

Regime change

1. Democratization and democratic consolidations
2. Democratic breakdown
3. Arab Spring

Causes of democracy: a muddle

Factors thought to promote democracy (Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, p. 37-8)

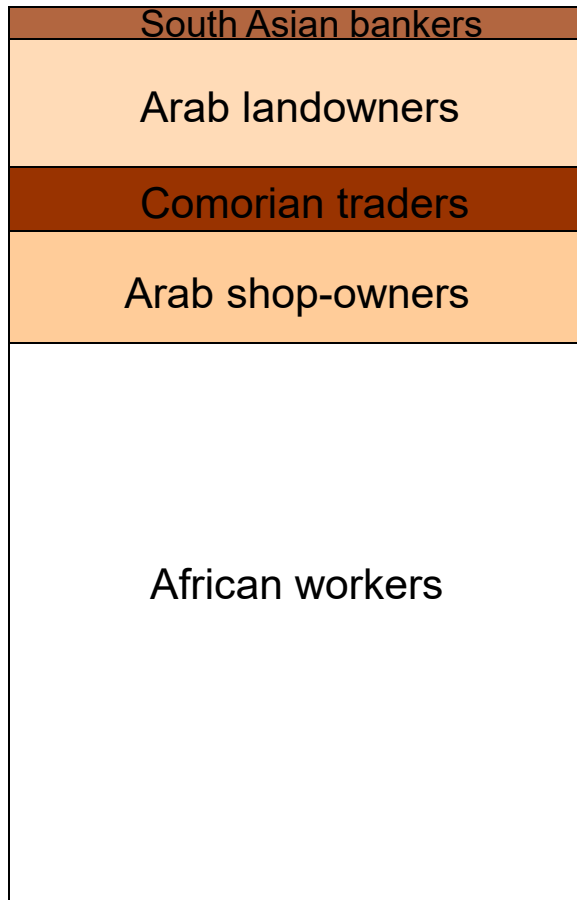
- a high overall level of economic wealth
- a relatively equal distribution of income and/or wealth
- a market economy
- a feudal aristocracy at some point in the history of society
- the absence of feudalism in society
- a strong bourgeoisie
- a strong middle class
- high levels of literacy and education
- an instrumental rather than consummatory culture
- Protestantism
- social pluralism and strong intermediate groups
- the development of political contestation before the expansion of political participation
- democratic authority structures within social groups, particularly those connected to politics
- low levels of civil violence
- low levels of political polarization and extremism
- political leaders committed to democracy
- experience as a British colony
- traditions of toleration and compromise
- occupation by a pro-democratic foreign power
- elite desire to emulate democratic nations
- traditions of respect for law and individual rights
- communal (ethnic, religious, racial) homogeneity
- communal (ethnic, racial, religious) heterogeneity
- consensus on political and social values
- absence of consensus on political and social values

Causes of democracy: main schools of thought

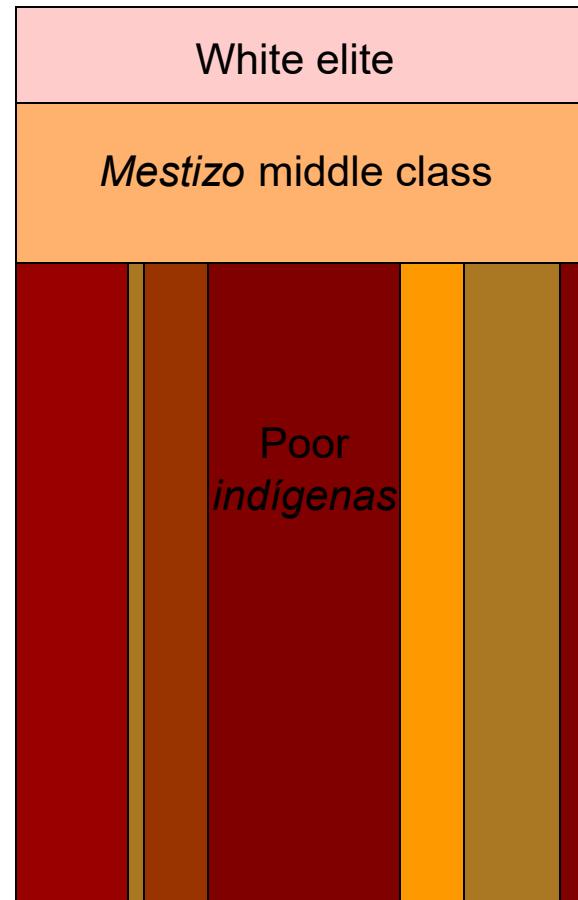
Theory	Variants	Advocates	Empirical assessment
1. Social cleavages	1a. Class structure 1b. Ethnic homogeneity 1c. Cross-cutting cleavages	Aristotle, Dahl, Lijphart, etc.	Mixed on economics, strong on ethnicity
3. Culture	2a. Mass values (trust, etc.) 2b. Civil society and associations 2c. Elite values	Tocqueville, Almond & Verba, Putnam, Inglehart	Mixed
4. Institutions	3a. Presidentialism 3b. Electoral rules	Hume, Linz, Valenzuela, etc.	Mixed; support for interaction effects
5. Leaders	4a. Socialization and selection 4b. "Grand gestures"	Machiavelli, Schmitter & O'Donnell, etc.	Mixed; support in times of crisis
[6. External influences]	5a. Direct (e.g., occupation) 5b. Indirect (e.g., diffusion)	Huntington, USAID, etc.	Strong for direct; mixed for indirect
Level of development	a. Education, tolerances, etc. b. Specialization, cross-currents c. Urbanization, mobilization d. Communication, mobilization e. Patterns of development]	Lipset, Diamond, Pzeworski, Marx, etc.	Strong support; mechanisms less clear, and many caveats

