *polyarchy* variable from V-Dem version 9. Polyarchy ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 being the highest level of democracy. When estimating the survival models, we use various cutpoints within polyarchy to divide countries into democratic and non-democratic in a given year. When estimating panel models for the level of democratization the full interval polyarchy is our outcome variable of interest.

Independent Variables

State Capacity

As we discussed, scholars of state capacity and democracy have focused on three types of state capacity: *coercive capacity, administrative capacity*, and *legitimacy*. Most empirical studies focus on coercive or administrative capacity, given the difficulty of assessing legitimacy absent survey data. We follow suit in this analysis. The next question is how to operationalize coercive and administrative capacity. The literature has employed a wide variety of measures, including taxes as a percentage of GDP, military expenditures, rule of law, bureaucratic quality, infrastructure capacity, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and control of corruption. In selecting our measure we place a premium on country-year coverage and on the fit between concept and measure. For these reasons we select two proxies for state capacity. For coercive capacity we use a measure of the percentage of territory over which a state has effective control (*territory*). For administrative capacity, following the approach of Gjerlow et al. (2018) we use a measure of the level of bureaucratic professionalization (*state capacity*). Both of these measures come from V-Dem. In the end, because the variable for state control over territory is never significant and including it does not alter the

remaining results, we report only *state capacity* in the analyses below. For robustness we also include a measure of *information capacity* as developed by Brambor et al. (forthcoming).

Executive Regime Type

Most existing datasets of executive regime type are limited in scope—either by country coverage, or by time period. As a result, we constructed our own unique dataset of executive regime type. The dataset offers a yearly assessment of executive regime type for all sovereign countries since the French Revolution (16,910 country-years), matching the coverage in V-Dem. For each country-year we identify whether a country had a president, prime minister, or both, and whether or not those positions were elected (see Baltz et al. n.d. for more details). This flexible measure of presidentialism and parliamentarism allows us to compare various dimensions of Linz's (1990) hypothesis: throughout the analysis we will focus on comparing systems with elected presidents to systems without elected presidents, systems with elected prime ministers to systems without elected prime ministers, and systems which elect both to systems which do not elect their Head of Government.

The resulting dataset gives us information about whether or not an elected president served during that country-year, but by itself the dataset does not contain information about the powers of that president. Because the power of the presidency is a key mechanism in Linz's (1990) hypothesis, we also use V-Dem data to construct a composite variable which distinguishes regimes with figurehead presidents (e.g. Ireland) from true presidential regimes. To do this we classify as presidential any country-year where the president is also the Head of Government, as measured in V-Dem (*Strict President*). As a further check we also consider the various actions which the Head of Government is able to undertake in that country-year, such as the ability to appoint or dismiss officials or dissolve legislative bodies.

Party Fragmentation

Ideally, we would measure party system fragmentation directly via a weighted or unweighted count of the number of parties in the system. Existing datasets have only partial coverage, leaving us with a lot of missing data. As an alternative we use two proxies for party system fragmentation: the lower chamber seat share held by the largest party (*largest seat share*), which we obtain from V-Dem, and a measure of the electoral system, where 1 equals majoritarian, which we get from V-Dem and the Contestation dataset (Gerring et al. 2018) (*majorit. electoral system*). For both variables high values should be associated with less fragmentation, ceteris paribus.

Party Institutionalization

To measure the average institutionalization of parties within a given country-year, we use the Party Institutionalization Index from V-Dem (*party institutionalization*) (Bizzarro et al., 2017). PI is an index created from five party-related components: the nature of party organization, the extent to which parties have permanent branches, the nature of party linkages with voters, whether parties have distinct party platforms, and the degree of legislative party cohesion.

Control Variables

We match several existing datasets onto these country-years in order to control for other important historical variables. We include the country-year's GDP/capita (logged) and the GDP growth rate from the Maddison Project Database (Bolt et al. 2018), ethnic fractionalization from the Ethnic Power Relations dataset (Wimmer et al. 2009), and each observation's history of colonization from the ICOW Colonial History Data (Hensel 2018). We also use the colonial history dataset to build a

variable which records the number of years since a country become independent. A full list of variables used in the paper is available in the Appendix.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Survival Analysis

We first examine the results of the survival analysis. We estimate a series of parametric models with a Cox specification of the baseline hazards. The resulting coefficients represent the hazard rate, which is the risk of that a country ceases being a democracy at any given point in time. Positive numbers mean an increased risk of democratic breakdown, negative numbers represent a reduced risk of breakdown.

Because polyarchy is a continuous measure, there is no one correct way to translate it into a dichotomous measure of democracy. What cutpoint should we choose to determine the lowest polyarchy score which can still be considered a democracy? This complication, however, is also an opportunity: it allows us to test whether our results vary depending on which threshold we choose. We therefore look at the risk of breakdown over every value of polyarchy,[13] categorizing every country-year with a polyarchy value above that threshold as a democracy and every country-year below that threshold as a non-democracy. Thus, for every polyarchy value we produce a binary classification in the same format as previous classifications of democracies in the literature. Then, we conduct a survival analysis using every one of these alternative classification schemes and examine how results change (or do not change) as we move the cutpoint.

Our specific test is a democratic survival model that yields the hazard rate connected to different types of institutional variables. The core question of the survival model is whether or not democracies with certain configurations of state capacity, presidential regime type, party system fragmentation, and party institutionalization are more or less likely to become autocracies. Of course, the structure of the survival analysis also means that we can just as easily run the survival model with the classification reversed, and ask the opposite question: are autocracies which have certain institutional characteristics (e.g. electing a Head of Government) more or less likely to become democracies than countries which do not have those characteristics (e.g. no elections for the Head of Government).

All of our results are therefore split into the probability of a democratic "step-up", in which the polyarchy value of an autocracy rises above the arbitrary cutpoint in that model, and a "step-down", in which the polyarchy value of a democracy falls below the arbitrary cutpoint in that model. We use this terminology to call attention to the possibility that transitions from above the polyarchy threshold to below the polyarchy threshold can represent quite small changes in the value of polyarchy, since the value might be just barely above the polyarchy cutpoint in one year and then just barely below that cutpoint in the next (and vice versa for cases which begin below the cutpoint in one year and rise above the cutpoint in the next year).

[13] Up to 1 decimal place, and omitting values which are either so large or so small that there are not enough cases above or below them.

