

Order & Violence (Political Economy of Development)



Week 9: Democratization and democracy promotion
Chris Blattman

Week 9 objectives

1. In thinking about democracy it's useful to distinguish between outcomes (freedom, equality) versus processes (elections)
2. Not all elections are democratic, and not all election promotion promotes democracy
3. But elections in autocracies are not simply window dressing
 - Elections and legislatures are useful arenas for peaceful bargaining
 - They may help powerful groups in society reduce information asymmetries and provide credible commitment
 - It's too soon to say whether this strengthens the hold of the autocracy or leads them down a slow path to further democratization
4. Democratization has largely been driven by struggles internal to a country, between civil societies growing in organization, but strongly influenced by international democratic norms

Week 9 objectives

5. But can democracy precede development? Many thinkers have argued that democracy is too slow and focuses too much on the short term to promote development
6. There are several arguments for democracy
 - It is intrinsically important—development itself
 - Without political power for the citizenry, autocracies are unequal
 - Autocracies are also extremely risky, and most underperform
7. Natural experiments suggest that democratization on the margin reduces inequality and increases public goods
8. External democracy promotion probably focuses too much on processes (elections) rather than citizen empowerment, but nonetheless the evidence suggests these have small yet meaningful impacts on outcomes

Week 9 objectives

9. The savior complex in development is misleading and dangerous

10. The root problems in development:

- Forgetting that the political considerations and bargains are all-important
- Having an unerring confidence in the ability to engineer progress

11. Remember

- Don't be an anti-politics machine
- Be a piecemeal not a utopian social engineer
- The answer to every question is “it depends”

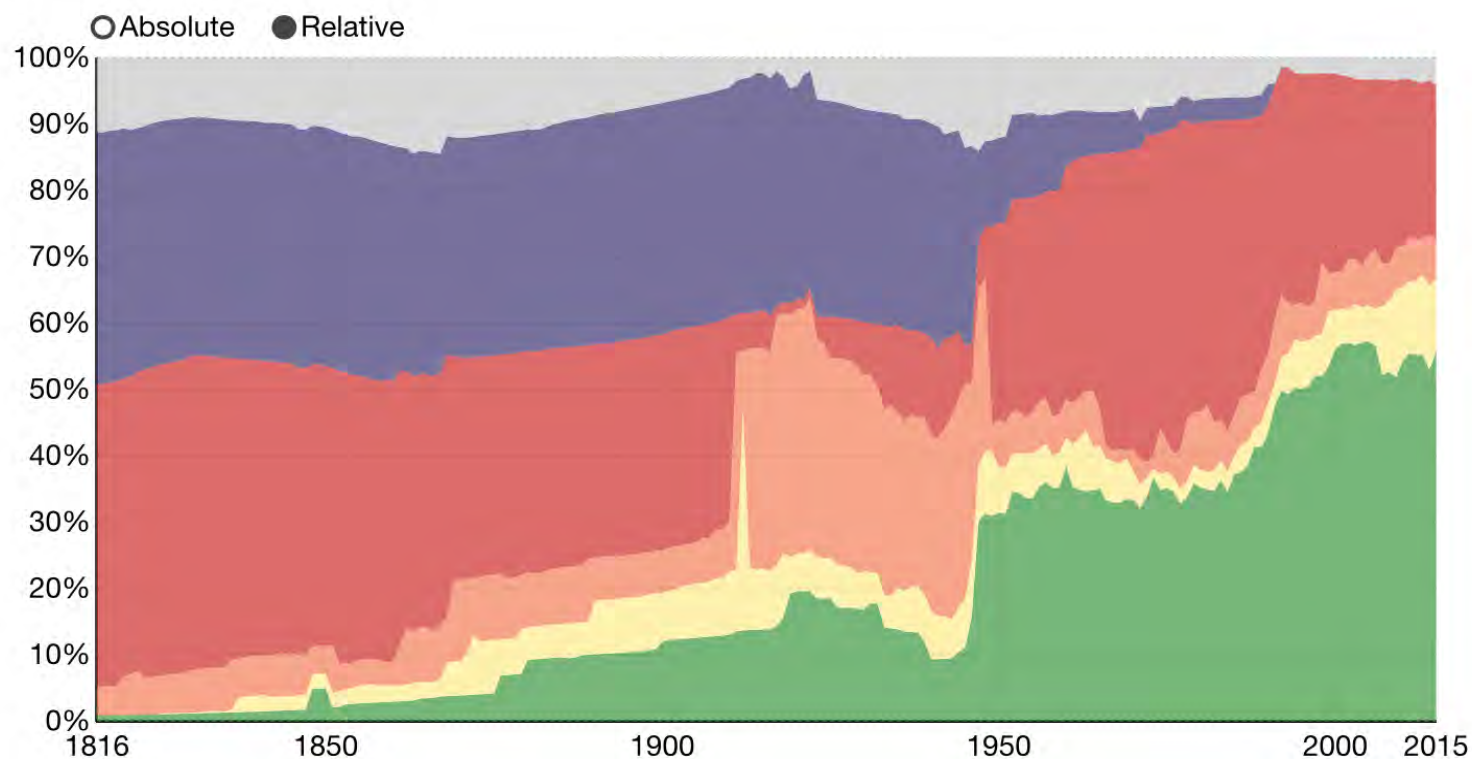
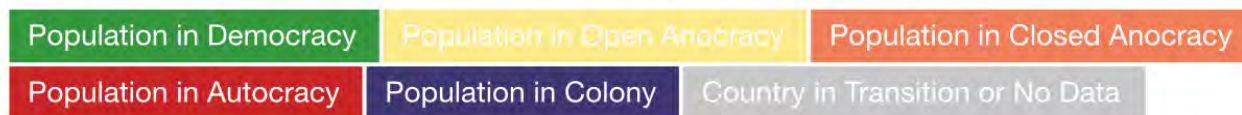
I. Some basics

In 1942 there were merely 12 democracies in the world. Today more than half the world's countries and population are democratic.