Examples of cumulative cleavages

Zanzibar, 1961

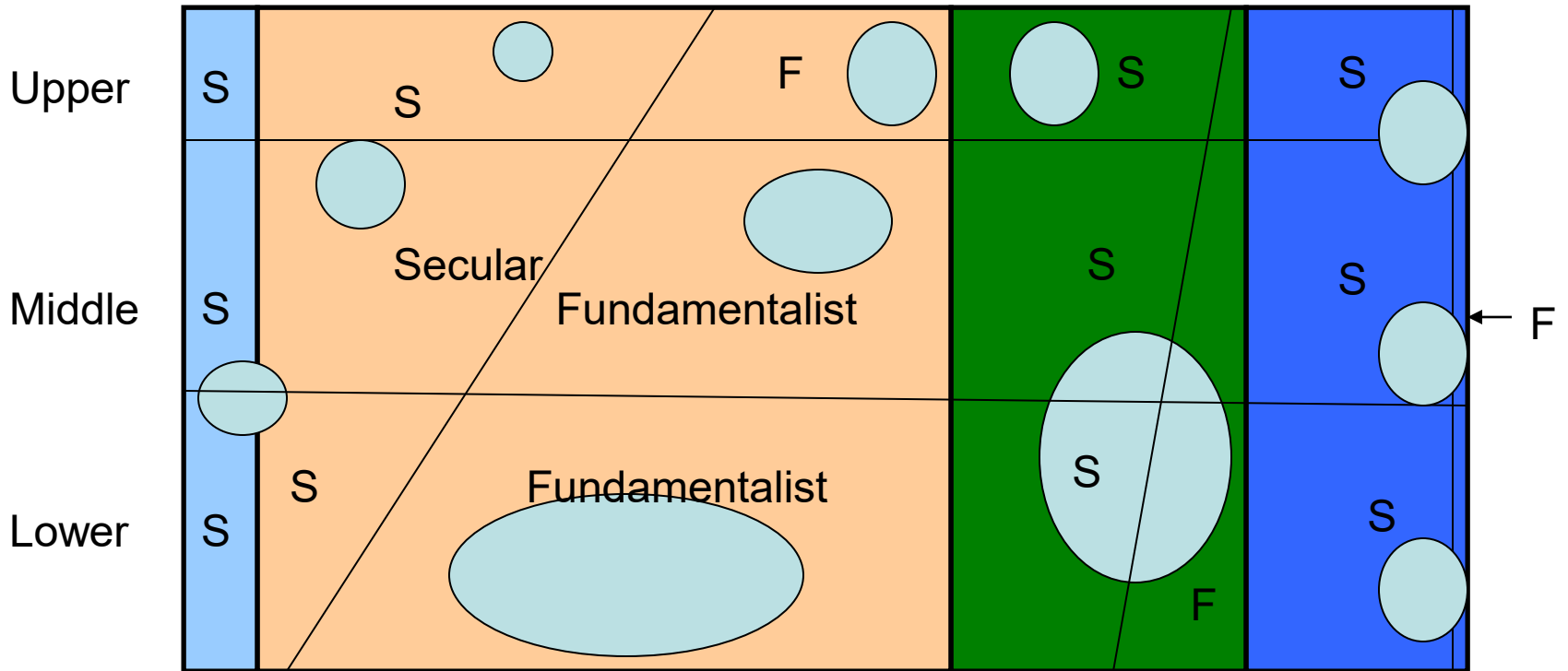


Guatemala, 1980



Cross-cutting cleavages

This box represents society



○ Rural

Tocqueville uses international comparisons to assess effect of culture on democracy in the U.S.

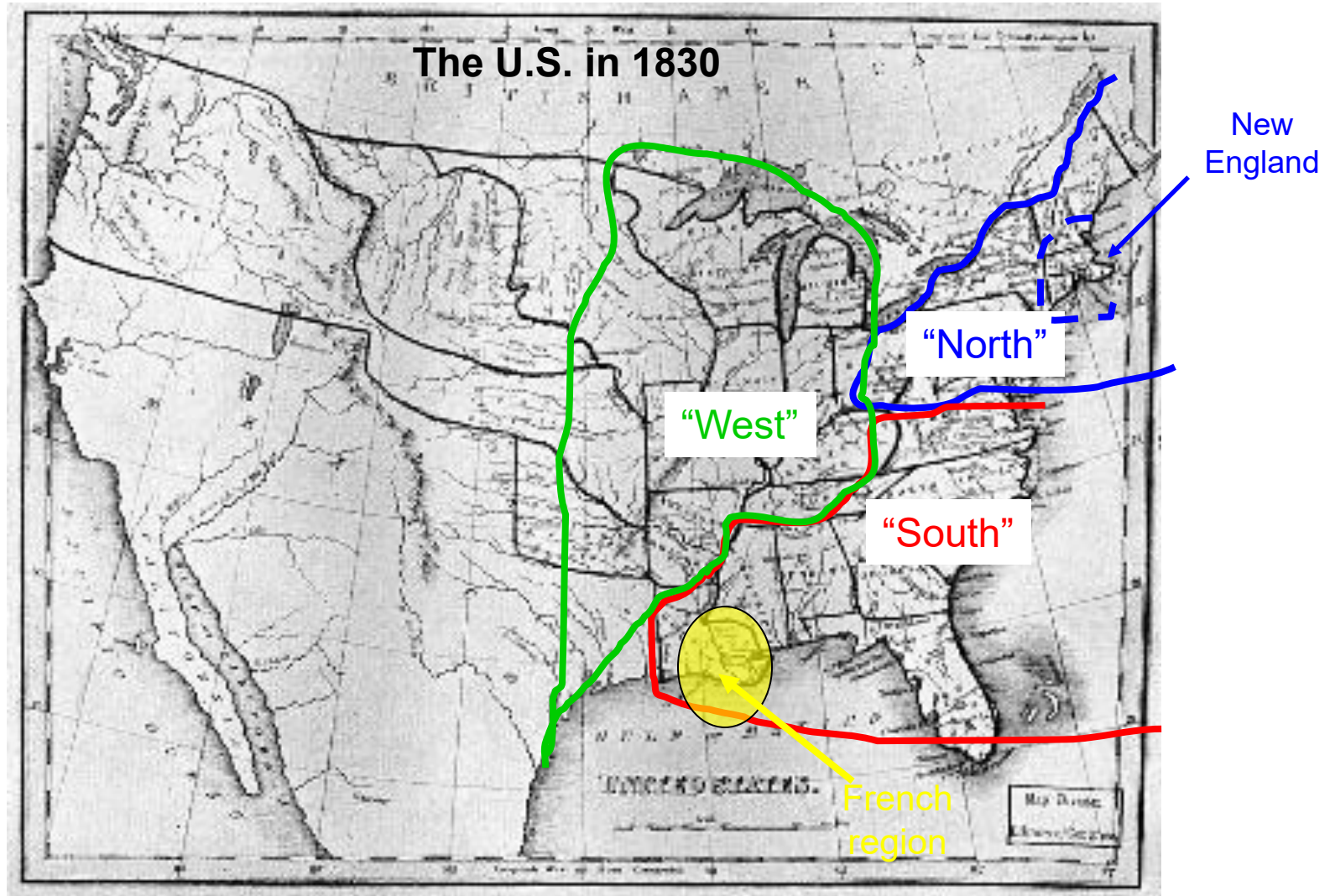


This image is in the public domain. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexis_de_Tocqueville.jpg).

