POLARITY, POLARIZATION AND DEMOCRATIC SURVIVAL

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Abstract- In my previous publications, I have shown that systemic power configurations may impact democratic transitions. This paper logically extends this systemic approach by considering the impact of polarity and polarization on democratic survival. In my earlier works, I have argued that systemic uncertainty raised by multipolarity and polarization is likely to impact political elite behavior leading to their concession to share political power. In this study, to extend this argument to democratic survival, I use dynamic logit models on 6114 observations, and 154 country clusters ranging from 1946 until 2000. The results support the argument that polarity and polarization have significant impact on democratic consolidation as well as democratic transitions.

Index Terms- Democratic transitions, democratic survival, polarity, polarization.

I. INTRODUCTION

The possible impact of power configurations on international peace has been a topic of debate among international relations scholars. While some argue that a bipolar power structure stabilizes the system, others support the view that a multipolar structure increases chances of peace and stability. After the end of the bipolar power structure of the Cold War era, power concentration in the system moved to a multipolar structure with the diffusion of power among various countries. Could this new multipolar world impact democratic transitions and democratic consolidation?

Democratic break-down or failure happens when democracies transform into authoritarian regimes, and democratic transitions happen when authoritarian regimes become democratic. Today, most scholars of democracy agree that the factors that strengthen a regime may not be the ones that brought it into its existence in the first place [27]. According toRustow [27], military dictatorships typically originate by armed revolt but perpetuate themselves by massive publicity and by alliances with civilian supporters. Charismatic leaders establish their claim to legitimacy by performing seeming miracles but preserve it through routinization; similarly, a hereditary monarchy rests most securely on the subjects' unquestioning acceptance of tradition while it cannot be established on such a principle [27].

One of the most influential studiesthat suggests the separation of the factors that brought about consolidation and transition has been Przeworski[24]. According to Przeworski [23], social and economic factors which affect democracy are valid for democratic consolidation, whereas there is no requisite for transitions to democracy: transitions are random events. However,Przeworski [24] 'sstudy was later challenged by recent studies which show that structural factors such as economic development, growth, regressive socioeconomic distribution or international factors such as a country's role in the world system or geographical location have an impact on democratic transitions [25]. Determinants of democracy can be grouped under two categories: internal and systemic factors. Internal factors are rooted in a country's domestic structure which may include domestic economic, structural, institutional, or cultural variables, whereas systemic factors are mainly international or global determinants which may include a country's neighbors, conflict in the system, or international organizations [2],[18].

In both democratic transition and consolidation literature, economic development is seen as the most robust internal determinant. Modernization theory was supported by other additional measures of development such as levels of education [1], [7], [26] and economic performance [23]. Later more nuanced contributions were added to the "wealth" literature looking into the relationship between a country's natural resources and democracy [4]. According to this literature, a "resource curse" led to stabilizing effects on dictatorships and hence reduced the probability of democratization. Therefore, it is found that not only "quantity" but the "quality" of wealth was important [4].

Other than internal causes that mainly result from a country's domestic structure, international and systemic factors have been the focus of attention. It is argued that in an international environment of strong democratic states, strong states can shield fledgling democracies from invasion and annexation. They can protect democratic institutions and leaders from local coup attempts [15]. It is also argued that involvement in international organizations (IOs) help democratization and democratic consolidation. According to this argument, IOs help democratic consolidation and democratization through creating credible guarantees to key democratic groups as well as altering elites' belief systems through socialization process [21], [22].

There is also research on the relationship between conflict and democracy. Thompson [30] suggests that in regions where states are preparing for war, the political composition will most likely be autocratic, as elites attempt to mobilize national resources towards survival and expansion. When necessity for survival

strategies fade and in the absence of war, we see the emergence of liberal political regimes. On the other hand, some research support an endogenous relationship where conflict and democracy are mutually affecting each other [6, 15]. However, in most of these findings, the relationship between conflict and democracy is found to vary over time and space [6], [15]. That is, democracy might have a markedly different effect on incidence of war and vice versa, during the 19th century compared to their effect in the post-World War II period. Spatial and temporal variations in democracy-conflict relationships necessitate looking for alternative explanations on the relationship between the international system and democracy.