Having picked a threshold and classified countries according to whether or not their polyarchy level is greater than that threshold, we can identify step-downs and step-ups. If a country-year has a polyarchy level below the threshold one year after it had a polyarchy level above the threshold, then we consider a step-down to have happened in that year. Conversely, if a country-year has a polyarchy level above the threshold one year after it had a polyarchy level below the threshold, then we consider a step-up to have happened in that year. Note that our approach is similar to the upturns and downturns analyses in other chapters in this volume, except that rather than looking at whether a country experiences a year-on-year positive or negative change, we are looking at whether or not a country crosses one of our cutpoints (in a positive or negative direction). Our approach allows us to incorporate survival analysis.

Before presenting results for all of the possible cutpoints, we can first focus on a few focal cutpoints. In Table 2 we present results for both a cutpoint of 0.5, which is the middle of the polyarchy measure, and 0.7, which we take to be a reasonable representation of the approximate polyarchy value for a stable democracy. [14] We also use the cutpoint developed by V-Dem as part of the Regimes of the World (RoW) project (Lührmann et al. 2018). The cutpoint divides liberal and electoral democracies, from electoral and closed autocracies. Finally, we identify the cutpoint in the polyarchy measure which optimally mimics the binary measure of democracy or autocracy used by Svolik (2008). First, we match Svolik's (2008) dataset onto the V-Dem country-years. Svolik's (2008) dataset includes 3,402 country-year observations. We are able to match 2,902 observations onto our dataset of 10,875 observations. We then run through every possible binary version of the polyarchy measure, searching for the cutpoint that most closely matches Svolik's classification scheme. The polyarchy cutpoint that most closely mimics Svolik's (2008) classification is either 0.422 or 0.423, which both classify 2,492 country-years identically to Svolik's (2008) classification, and classify 410 country-years differently from Svolik's (2008) classification. We apply that cutpoint to our full dataset, to as closely as possible represent what a test of our hypotheses might look like using Svolik's (2008) classification scheme on V-Dem data.

[14] In our dataset, the 75% quantile is 0.622. If we arbitrarily subset this to only postwar democracies by checking the 75% quantile from 1945 onwards, we find a value of 0.726. So, we arbitrarily run the model with 0.7, the simple round number which lies between these values.

Table 2.
Cox Hazard models of Step-Down

	V-Dem's Regimes of the World		polyarchy cutpoint: 0.5		polyarchy cutpoint: 0.7		polyarchy approx. Svolik's: 0.422	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
strict president:	**-0.82**	**0.33**	**-0.68**	**0.29**	-0.02	0.35	-0.54	0.30
majorit. elec system:	-0.82	0.46	-0.30	0.37	-0.91	0.48	0.27	0.32
state capacity:	**-11.70**	**1.57**	**-8.39**	**1.36**	**-6.98**	**1.83**	**-8.83**	**1.37**
largest seat share:	**2.06**	**0.83**	**2.12**	**0.72**	**3.49**	**0.94**	**1.97**	**0.71**
party institutionalization	-0.61	0.96	-0.80	0.89	1.90	1.37	-1.52	0.86
log of GDP per capita	-1.16	0.21	-0.20	0.19	-0.23	0.24	-0.10	0.20
GDP growth	**-4.91**	**1.82**	**-5.09**	**1.71**	-0.76	3.21	**-4.68**	**2.01**
ethnic fractionalization	**1.12**	**0.57**	0.44	0.49	**1.78**	**0.72**	-0.39	0.46
former UK colony	0.14	0.51	-0.36	0.45	-0.60	0.52	**-0.88**	**0.47**
Likelihood ratio test:		**105.5**		**90.7**		**57.7**		**97**
N:		3379		3425		2229		3880
Events:		58		70		56		63

Results in bold are statistically significant at a p-value level of 0.05

Consistent with most of the existing literature we find that high state capacity, measured as the degree to which the bureaucracy is professionalized, lowers the risk of a democratic breakdown. This is the case across all four of our models in Table 2.[15] By contrast, we find no support for the presidentialism hypothesis. In fact, in two of our models, presidentialism is associated with a small but significant decrease in the risk of a democratic decline. We also find no support for the party system hypotheses. The coefficients for party institutionalization and the electoral system are not significant in any of the models, and, counter our hypothesis, the seat share of the largest party is associated with a greater risk of a stepdown. The latter likely reflects the fact that the greater danger to democracy is too much power in the hands of one party, rather than too much fragmentation.[16]

In Figure 1 we show the effects of four of our main independent variables across a range of possible cutpoints. The first panel shows the effect of electing a (powerful) president compared to electing a prime minister on the probability that the country will experience a step-down—a decline in its polyarchy score. For most of the possible values of polyarchy, the effect of presidentialism on the probability of a step-down is indistinguishable from no effect, with a small range in which the effect is slightly negative. For the entire range of polyarchy below the cutpoint 0.32, and for nearly the entire range of polyarchy above the cutpoint 0.60, almost no cupoint has a significant effect, with the exception of a few at the very top of the testable range. But of the 29 cutpoints between 0.32 and 0.60, all but eight have a significant and negative effect on the probability of a step-down; the others are not significantly different from zero. So, for most democratic cutpoints, presidentialism has no effect on the probability of a step-down, but for most of the cutpoints in the middle of the