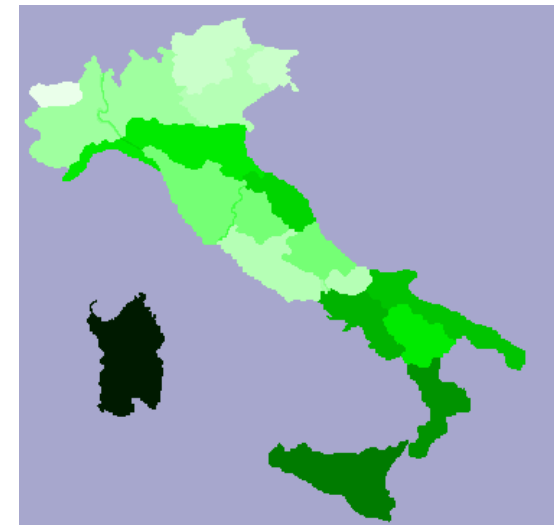
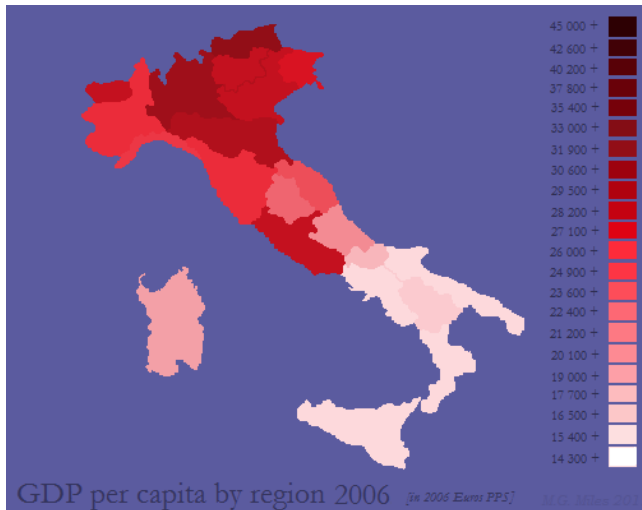
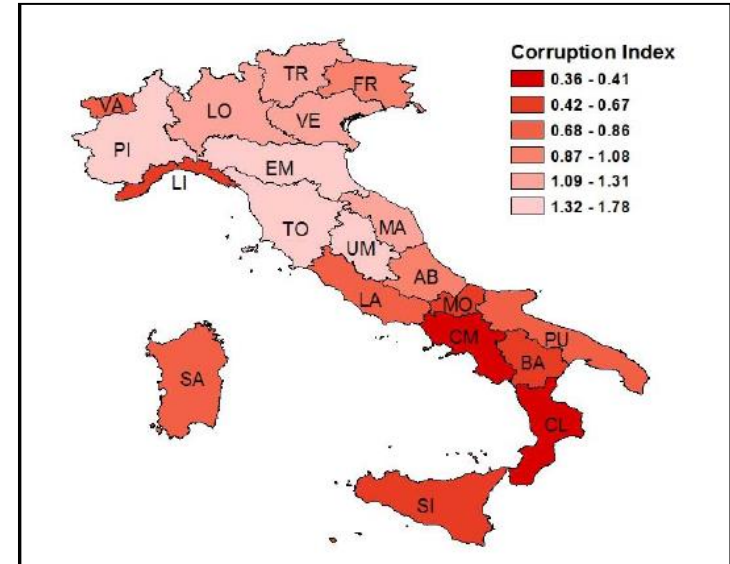
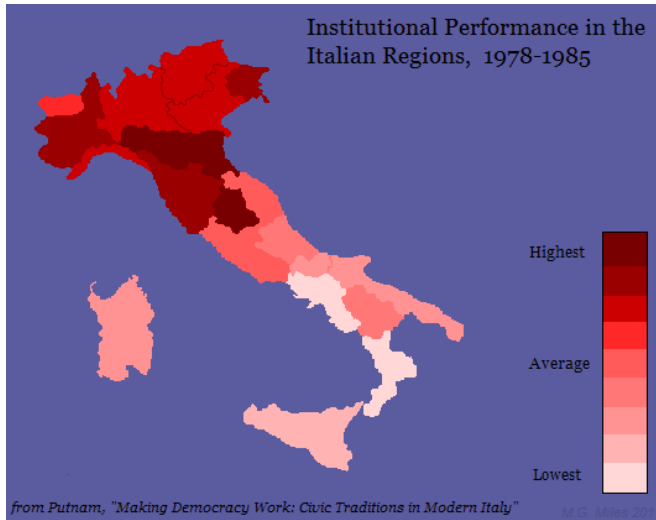


© Source unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Tocqueville uses internal comparisons to show effect of culture on democracy in the U.S.



Putnam argued that culture was responsible for difference between northern and southern Italy



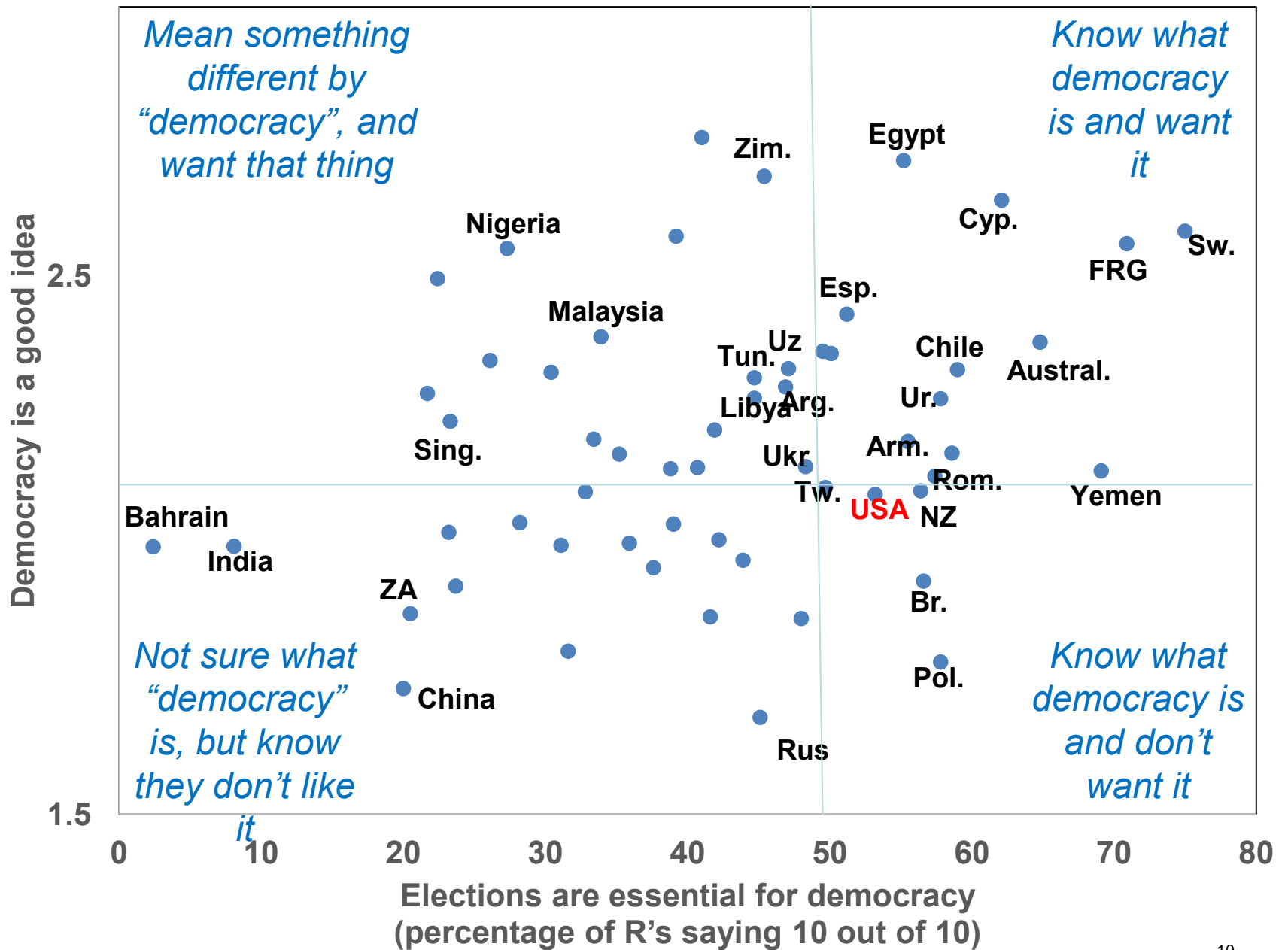
Images © M.G. Miles. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Broad support for democracy