POLARITY, POLARIZATION AND DEMOCRACY

Geller and Singer [9] provide a useful terminology which has been commonly accepted. According to this terminology, the *polarity* of the international system is determined by the number of major actors. *Unipolarity* is defined as systems which have one dominant state, *bipolarity* is defined as systems in which there are two major states of approximately equal capabilities, and *multipolarity* is defined as systems which have three or more major states of approximately equal capabilities. In this definition, "poles" are "states", not "alliances" or "blocs" of states. Alliance configuration has often been discussed in terms of the *polarization* of the international system [9]. Therefore, polarity pertains to the *distribution of power* (the number of major states), and polarization refers to the propensity of countries to cluster in alliance. Therefore, a system with multiple major states which form two separate blocs is *multipolar* and highly *polarized.*

This paper suggests an alternative way of looking at the effects of systemic factors on democracy by suggesting that uncertainty caused by polarity and polarization might be a better explanatory factor. Empirical research on the impact of systemic polarity and polarization on democratic transitions and consolidation is limited, and the theoretical explanations are varied. According to structural realism, under bipolarity, domestic political systems tend to converge towards the models provided by the leading powers [31]. Structural realists argue that in multipolar systems, the impact of systemic political and military factors is more indeterminate, and the international economy as well as various domestic forces have more influence on political systems [31]. Therefore, multipolar systems are more flexible and contain more interaction opportunities. Following this argument, it can be concluded that multipolar systems might be more conducive to democratic institutions because of the availability of interaction opportunities in the system.

On the other hand, Väyrynen [31] argues that under multipolar systems, dominant powers might be less interested in materially supporting democracy, and the policies of democracy promotion might be ineffectual since a multipolar system permits more political experimentation and uncertainty. As a result, in multipolar systems, ideologies and institutions can vary considerably [16]. Following this argument, it can be concluded that multipolar systems might be more conducive to both democratic and authoritarian institutions.

Even though these explanations give some hints that link the international system to regime types, they lack a clear argument in explaining how systemic factors might shape elite behavior. In my previous publications, I have established some theoretical and causal mechanisms on the possible impacts of polarity and polarization on democracy [13], [14], [12], [11]. According to this approach, multipolarity and polarization may cause uncertainty in the system and this may trigger authoritarian elites' concession to democratic policies. Uncertainty created by polarization and multipolarity might produce a crisis-like environment in which collective action problems become easier to overcome, facilitating democratic movements. I have tested this hypothesis in various other publications. In this paper, I revisit this hypothesis to see if these arguments apply to democratic consolidations.

METHODS AND DATA

I use dynamic panel logit models to test my hypothesis. In dynamic logit models democracy/non-democracy is taken as the dependent variable, and a lagged dependent variable D_{t-1} is included in the model in order to see the transitions in both ways. I estimate two separate equations. One equation is conditional on being democratic the previous year, and the second equation is conditional on being authoritarian in the previous year. My model contains systemic variables including conflict, polarity and polarization. I analyze whether these factors contribute to a regime's democratic status. Following the suggestions by Gassebner et. al. [8], I use economic growth, economic development and a number of past transitions as controls in my model as these three variables have proven to be the most robust determinants that passed through the test of different empirical models. I look at the democracies from 1946 to 2000 and merge multiple datasets includingmeasures of democracy [5], measures Network Polarization[20], War and Conflict in the system [28], GDP which measures development [19], and different measures of polarity such as System Concentration (CON) and System Movement (MOVE)[29].

A. Dependent and Independent Variables

The dependent variable is whether or not a state is a democracy from Cheibub [5] dataset. Democracy data starts from 1946 until2008. There are 9115 observations and 201 countries. 3995 observation is

coded as 1 (democratic) and 5120 observations coded as 0 (authoritarian). The unit of analysis is state-year, and the dataset is country-year panel data.This study will report the emergence and survival of democracies. Therefore, the dependent variable for transitions will be whether a state becomes a democracy, and for the democratic survival, the dependent variable will be whether a state remains a democracy.

As argued above, development is considered as one "core" variable that has an impact on democratization and per capita GDP (logged) is the most common measure of development. The GDP data is obtained from Maddison [19] which contains per capita GDP data from 1820 till 2008 and covers 163 countries that existed within this time period. It is also argued that, *ceteris paribus*, systemic conflict might be negatively related to the likelihood of democratization and democratic survival [15]. In order to measure systemic conflict, I use recent updated Interstate War Data (version 4.0) from COW which covers inter-state wars from 1823 till 2007 [28]. Following other scholars, I measure the systemic level of conflict with the number of inter-state wars in a given year, normalized by the number of states in the international system [6].

In order to measure polarization in the system, I use Maoz dataset [20]. Maoz [20] introduces an endogenous procedure defining groups and group membership as a result of the structure of relations. Maoz'smeasurement of group membership is analytically useful since he recognizes that states may be members of multiple groups. The maximum level of network polarization is obtained when there are only two blocs that are mutually exclusive in terms of the members making up each bloc [20]. Network Polarization is defined as NPI (Network Polarization Index)=NPOL*(1-COI). Maximum network polarization is obtained when the system is strictly divided into two cliques with half of the units in each and no overlap between the cliques. Zero polarization is obtained if all units are members of one clique (NPOL=0). We also get zero polarization when there is maximum overlap among the cliques [20].Maoz [20] uses COW2 [10], and ATOP [17] datasets to construct Alliance Polarization Index. Alliance Polarization data is available from 1816 till 2000.