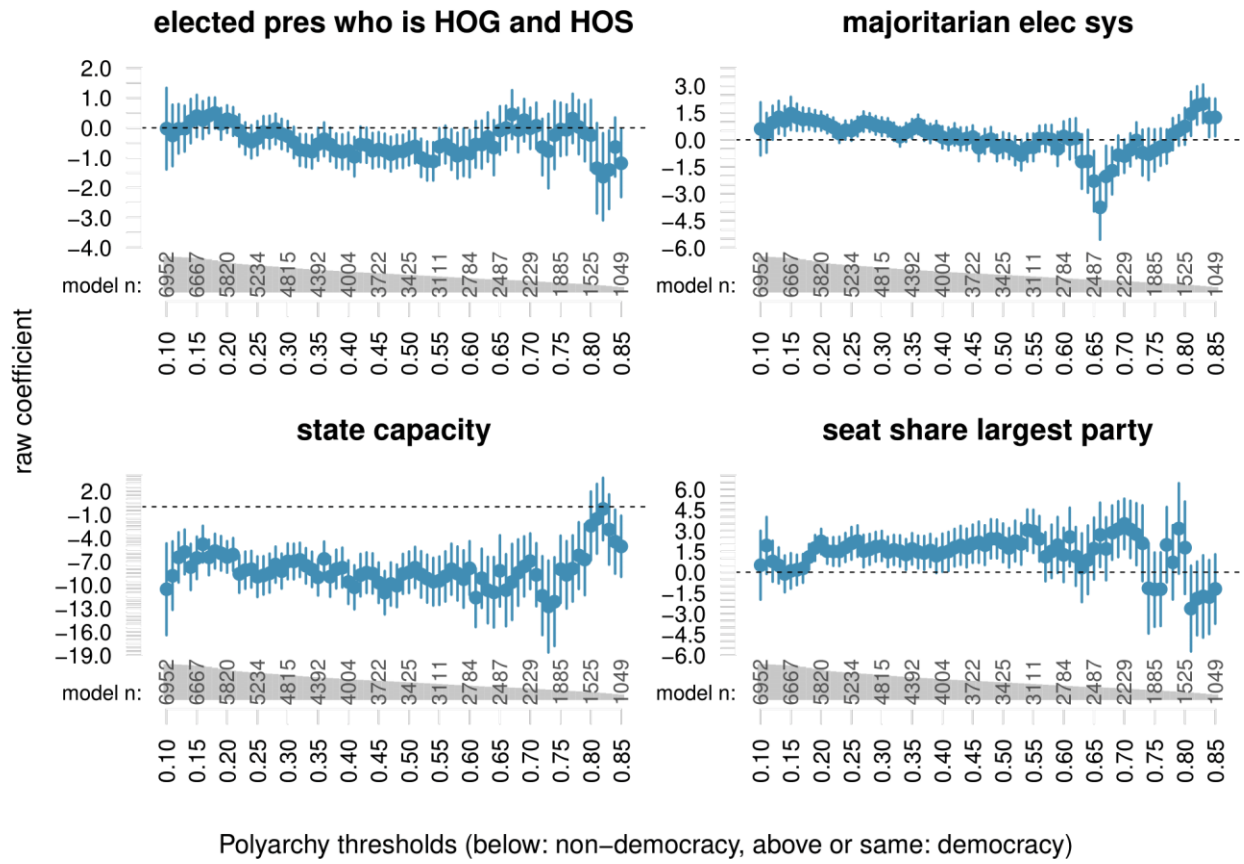
[15] We also ran models which include state control over territory and state information capacity as robustness tests (Appendix 2). As mentioned previously, state control of territory has no significant effect. The effect of information capacity is inconsistent, with a negative effect in some models, a positive effect in some models, and no effect in others.

[16] We also tried interacting presidentialism and party fragmentation in an effort to test whether the combination of presidentialism and high fragmentation is particularly hazardous, but found no support for that hypothesis.

range presidentialism has small a negative effect. Neither outcome is consistent with the perils of presidentialism as described by Linz and others.

Turning to our other institutional variables, the strongest and most consistent effects are for state capacity. State capacity dramatically reduces the probability of a step-down for almost every possible cutpoint. By contrast, the effect of the electoral system is indistinguishable from zero for most cutpoints, with two exceptions. At very low cutpoints, majoritarian electoral systems are associated with an increased risk of a step-down. At cutpoints between 0.65 and 0.68 majoritarian institutions have the hypothesized negative effect, but at the highest several cutpoints they have a positive effect. Electoral rules that are likely to increase (reduce) fragmentation are associated with a greater (lesser) risk of breakdown. Finally, for most cutpoints the seat share of the largest party is positively associated with the risk of backsliding.

Figure 1
The Effect on the Probability of a Step-down
(with Pres v. Parl)

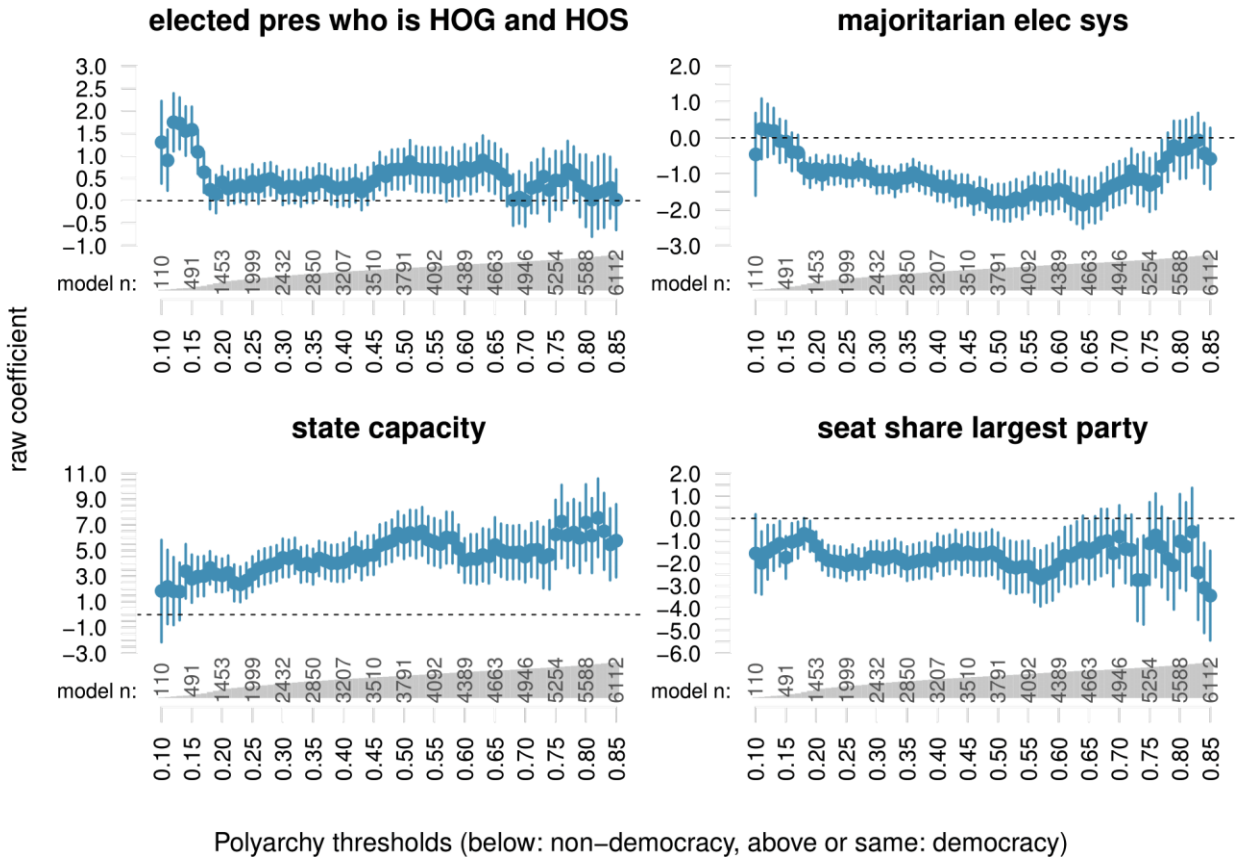


In Figure 2 we take a short detour to look at whether our set of institutional variables has any effect on the probability that a country experiences a "step-up"—moving from non-democratic to democratic across any given cutpoint. State capacity has a consistent positive impact on the probability of a step-up, and the coefficient size is increasing as the polyarchy value increases (for models using four of these thresholds see Table 2). The only case in which the coefficient for state

capacity is indistinguishable from 0 is for extremely low polyarchy cutpoints, where nearly every country is classified as a democracy, so the only cases which could experience a step-up are the most extreme autocracies. In terms of party system fragmentation, our two measures reveal the same pattern. More (less) fragmentation, whether measured via the electoral system or by the largest party's seat share, is associated with a higher (lower) probability of a step-up across most cutpoints.