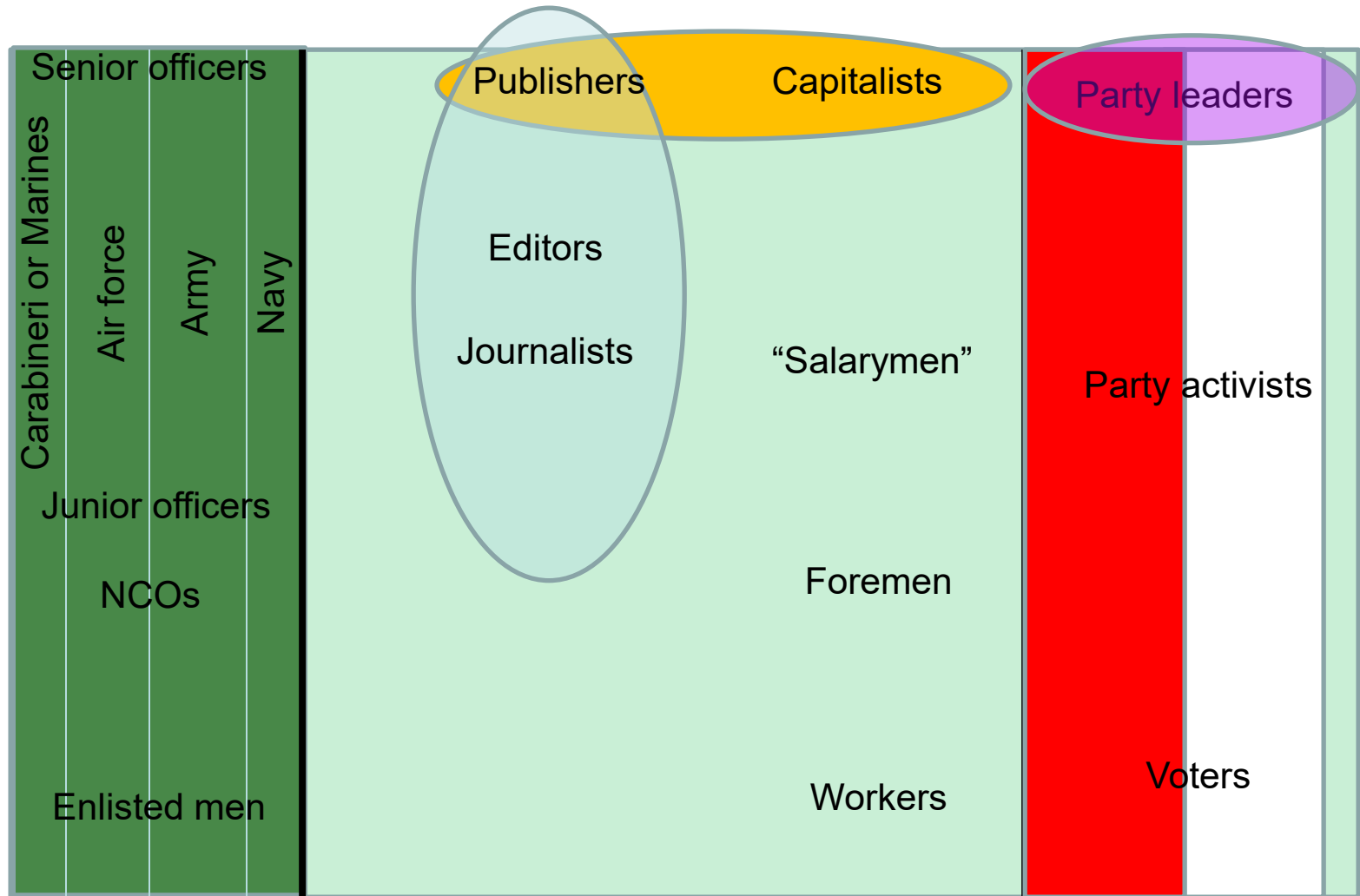
	Democracy	Strongman	Experts	Military
Germany	2.56	0.70	1.53	0.28
Sweden	2.58	0.85	1.17	0.50
United States	2.09	1.01	1.37	0.68
Taiwan	2.11	1.71	1.57	0.70
South Korea	1.87	1.46	1.50	0.58
Mexico	1.96	1.52	1.73	1.45
India*	2.00	1.98	2.08	1.98
South Africa	1.87	1.56	1.70	1.34
China	1.73	1.03	0.99	0.71
Pakistan	2.04	1.28	1.87	1.66
Russia	1.68	1.76	1.48	0.67
Singapore	2.23	1.46	1.60	0.92
Uzbekistan	2.36	1.13	1.22	0.96

*Relative support for democracy greater in previous waves of WVS.

Source: World Values Survey, 2010-14. Scale 0-3. Author's calculations.