To measure polarity, I use measures of CON (Concentration of Capabilities) and MOVE[29]. In order to calculate CON and MOVE, Singer et.al[29] start by calculating CINC (Composite Indicator of National Capabilities) which measures a state's material strength looking at a state's demography, military expenditures and personnel, size of armed forces, energy consumption and iron/steel production. MOVE reflects the number of percentage shares which have been exchanged between and among the major powers during each period, whether or not that redistribution leads to a change in the rank ordering [29]. The dataset I use in this research is a modified version of Singer et. al. [29]. I use EUGenewhich is a program designed primarily for generating data. While the original CON and MOVE scores were calculated over five-year aggregated periods, EUGene calculates both scores yearly[3]. In addition, Eugene calculates CON and MOVE across the entire system. Also, while original data is from 1820 until 1960, EuGenedataset is available from 1816 up to 2007 [3]. In this statistical analysis, I use System Concentration and System Movement which is derived from EUGene's system variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table I. The Impact of Systemic Factors on Transitions to Democracy and Democratic Survival, 1946-2000

	Democratic Transitions (Panel-Dynamic Logit)	Democratic Survival (Panel-Dynamic Logit)
Independent Variables	Coefficient	Coefficient
Alliance Polarization	4081.788***	1321.341
	(1225.433)	(1048.982)
System Concentration	-19.362	-19.470**
	(10.794)	(7.973)
System Movement	28.687	27.841
	(15.213)	(16.102)
Wars (System Level)	-7.499	-3.385
	(7.796)	(6.168)
GDP(Log)	.044	1.188***
	(.356)	(.190)
Economic Growth	-4.864	9.324***
	(2.649)	(2.517)
N. Past Transitions to Democracy	3.884***	-.397
	(.666)	(.258)
Constant	-5.310	-1.111
	(4.251)	(2.252)
N	3815 observations	2299 observations
	120 groups	93 groups
Log likelihood	-250.625	-214.788

Note 1 : Entries for all Models are logit coefficients. Standard errors are in parenthesis. Regimes are coded 0 for Authoritarian Regimes and 1 for Democracies.

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p.<.001

Note 2: Weibull and Cox survival models as well as dynamic logit with interaction terms with Polity IV data gives similar results supporting the significance of systemic variables.

Table 1 shows all the systemic variables and core internal variables. The results show that Alliance Polarization have a significant impact on democratization. This supports the hypothesis that anuncertain systemic settingresulting from polarization is in fact good for the emergence of democracies by providing a crisis like situation that facilitates collective action and increasing the cost of repression.

System Concentration is the static measure of system capability concentration which ranges from 0 (reflecting perfect equality in the distribution) to 1.0 (in which case one nation holds 100 percent of that capability). Based on the results there is a negative non-significant relationship between system concentration and democratic transitions. This means that as the power is concentrated in one hand, it is less likely to see democratic transitions and that power polarity in the system is good for democracies. In the second column, there is a negative significant relationship with democratic survival. This indicates that as the power is more polarized, it is less likely to see democratic breakdowns. In other words, as the system concentration increase, the break downs should increase which happens to be the case after the emergence of post-Soviet democracies. The results for

system concentration also supports the hypothesis that uncertainty resulting from a multipolar setting benefits democratic regimes since elites are more responsive to the popular demands during uncertainty.

System movement reflects the number of percentage shares which have been exchanged in the system each year. Based on the results, we see a positive relationship with change of power concentration and democratic transitions and democratic survival. In this model, system movement seems to be insignificant for both transitions and break downs. This means that for the survival and transition of democracies, the question of who holds power is less important than power polarization. The impact of War on regime change and survival is negative but not significant. These results may suggest that power and alliance configurations are stronger explanatory variables than wars that relate to the systemic causes.

In line with previous research, these results show that previous experience with democracy has a considerable impact on democratic transitions. Also, in line with Przeworski [24], economic development has a significant impact on democratic survival but not for democratic transitions. The results show that economic growth also impacts democratic survival. Economic growth has a negative but insignificant effect on democratic transitions. In line with Gassebner et. al.'s [8] findings, these results also show that economic growth has a positive effect on democratic survival, meaning that economic contractions lead tothe breakdown of dictatorships. Increase in level of development or economic growth does not affect democratic transitions, but their contractions may lead to democratic breakdowns.

The systemic features and their impact on democracies show that systemic hold of power in one hand will definitely hurt democracies in the long run. The results show that an international system with diverse share of power is in fact good for democratic stability in the long run. In a way domestic systems could be thought of as mirror images of system level features. If the system capabilities are shared among states, it is likely to see political authority shared within states. If the power is concentrated in one hand, the domestic politics will reflect with increasing concentration of political power with authoritarian regimes. As stated earlier, uncertainty produced by system polarization and system polarity creates more opportunities for democratic oppositions.

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