What about the effect of presidentialism on step-up? For most polyarchy cutpoints below the value 0.45, the coefficient is indistinguishable from 0, and the same is true for almost every cutpoint above a polyarchy value of 0.66. For most of the values inside of this range, the presence of an elected president has a very slightly positive effect on the probability of a step-up. The one major exception to this pattern is, again, several extremely low cutpoints. These cases, which are the few hundred most extremely autocratic country-years in the dataset, show a strongly positive relationship between having a president and the probability of a step-up, compared to cases in which a prime minister is elected. Each of these coefficient estimates corresponds to a sample size of a few hundred country-years which are on the extreme low end of the polyarchy measure.

Figure 2
The Effect on the Probability of a Step-up
(with Pres v. Parl)



So far, we have investigated the relevance of having a president that is both Head of Government and Head of State to the probability of a step-up or of an step-down. This has meant using a binary variable whose reference case is "*not* having a president that is both HOG and HOS". Another

interesting possibility opened by our dataset is that of comparing the election of different types of Head of Government against the presence of a non-elected Head of Government. This is what we do next. Specifically, we re-run the previous models now including three binary variables related to system of government. One indicates whether the country-year had an elected president. Another indicates whether the country-year had an elected prime-minister. The third indicates whether the country-year had both an elected president and an elected prime-minister. The reference case for this categorical analysis, therefore, is having neither an elected president nor an elected prime-minister.

The result is shown in Figure 3, where we re-estimate the previous models for the probability of a step-down using this new frame of analysis. When comparing having just an elected president to not electing a Head of Government, we see that for all polyarchy cutpoints from 0.14 up to the maximum testable cutpoint, 0.65 -- with the exception of just the two polyarchy cutpoints 0.42 and 0.62 -- the presence of an elected president significantly decreases the probability of a step-down compared to not electing and Head of Government. In the case of elected prime ministers, many fewer cutpoints are distinguishable from zero. However, electing a prime minister significantly decreases the probability of a step-down for every cutpoint from 0.14 to 0.40 except for 0.33, as well as for the cutpoints between 0.46 and 0.51, and for the cutpoints 0.61 and 0.65. Electing a prime minister never significantly increases the probability of a step-down. And electing both significantly decreases the probability of a step-down for every cutpoint from 0.12 to 0.43, as well as six more cutpoints towards the top of the range. The presence of a majoritarian electoral system has mixed effects, slightly increasing the probability of a step-down for some low cutpoints while increasing the probability for some high cutpoints. State capacity always substantially decreases the probability of a step-down, while the centralization of seats in the largest party increases the probability of a step-down for most of the range of cutpoints between 0.18 and 0.56.

These coefficient estimates for step-down probabilities are mirrored by the coefficients for step-up probabilities when electing a president, electing a prime minister, or electing both compared to not electing any Head of Government (Figure 4). Electing a president consistently increases the probability of a step-up for most values of polyarchy compared to not electing any Head of Government, but the effect declines as the cutpoint increases, crossing 0 at values greater than 0.40. Electing a prime minister increases slightly the probability of a step-up compared to not electing any Head of Government at low levels of the polyarchy, but above 0.20 it does not make a difference. Finally, electing both increases the probability of a step-up for most cases where the polyarchy cutpoint is below 0.35.

So, quite a surprising finding emerges from this analysis—one that we were not explicitly looking for. We find that electing presidents, prime-ministers or both similarly impacts the probability of a step-up or of an step-down. That is, we found strong support for the idea that the very act of holding elections increases the chance of an improvement in democracy in future periods, and lowers the risk of a democratic decline. For most cutpoints, countries that hold elections for their Head of State and/or Head of Government are more likely to experience a step-up in their democracy score, and less likely to see a decline in subsequent years. In short, in authoritarian, semi-authoritarian, semi-democratic, and non-consolidated democracies, electing a president and/or prime-minister makes a difference: it decreases the likelihood of a step-down and increases the likelihood of a step-up. But executive regime type does make a difference. Compared to holding no election, electing a president is more likely to prevent a step-down or induce a step-up than electing a prime minister is, consistent with arguments by Templeman (2012) and Roberts (2015).

Naturally, there might be some endogeneity at play since there could exist third factors that commonly affect both democratization in general and the occurrence of elections in particular. Yet, we think it is unlikely that those would account for all the eventual impact of holding elections. While further investigation is still needed, this idea is consistent with arguments in the literature about the democratizing effects of elections, even if those elections are not initially free and fair (Bratton and van deWalle 1997; Lindberg 2006a, 2006b, 2009; Teorell and Hadenius 2009).

Figure 3
The Effect on the Probability of a Step-down
(with elected v. non-elected)