Dimensions of political culture

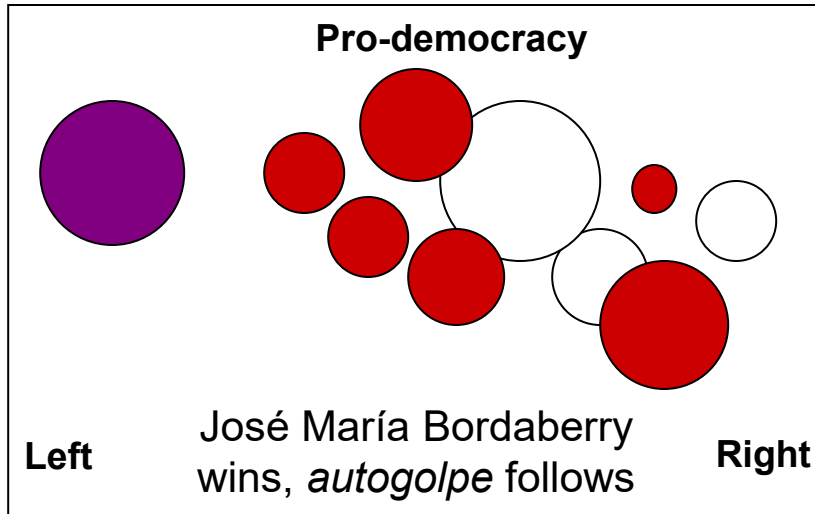


Causes of democracy: main schools of thought

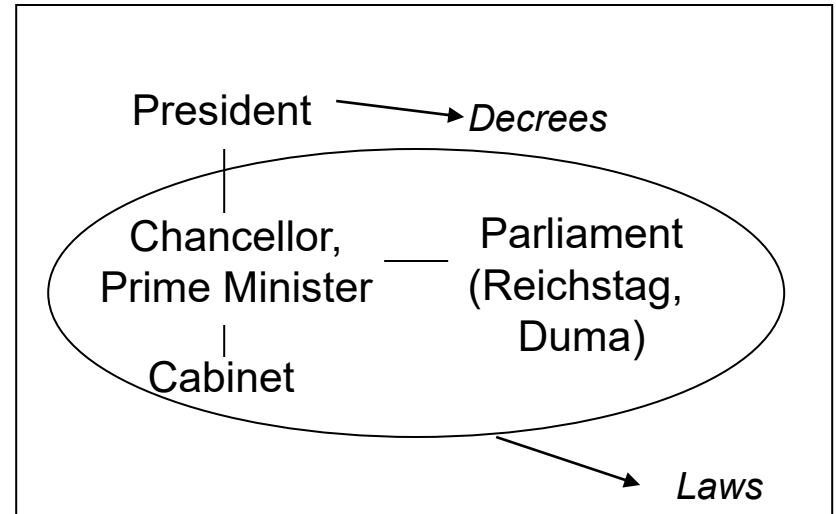
Theory	Variants	Advocates	Empirical assessment
1. Social cleavages	1a. Class structure 1b. Ethnic homogeneity 1c. Cross-cutting cleavages	Aristotle, Dahl, Lijphart, etc.	Mixed on economics, strong on ethnicity
3. Culture	2a. Mass values (trust, etc.) 2b. Civil society and associations 2c. Elite values	Tocqueville, Almond & Verba, Putnam, Inglehart	Mixed
4. Institutions	3a. Presidentialism 3b. Electoral rules	Hume, Linz, Valenzuela, etc.	Mixed; support for interaction effects
5. Leaders	4a. Socialization and selection 4b. "Grand gestures"	Machiavelli, Schmitter & O'Donnell, etc.	Mixed; support in times of crisis
[6. External influences]	5a. Direct (e.g., occupation) 5b. Indirect (e.g., diffusion)	Huntington, USAID, etc.	Strong for direct; mixed for indirect
Level of development	a. Education, tolerances, etc. b. Specialization, cross-currents c. Urbanization, mobilization d. Communication, mobilization e. Patterns of development]	Lipset, Diamond, Pzeworski, Marx, etc.	Strong support; mechanisms less clear, and many caveats

Institutions: We don't know what works, but...

1. DSV: Uruguay, 1970



2. Hyper-presidentialism



3. Presidential election

President and VP on separate tickets

- U.S. 1800
- Philippines (Corazón Aquino)
- Peru (Alberto Fujimori)

President and PM elected on a different schedule

4. Excessive veto players

- a. Plurality-winner presidential elections in multiparty system
- b. Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1652-1791 (really 1764)
- c. U.S.? Brazil?

Causes of democracy: main schools of thought

Theory	Variants	Advocates	Empirical assessment
1. Social cleavages	1a. Class structure 1b. Ethnic homogeneity 1c. Cross-cutting cleavages	Aristotle, Dahl, Lijphart, etc.	Mixed on economics, strong on ethnicity
3. Culture	2a. Mass values (trust, etc.) 2b. Civil society and associations 2c. Elite values	Tocqueville, Almond & Verba, Putnam, Inglehart	Mixed
4. Institutions	3a. Presidentialism 3b. Electoral rules	Hume, Linz, Valenzuela, etc.	Mixed; support for interaction effects
5. Leaders	4a. Socialization and selection 4b. "Grand gestures"	Machiavelli, Schmitter & O'Donnell, etc.	Mixed; support in times of crisis
[6. External influences]	5a. Direct (e.g., occupation) 5b. Indirect (e.g., diffusion)	Huntington, USAID, etc.	Strong for direct; mixed for indirect
Level of development	a. Education, tolerances, etc. b. Specialization, cross-currents c. Urbanization, mobilization d. Communication, mobilization e. Patterns of development]	Lipset, Diamond, Pzeworski, Marx, etc.	Strong support; mechanisms less clear, and many caveats

Leadership

With a mixture of great surprise and astonishment I have read with attention the Sentiments you have submitted to my perusal.

Be assured Sir, no occurrence in the course of the War, has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the Army as you have expressed, and I must view with abhorrence, and reprehend with severity...

I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs that can befall my Country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable...

Let me conjure you then, if you have any regard for your Country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your Mind, and never communicate, as from yourself, or any one else, a sentiment of the like Nature.



Establishment of new polity or political system



Founder without *virtú* or honor

Failed tyranny

Founder with honor but without *virtú*

Failed republic (or constitutional monarchy)

Constitutional crisis

Founder with *virtú* but without honor

Dynasty (or tyranny)

“Corruption”

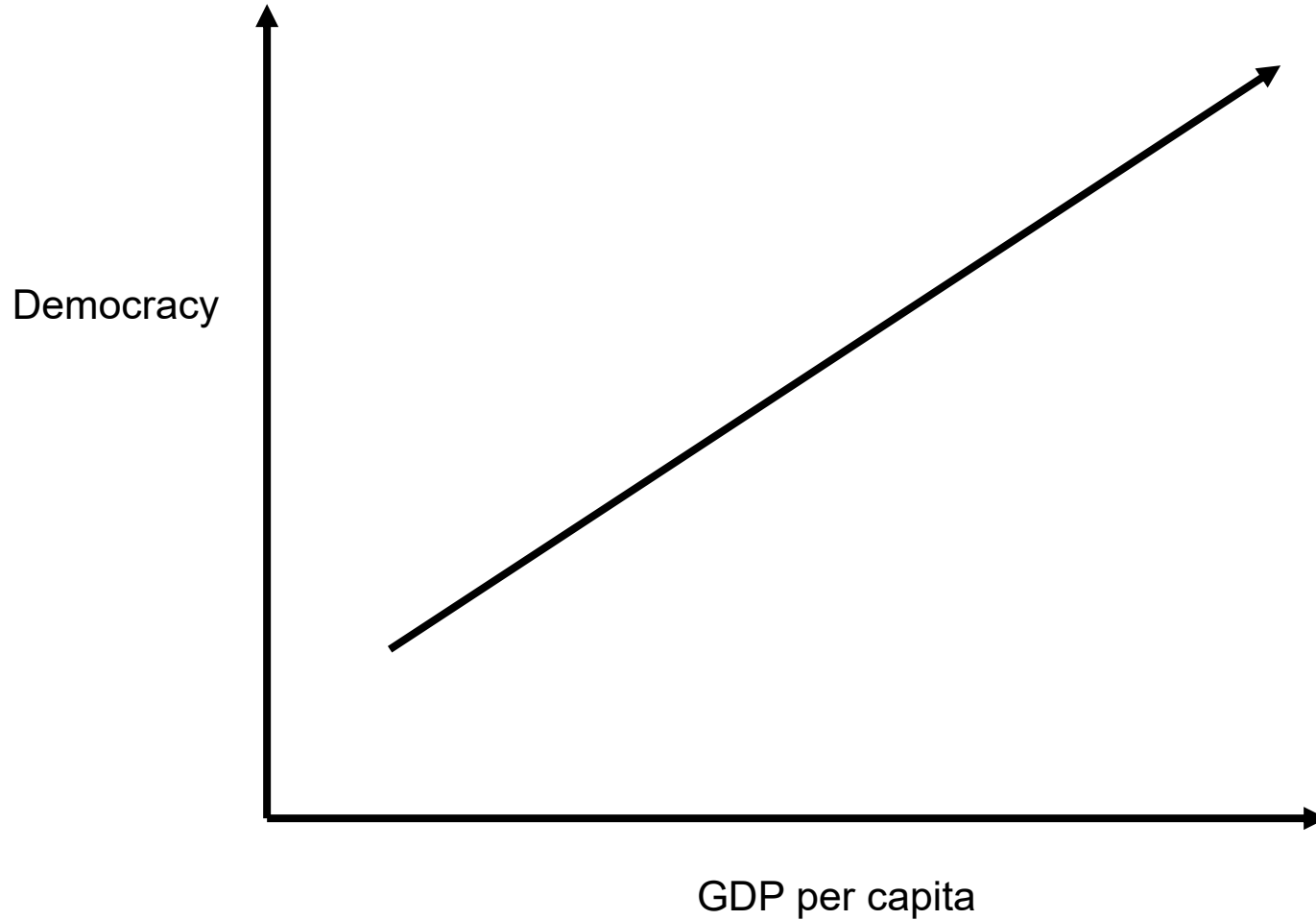
Founder with *virtú* and honor

Republic (or constitutional monarchy)

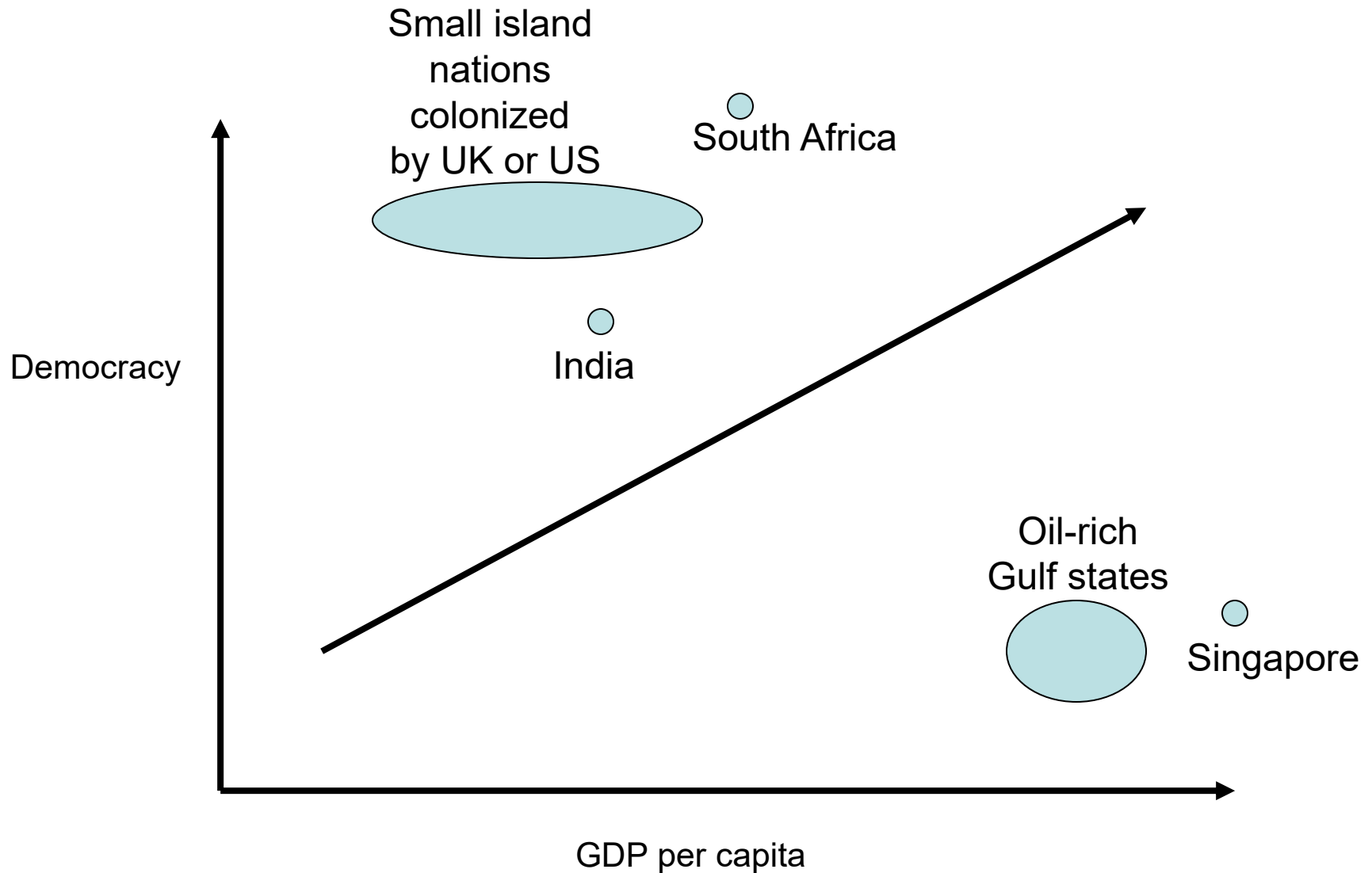
Causes of democracy: main schools of thought