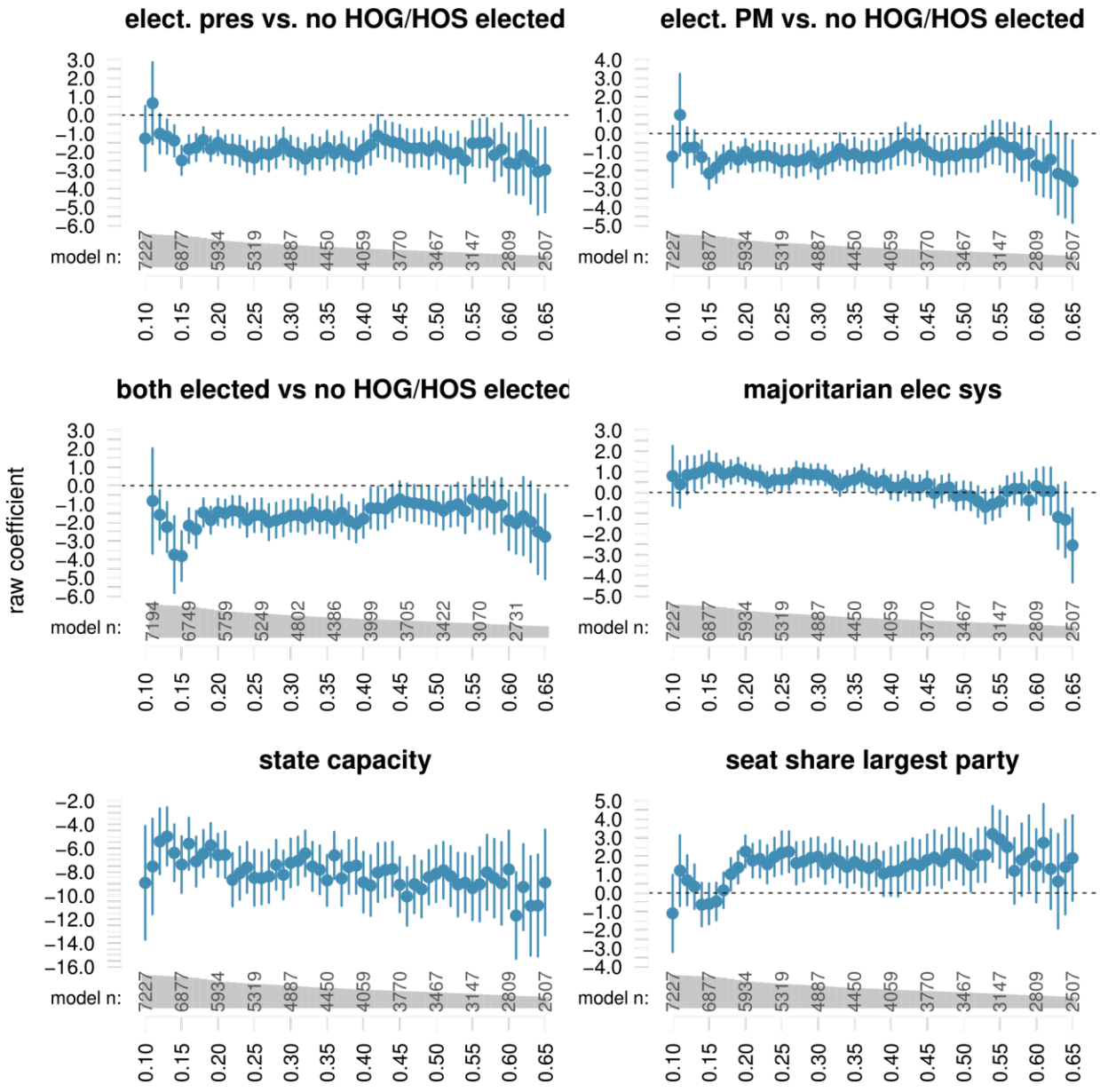
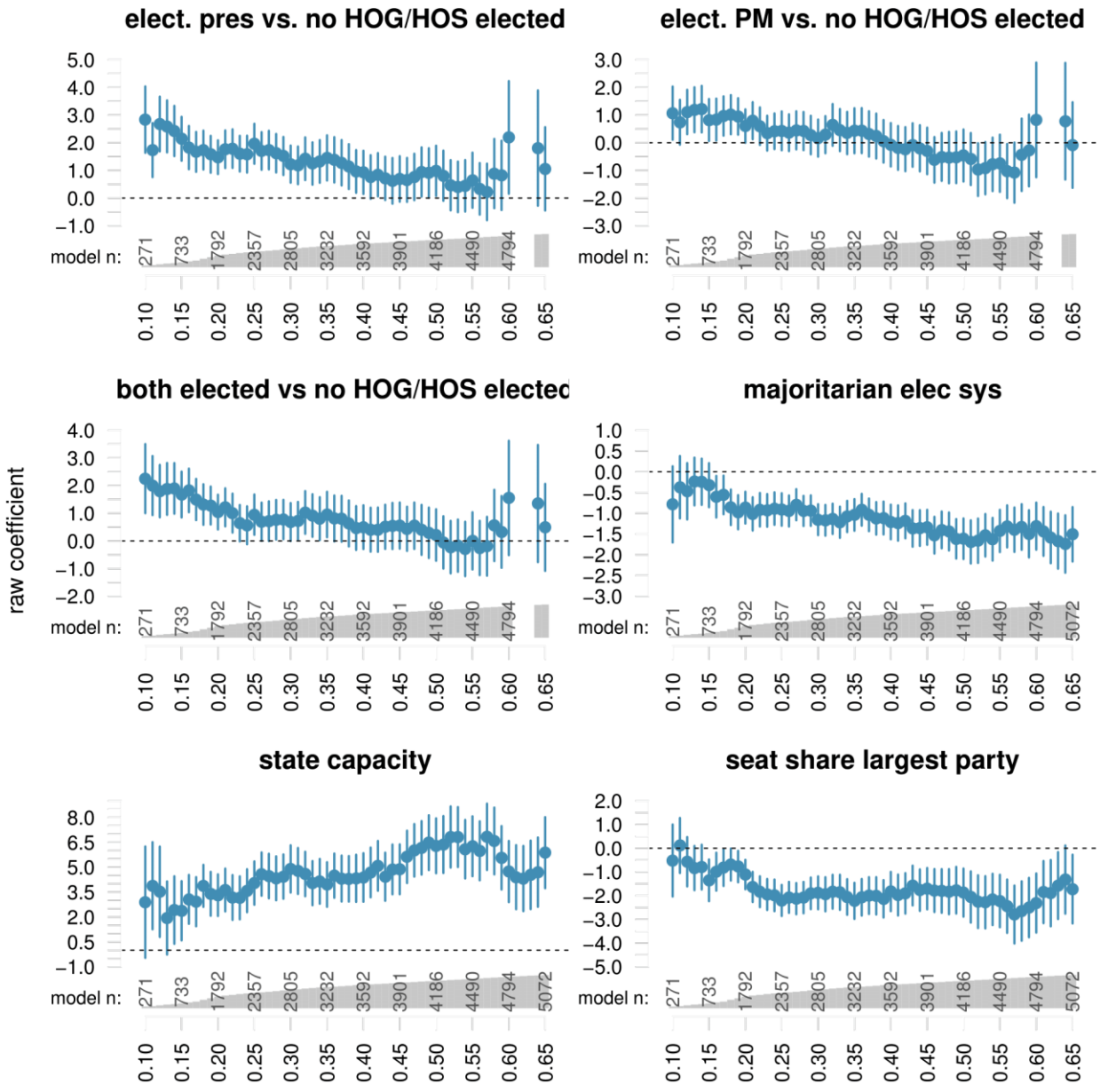


Figure 4
The Effect on the Probability of a Step-up
(with elected v. non-elected)



Pooled Time Series Results

In an effort to check the robustness of the results from our survival analysis, we keep the same independent variables but look at how they affect the level of democracy in a given country. In order to do this, we estimate panel linear models where V-Dem's polyarchy variable is the outcome variable. The explanatory variables of interest and the controls will be the same as those used in the survival analysis – with the only difference being that we also include the variables with a one-year lag. All models estimated here are either fixed effects or random effects time-varying models, and all use Cribari-Neto (2004)'s heteroskedasticity-consistent robust standard errors (popularly known as HC4). We also repeat the models 3 times, once for the whole dataset, once for country-years with polyarchy lower than 0.5 (roughly representing less democratic countries) and once for country-years with polyarchy greater or equal than 0.5 (roughly representing more democratic countries).

Table 3 displays the results for all models, giving us estimates of the conditional partial correlation between each independent variable and the level of polyarchy in a given country-year. Consistent with the survival analysis we find no effect for presidentialism, regardless whether we use fixed or random effects or whether the model includes the whole sample, only less democratic countries, or only more democratic countries.

On the other hand, the coefficients for state capacity are always statistically significant, and have the expected sign and substantial magnitude. This is also consistent with what we found previously in the survival models--state capacity is positively correlated to the level of democratization in a country. Unlike in our survival models, party institutionalization is positively and significantly associated with higher levels of democratization when using the panel data, as hypothesized.

Turning finally to our proxies for party system fragmentation, our results depend on the sample we use. When we use the entire dataset, majoritarian electoral institutions and largest party seat share are negatively associated with the level of democracy. Yet, notice that the coefficients of these two variables are no longer statistically significant when less democratic countries are dropped from the dataset. This would suggest that the partial correlation between our two fragmentation proxies and polyarchy is only relevant for lower levels of democracy. This makes sense. At low levels of polyarchy the greatest risk to democracy is not too much fragmentation, it is too much concentration in the hands of the ruling party/ruling elite. A higher concentration of seats in the hands of a single party (as well as majoritarian electoral rules that help facilitate such a concentration) should be negatively correlated with levels of democracy.

Table 3
Pooled Time Series

	All cases				Polyarchy < 0.5				Polyarchy >= 0.5			
	fixed effects		random effects		fixed effects		random effects		fixed effects		random effects	
	coef.	s.e.	coef.	s.e.	coef.	s.e.	coef.	s.e.	coef.	s.e.	coef.	s.e.
Strict president:	.01	.02	.01	.08	-.01	.01	-.01	.01	.10	.08	.11	.06
lagged 1 year:	.02	.02	.02	.02	.00	.01	.01	.01	-.07	.08	-.06	.06
majorit. elec system:	**-.07**	**.02**	**-.07**	**.02**	**-.03**	**.01**	**-.04**	**.01**	-.03	.02	-.03	.02
lagged 1 year:	**-.04**	**.01**	**-.04**	**.02**	-.01	.01	-.01	.01	-.00	.01	-.00	.01
state capacity:	**.46**	**.07**	**0.5**	**.07**	**.33**	**.03**	**.33**	**.07**	**.37**	**.05**	**.37**	**.05**
lagged 1 year:	**.28**	**.07**	**.28**	**.07**	**.07**	**.03**	.07	.06	**.14**	**.06**	**.13**	**.06**
Largest seat share:	**-.10**	**.02**	**-.10**	**.02**	**-.08**	**.01**	**-.08**	**.02**	-.03	.02	-.03	.02
lagged 1 year:	**-.10**	**.02**	**-.10**	**.02**	**-.07**	**.01**	**-.06**	**.01**	-.02	.02	-.02	.02
party institutionalization	**.26**	**.04**	**.26**	**.04**	**.11**	**.01**	**.11**	**.03**	**.24**	**.09**	**.20**	**.07**
log of GDP per capita	**.07**	**.01**	**.07**	**.01**	**.01**	**.00**	.00	.01	**.05**	**.01**	**.05**	**.01**
GDP growth	-.02	.02	-.03	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01	-.04	.03	-.04	.03
ethnic fractionalization			**0.5**	**.04**			**.06**	**.03**			.07	.04
former UK colony			.05	.03			**.06**	**.02**			-.01	.03
intercept			**-.55**	**.08**			.12	.08			**-.20**	**.10**
Adjusted R^2:	.76		.77		.41		.46		.66		.70	
number of countries:	132		132		112		112		93		93	
number of time points:	4-182		4-182		1-107		1-107		1-151		1-151	
number of cases:	6825		6825		3452		3452		3195		3195	

Results in bold are statistically significant at a p-value level of 0.05

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we used V-Dem data to re-examine the effect of some of the most well-studied political institutions on democratic stability and quality. We focused on how three categories of institutions shape democracy: state capacity, executive regime type such as presidential or parliamentary systems, and features of party systems such as fragmentation and centralization. Because there is no single true method for dividing V-Dem's many-valued polyarchy measure into "democracy" and "autocracy" bins, we considered every possible definition, so that readers can interpret our results based on whatever their own preferred polyarchy cutpoint is. For each of these cutpoints, we estimated how different arrangements of the institutions of interest affect the probability that a democracy survives as a democracy, or the reverse probability, that an autocracy survives as an autocracy. We supplemented these survival analyses with panel linear models, checking the results of the survival models using a pooled time series analysis, and the two analyses agreed on nearly every substantive detail.

Regarding state capacity, the results of our analyses confirm the main results of previous studies. The prevailing theoretical argument about the role of state capacity in democratic quality is that democracies with higher state capacity should typically experience better and more stable democratic governance. Past empirical work has reinforced this expectation. And our analysis resoundingly agrees: we found that state capacity, operationalized as administrative capacity, dramatically lowers the risk that a democracy will experience a democratic breakdown. It is almost irrelevant how values of polyarchy are translated into a definition of democracies and autocracies: for nearly every possible cutpoint, high state capacity is an important predictor of continued democracy.

Contra Linz, we did not find any evidence to support the peril of presidentialism. In fact, for countries that are neither fully autocratic nor fully democratic, we found that presidentialism increases the chances of a step-up to fuller democracy. So for countries which we might not consider to be democratic, presidential regimes actually have a higher probability of becoming democratic enough to meet our definition of a democratic regime. The direction of these substantive results is consistent with the bulk of recent research on how executive regime types affect the level of democracy, but the use of V-Dem data enables us to uncover intriguing details about how these institutional arrangements affect many different levels of democracy.

Regarding party systems, we find no support for the claim that party system fragmentation decreases the level of democracy. Rather, our results suggest that the centralization of power is a greater threat to overall democratic stability. We find that centralization of power in the hands of one party is an obstacle to democratic improvement for countries at lower levels of polyarchy. In the pooled time series analysis, we found some support for the positive role of party institutionalization in supporting democracy.