Theory	Variants	Advocates	Empirical assessment
1. Social cleavages	1a. Class structure 1b. Ethnic homogeneity 1c. Cross-cutting cleavages	Aristotle, Dahl, Lijphart, etc.	Mixed on economics, strong on ethnicity
3. Culture	2a. Mass values (trust, etc.) 2b. Civil society and associations 2c. Elite values	Tocqueville, Almond & Verba, Putnam, Inglehart	Mixed
4. Institutions	3a. Presidentialism 3b. Electoral rules	Hume, Linz, Valenzuela, etc.	Mixed; support for interaction effects
5. Leaders	4a. Socialization and selection 4b. "Grand gestures"	Machiavelli, Schmitter & O'Donnell, etc.	Mixed; support in times of crisis
[6. External influences]	5a. Direct (e.g., occupation) 5b. Indirect (e.g., diffusion)	Huntington, USAID, etc.	Strong for direct; mixed for indirect
Level of development	a. Education, tolerances, etc. b. Specialization, cross-currents c. Urbanization, mobilization d. Communication, mobilization e. Patterns of development]	Lipset, Diamond, Pzeworski, Marx, etc.	Strong support; mechanisms less clear, and many caveats

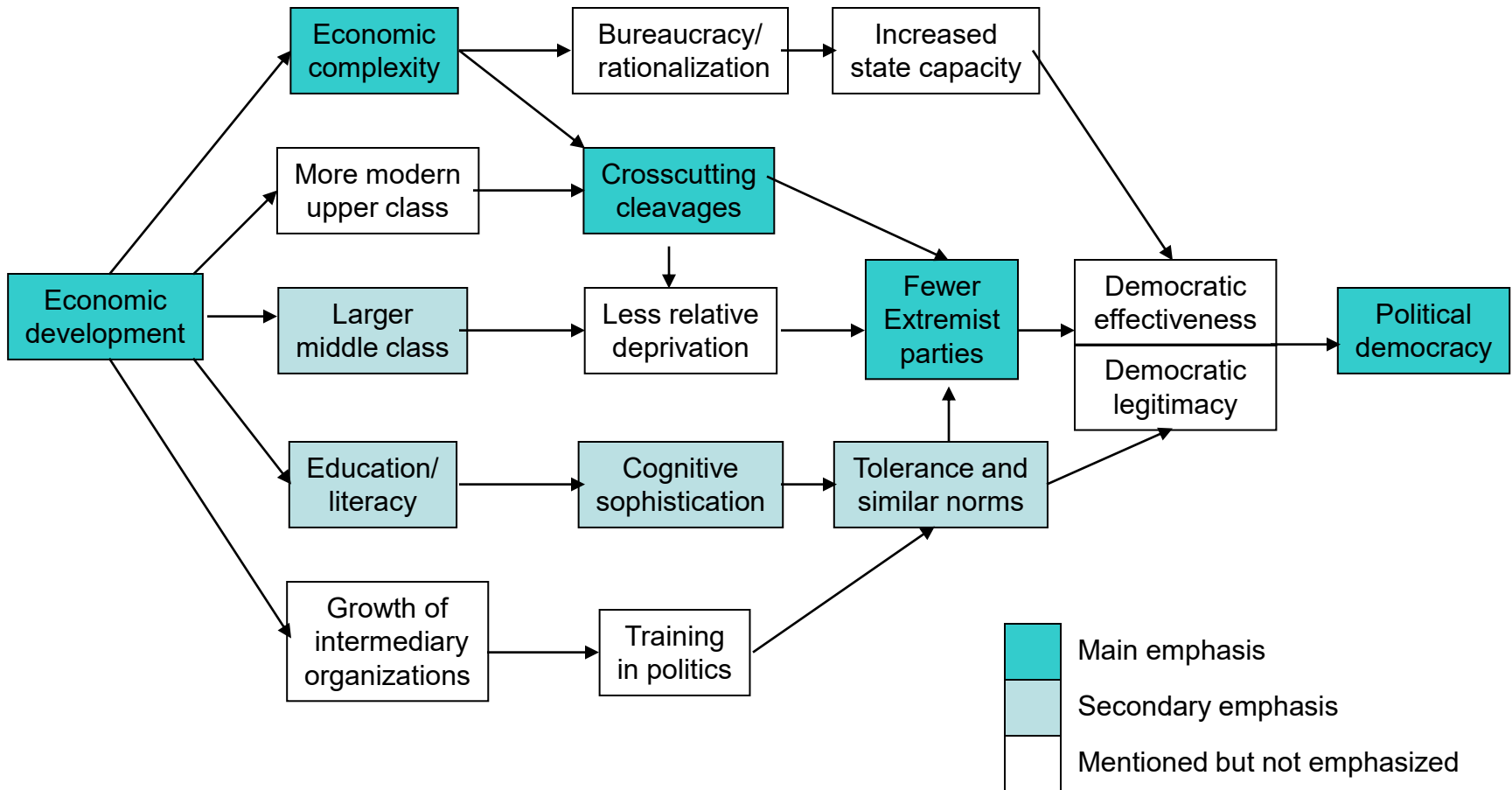
Lipset's relationship between development and democracy



There are two main clusters of outliers (2)



The Lipset model (*Political Man*, 1961)



Breakdown of autocracy ≠ establishment or consolidation of democracy

Stages of regime change

- Breakdown of old regime (of whatever type)
- Establishment of new regime
- Consolidation of the new regime

Idiosyncrasies of the old regime may affect trajectory, and once smothered social divisions may emerge

Examples

- Breakdown of Communist rule in Eastern Europe (Poland, E. Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania)
- Breakdown of Weimar democracy in Germany, 1933
- Democratization of military dictatorships in Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil
- Breakdown of one-party rule in Mexico

Background on democratic breakdown

Collapse

- Several dozen cases in last two hundred years
- About half to military coups and half to *autogolpes*; very few to popular revolutions

Broad patterns

- Around 1/6 of democracies failed in last 25 years
- Most of failure are low-quality or unconsolidated democracies (Pakistan, Thailand, Russia, Egypt)
- Some far more troubling (Fiji, Venezuela, Turkey)

“Hollowing out” and “illiberal” democracy

- Declines in average Freedom House scores every year for past 10 years
- Examples: Argentina, Hungary, Poland

Failure of transition to lead to democracy

- Arab Spring, most of former Soviet Union

Causes of Democratic Breakdown

Inhospitable social-structural conditions

- Ethnic or class polarization
- Cumulative cleavages

Culture

- Elites
- Mass public
- Military

Inappropriate institutional designs

- Constant stalemate / veto-players
- Personalization of power
- Military

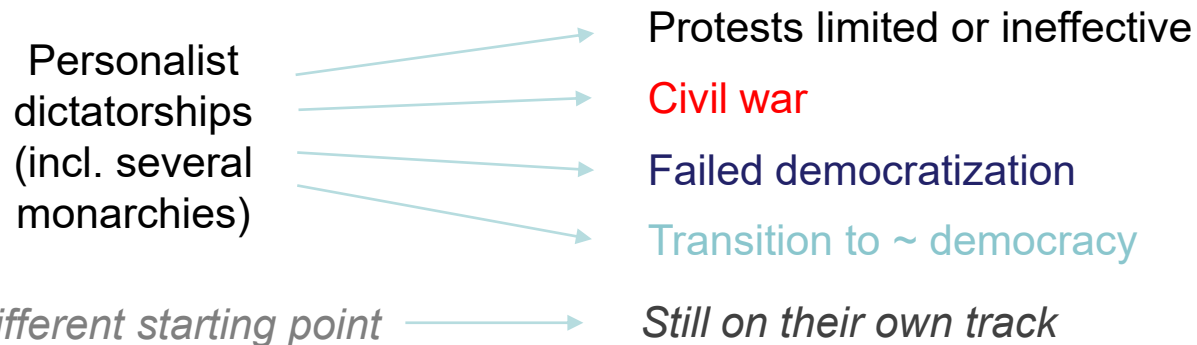
Leadership

Unfavorable external circumstances → delegitimation

- Exogenous economic crisis
- Defeat in war

Arab spring

1. What happened?



2. Why did it happen?

- The role of discontent
- The reasons why a regime breaks down are different from the reasons why a new regime emerges

The Arab Spring: What happened?

	Polity IV (-10 to 10, higher is democ)		Freedom House (1-7, higher is less free)	
	2010	2015	2010	2015
Tunisia	-4	7	6.0	2.0
Egypt	-3	-4	5.5	5.5
Morocco	-6	-4	4.5	4.5
Jordan	-3	-3	5.5	5.5
UAE	-8	-8	5.5	6.0
Kuwait	-7	-7	4.5	5.0
KSA	-10	-10	6.5	7.0
Bahrain	-9	-8	5.5	6.5
Libya	-7	n/a	7.0	6.0
Syria	-7	-9	6.5	7.0
Yemen	-2	n/a	5.5	6.5
<i>Iraq</i>	3	3	5.5	5.5
<i>Algeria</i>	2	2	5.5	5.5
<i>West Bank/ Gaza</i>	--	--	5.5/6.0	5.5/6.5

Arab Spring: *Why* did it happen?

Background causes of underlying discontent with the regime

Causes of whether discontent erupted into mass protests

Factors that influence whether the regime collapses in the face of protests

Factors affecting the establishment and consolidation of a democratic regime if the regime collapses

Arab Spring: *Why* did it happen?

Background causes of underlying discontent with the regime

Poor economic performance (+)

Corruption and cronyism (+)

Authoritarianism (+)

Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)

Arab Spring: *Why* did it happen?

Background causes of underlying discontent with the regime

Causes of whether discontent erupted into mass protests

Poor economic performance (+)

Corruption and cronyism (+)

Authoritarianism (+)

Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)

Arab Spring: *Why* did it happen?

Background causes of underlying discontent with the regime	Causes of whether discontent erupted into mass protests
Poor economic performance (+)	“Spark” / focusing event: self-immolation in Tunisia, Tunisian
Corruption and cronyism (+)	example elsewhere (+)
Authoritarianism (+)	
Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)	Social media (+)
	Existing opposition movements (+)

Arab Spring: *Why* did it happen?

Background causes of underlying discontent with the regime

Poor economic performance (+)

Corruption and cronyism (+)

Authoritarianism (+)

Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)

Causes of whether discontent erupted into mass protests

“Spark” / focusing event: self-immolation in Tunisia, Tunisian example elsewhere (+)

Social media (+)

Existing opposition movements (+)

Factors that influence whether the regime collapses in the face of protests

Arab Spring: *Why* did it happen?

Background causes of underlying discontent with the regime	Causes of whether discontent erupted into mass protests	Factors that influence whether the regime collapses in the face of protests
Poor economic performance (+)	“Spark” / focusing event: self-immolation in Tunisia, Tunisian example elsewhere (+)	Strength of the coercive apparatus (-)
Corruption and cronyism (+)		Foreign involvement (+ or -, depending)
Authoritarianism (+)		
Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)	Social media (+) Existing opposition movements (+)	Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)

Arab Spring: *Why* did it happen?

Background causes of underlying discontent with the regime	Causes of whether discontent erupted into mass protests	Factors that influence whether the regime collapses in the face of protests	Factors affecting the establishment and consolidation of a democratic regime if the regime collapses
Poor economic performance (+)	“Spark” / focusing event: self-immolation in Tunisia, Tunisian example elsewhere (+)	Strength of the coercive apparatus (-)	
Corruption and cronyism (+)		Foreign involvement (+ or -, depending)	
Authoritarianism (+)			
Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)	Social media (+) Existing opposition movements (+)	Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)	

Arab Spring: *Why* did it happen?

Background causes of underlying discontent with the regime	Causes of whether discontent erupted into mass protests	Factors that influence whether the regime collapses in the face of protests	Factors affecting the establishment and consolidation of a democratic regime if the regime collapses
Poor economic performance (+)	“Spark” / focusing event: self-immolation in Tunisia, Tunisian example elsewhere (+)	Strength of the coercive apparatus (-)	Nature of the original opposition: civic or not (- for Islamist)
Corruption and cronyism (+)		Foreign involvement (+ or -, depending)	Foreign involvement (+ or – depending, usually negative in this particular context)
Authoritarianism (+)			
Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)	Social media (+) Existing opposition movements (+)	Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country: Whether the regime is allied with specific ethnic groups (+)	Ethnic / sectarian divisions in the country (-) “Westernization” (+) Level of economic development (+?)

Some country examples

Country	Background causes of underlying discontent with the regime	Factors shaping whether discontent erupted into protests	Factors that influence whether the regime collapses in the face of mass protests	Factors affecting the establishment and consolidation of a democratic regime if the regime collapses
Tunisia	All high	High	Weak coercive apparatus, ethnic divisions not salient → regime collapse	Westernized; civic movements strong; high GDP p.c.
Egypt	All high	All high	Strong coercive apparatus (partly as result of foreign aid) → overthrow of dictator without full structural change, elections won by Islamist opposition, eventual coup	Behavior of Morsi government, continued strength of the military, foreign support for coup
Syria	High, but major differences along ethnic /sectarian lines	High though opposition partly along ethnic lines	Strong coercive apparatus (partly as result of foreign support) → civil war, extensive foreign intervention	[Mainly government victory. Depends on outcome of civil war, which is in turn partly a product of foreign (Turkey

Credits for images on page 16

Top to bottom:

Victoriano Huerta

This image is in the public domain. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Francisco I. Madero

This image is in the public domain. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Robert Mugabe

Image courtesy of [Marcel Antonisse / Anefo](#) on Wikimedia Commons.
License CC CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

Nelson Mandela

© Apic / HultonArchive / Getty Images. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<https://ocw.mit.edu>

17.50 Introduction to Comparative Politics
Fall 2022

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <https://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.