Our results – on the benefits of state capacity, the unimportance of executive regime type, and the risk of centralization of power rather than party system fragmentation for democratic stability – largely agree with recent empirical and theoretical findings. But by considering how institutional arrangements affect the probability of a democratic step-up or a democratic step-down when democracies are defined in hundreds of different ways, we are able to make much more precise claims about how different institutional arrangements matter for countries that have different levels of democracy.

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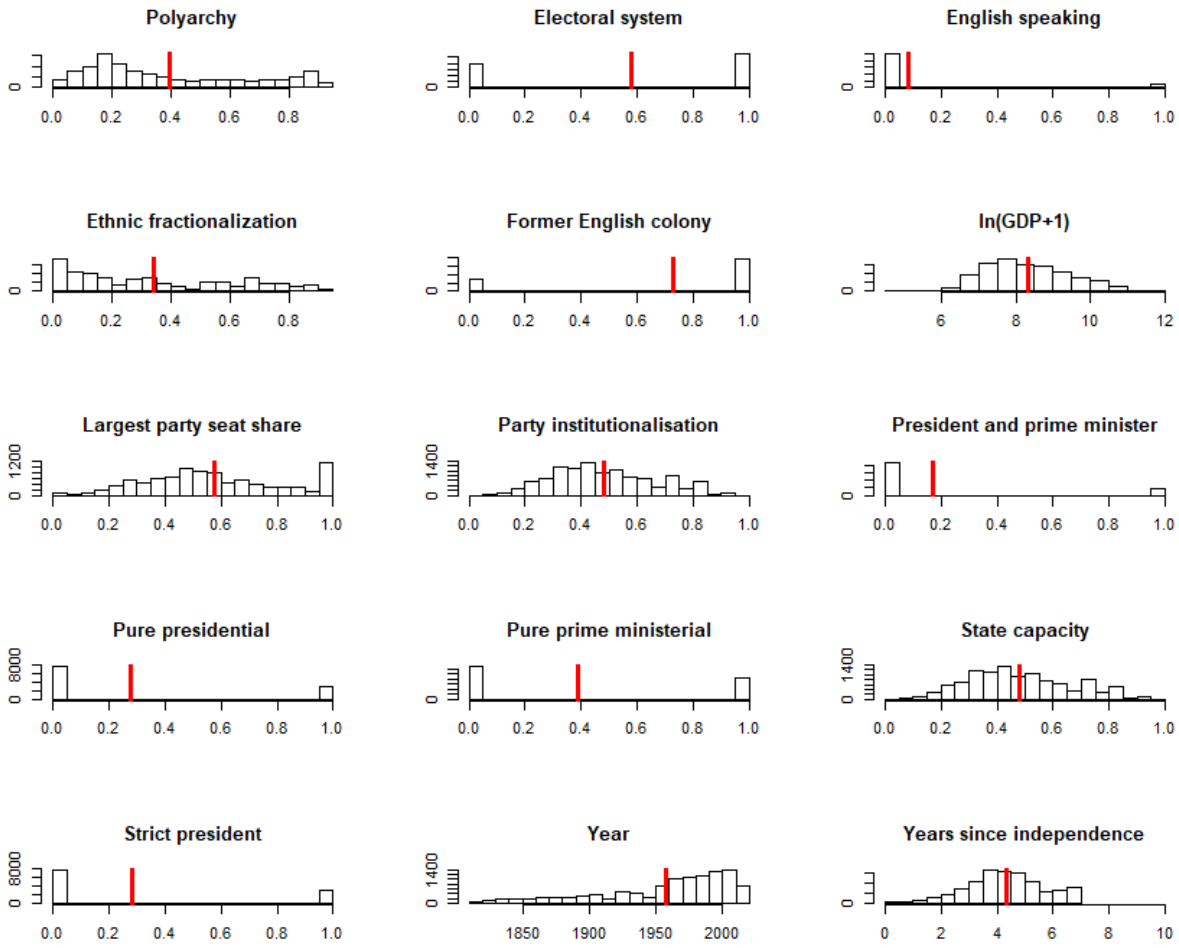
APPENDIX 1:

Table A1: List of Variables

Variable	Source	Count	Span
Country	Varieties of democracy version 9	10848	1815-2015
Year	Varieties of democracy version 9	10848	1815-2015
Polyarchy	Varieties of democracy version 9	10730	1815-2015
Country ID	Varieties of democracy version 9	10848	1815-2015
Geographic region	Varieties of democracy version 9	10848	1815-2015
Majorit. electoral system	Varieties of democracy version 9	9454	1815-2015
HOG elected directly	Varieties of democracy version 9	6189	1815-2015
Relative power of HOG	Varieties of democracy version 9	10733	1815-2015
Regime type	Varieties of democracy version 9	9101	1900-2015
State capacity	Varieties of democracy version 9	10776	1815-2015
Independent	Varieties of democracy version 9	10848	1815-2015
Democratic transition	Varieties of democracy version 9	10657	1815-2015
HOS elected directly	Varieties of democracy version 9	10847	1815-2015
Strict president	Varieties of democracy version 9	10848	1815-2015
Legislature can remove HOG	Varieties of democracy version 9	6127	1815-2015
Legislature can remove HOS	Varieties of democracy version 9	10776	1815-2015
HOG can dissolve legislature	Varieties of democracy version 9	6119	1815-2015
HOS can dissolve legislature	Varieties of democracy version 9	10687	1815-2015
Largest seat share	Varieties of democracy version 9	1671	1815-2015
State authority over territory	Varieties of democracy version 9	10641	1815-2015
Party institutionalization	Varieties of democracy version 9	9709	1815-2015
HOG appoints cabinet	Varieties of democracy version 9	6054	1815-2015
HOG dismisses ministers	Varieties of democracy version 9	6085	1815-2015
HOG veto power	Varieties of democracy version 9	6085	1815-2015
HOG proposes legislation	Varieties of democracy version 9	5498	1820-2015
HOS appoints cabinet	Varieties of democracy version 9	10715	1815-2015
HOS appoints cabinet (diff categories)	Varieties of democracy version 9	10715	1815-2015
HOS veto power	Varieties of democracy version 9	10698	1815-2015
HOS dismisses ministers	Varieties of democracy version 9	10775	1815-2015
HOS proposes legislation	Varieties of democracy version 9	10776	1815-2015
Elected PM	Presidentialism-parliamentarianism	10745	1815-2015
Elected Pres	Presidentialism-parliamentarianism	10660	1815-2015
Unelected PM	Presidentialism-parliamentarianism	10745	1815-2015
Unelected Pres	Presidentialism-parliamentarianism	10660	1815-2015
GDP/capita	Maddison project database	10261	1815-2015
GDP growth	Maddison project database	10304	1815-2015
Total population	Maddison project database	10553	1820-2015

Ethnic Fractionalization	Ethnic power relations	10848	1815-2015
Urbanization	Cross-national time-series data archive	8677	1815-2002
Historical electoral systems	Contestation dataset	8903	1815-2015
Independence date	Colonial history data	10446	1815-2015
Colonial ruler	Colonial history data	10446	1815-2015

Figure 1A
Variable histograms



These plots are histograms of each variable that is explicitly used in the analysis, with a vertical line representing the mean. The sources for these variables are identified in Table 1A. In the Electoral system variable, 1 is any majoritarian electoral system and 0 is otherwise. To obtain the GDP variable, we use the Maddison Project Database's "rgdpnapc", divide it by 1000, multiply it by the population, and then take the log of one plus that value. In the Pure presidential variable, 1 means only a president is elected, 0 means no Head of State or Head of Government is elected. In the Pure prime ministerial variable, 1 means only a prime minister is elected, 0 means no Head of State or Head of Government is elected. In the Both president and PM variable, 1 means both a president and a prime minister are elected, 0 means no Head of State or Head of Government is elected. Strict president is any case in which the president is (1) the Head of Government, and (2) the Head of Government is also the Head of State.

APPENDIX 2:

Table 3A
Cox Hazard models of Democratic Step-Down

	V-Dem's Regimes of the World		polyarchy cutpoint: 0.5		polyarchy cutpoint: 0.7		polyarchy approx. Svolik's	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
strict president:	**-0.79**	**0.33**	**-0.68**	**0.29**	-0.01	0.35	-0.53	0.30
majorit. elec system:	-0.76	0.47	-0.27	0.37	-0.87	0.49	0.27	0.32
state capacity:	**-11.49**	**1.60**	**-8.27**	**1.39**	**-6.98**	**1.84**	**-8.70**	**1.39**
largest seat share:	**2.07**	**0.83**	**2.12**	**0.72**	**3.58**	**0.94**	**1.98**	**0.71**
party institutionalization:	-0.43	1.00	-0.67	0.93	2.27	1.39	-1.39	0.89
log of GDP per capita:	-0.10	0.21	-0.18	0.19	-0.18	0.25	-0.10	0.20
GDP growth:	**-4.48**	**1.96**	**-4.88**	**1.75**	-0.97	3.27	**-4.57**	**2.00**
ethnic fractionalization:	1.09	0.57	0.43	0.49	**1.67**	**0.73**	-0.43	0.47
former UK colony:	0.14	0.51	-0.35	0.45	-0.57	0.53	**-0.85**	**0.47**
state capacity over territory:	-0.02	0.02	-0.01	0.02	-0.04	0.03	-0.01	0.01
Likelihood ratio test:		**105.8**		**90.9**		**58.7**		**97.0**
N:		3379		3425		2229		3873
Events:		58		70		56		63

Results in bold are statistically significant at a p-value level of 0.05

Table 4A

Cox Hazard models of Democratic Step-Down

	V-Dem's Regimes of the World		polyarchy cutpoint: 0.5		polyarchy cutpoint: 0.7		polyarchy approx. Svolik's	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
strict president:	**-1.13**	**0.54**	-0.63	0.47	-0.08	0.53	-0.46	0.45
majorit. elec system:	-0.21	0.78	-0.33	0.60	-1.137	0.79	-0.40	0.57
state capacity:	**-13.65**	**2.66**	**-12.21**	**2.39**	**-7.85**	**2.34**	**-7.45**	**1.93**
largest seat share:	**4.36**	**1.64**	**3.90**	**1.48**	2.27	1.41	**2.78**	**1.20**
party institutionalization:	-0.53	1.77	-0.11	1.58	2.56	2.15	-0.45	1.18
log of GDP per capita:	-0.24	0.46	-0.16	0.40	-0.30	0.35	-0.37	0.37
GDP growth:	**-14.33**	**4.03**	**-17.02**	**3.71**	**-12.27**	**4.47**	**-11.22**	**3.26**
ethnic fractionalization:	0.58	1.11	0.05	0.98	1.14	1.12	-0.20	0.91
former UK colony:	-1.794	1.34	-2.35	1.32	0.62	1.03	-1.855	54.7
state information capacity:	**-7.74**	**3.05**	**-6.08**	**2.43**	**4.164**	**1.90**	-2.11	2.38
Likelihood ratio test:		**79.3**		**79.2**		**47.3**		**60.8**
N:		2425		2423		1706		2688
Events:		25		30		34		31

Results in bold are statistically significant at a p-value level of 0.05

Table 5A

Cox Hazard models of Democratic Step-Down

	V-Dem's Regimes of the World		polyarchy cutpoint: 0.5		polyarchy cutpoint: 0.7		polyarchy approx. Svolik's	
	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.	beta	s.e.
strict president:	**-1.43**	**0.60**	-0.91	0.50	-0.11	0.58	-0.52	0.47
majorit. elec system:	-0.10	0.80	-0.68	0.62	-1.127	0.79	-0.28	0.59
state capacity:	**-13.31**	**2.67**	**-12.11**	**2.43**	**-7.80**	**2.35**	**-7.33**	**1.95**
largest seat share:	**4.38**	**1.67**	**3.61**	**1.48**	2.29	1.41	**2.67**	**1.21**
party institutionalization:	-0.03	1.77	-1.01	1.61	2.53	2.15	-0.14	1.26
log of GDP per capita:	-0.05	0.47	0.18	0.41	-0.28	0.37	-0.29	0.40
GDP growth:	**-13.96**	**4.00**	**-16.52**	**3.80**	**-12.34**	**4.49**	**-10.94**	**3.27**
ethnic fractionalization:	0.39	1.12	-0.385	1.02	1.10	1.14	-0.10	0.93
former UK colony:	-1.68	1.32	-2.11	1.29	0.60	1.04	-18.58	57.4
state capacity over territory:	-0.07	0.04	**-0.09**	**0.04**	-0.01	0.06	-0.02	0.03
state information capacity:	**-8.79**	**3.19**	**-7.75**	**2.61**	**4.064**	**1.99**	-2.54	2.51
Likelihood ratio test:		**81.82**		**84.6**		**47.3**		**60.8**
N:		2425		2423		1706		2681
Events:		25		30		34		31

Results in bold are statistically significant at a p-value level of 0.05