Number of world citizens living under different political regimes



The Polity IV score captures the type of political regime for each country on a range from -10 (full autocracy) to +10 (full democracy). Regimes that fall into the middle of this spectrum are called anocracies.



Democracy as a set of rules about who decides: The (narrow) election centric view

Democracy is *“the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.”*

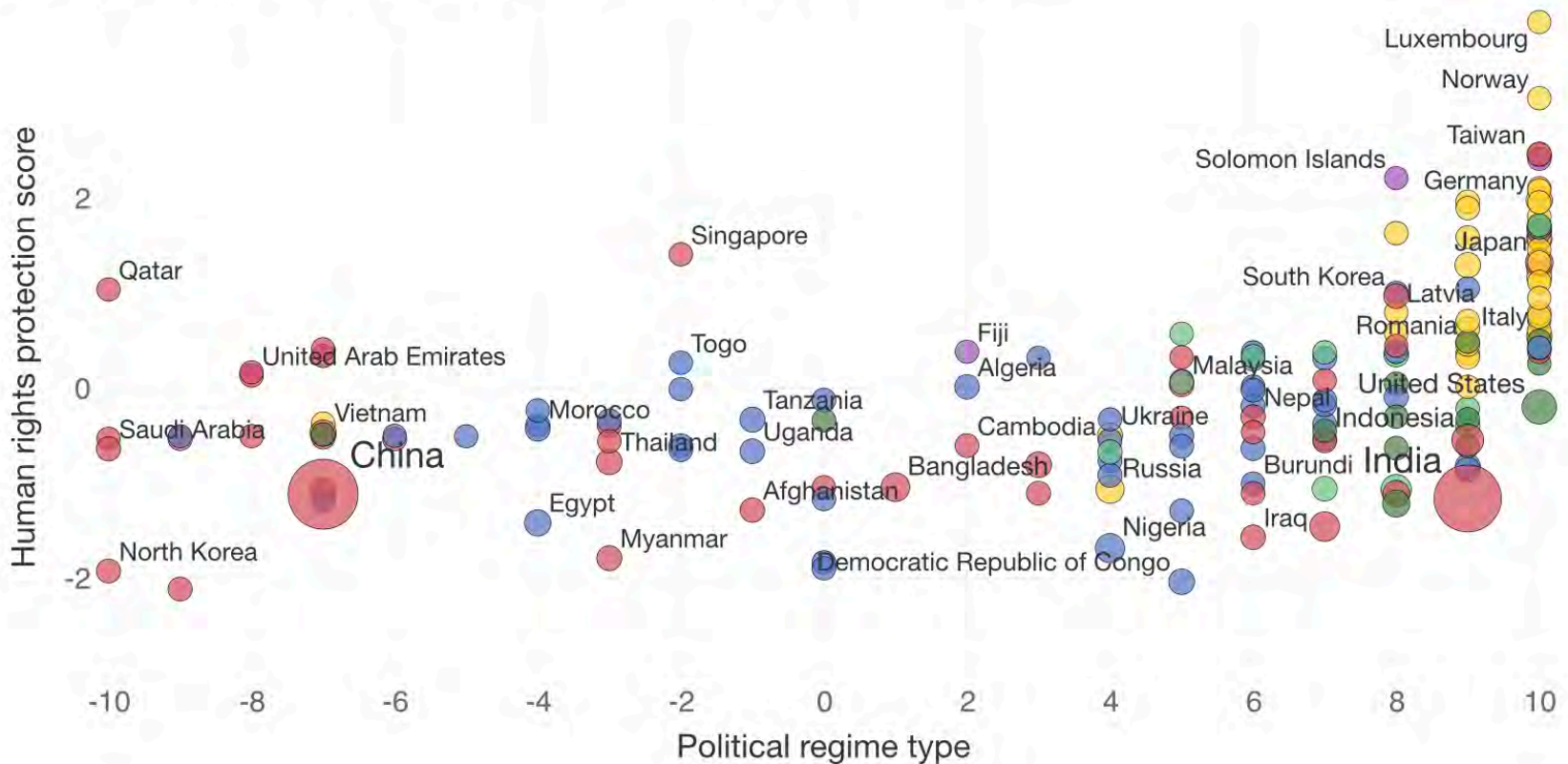
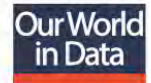


- Joseph Schumpeter (1942)

But it is possible to have a competitive struggle for votes without actual freedoms or equal treatment

Human rights vs type of political regime, 2014

Political regime are classified on a range from -10 (full autocracy) to +10 (full democracy).



A broader view: Democracy as an outcome, freedom

What exactly is democracy? We must not identify democracy with majority rule. Democracy has complex demands, which certainly include voting and respect for election results, but it also requires the protection of liberties and freedoms, respect for legal entitlements, and the guaranteeing of free discussion and uncensored distribution of news and fair comment.



Some key democratic processes and institutions considered important for this outcome

- Specific processes and institutions, e.g.
 - Free and fair elections
 - Political pluralism
 - Due process
- Civil society
 - Active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life
- Rule of law
 - Protection of the human rights of all citizens
 - Laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

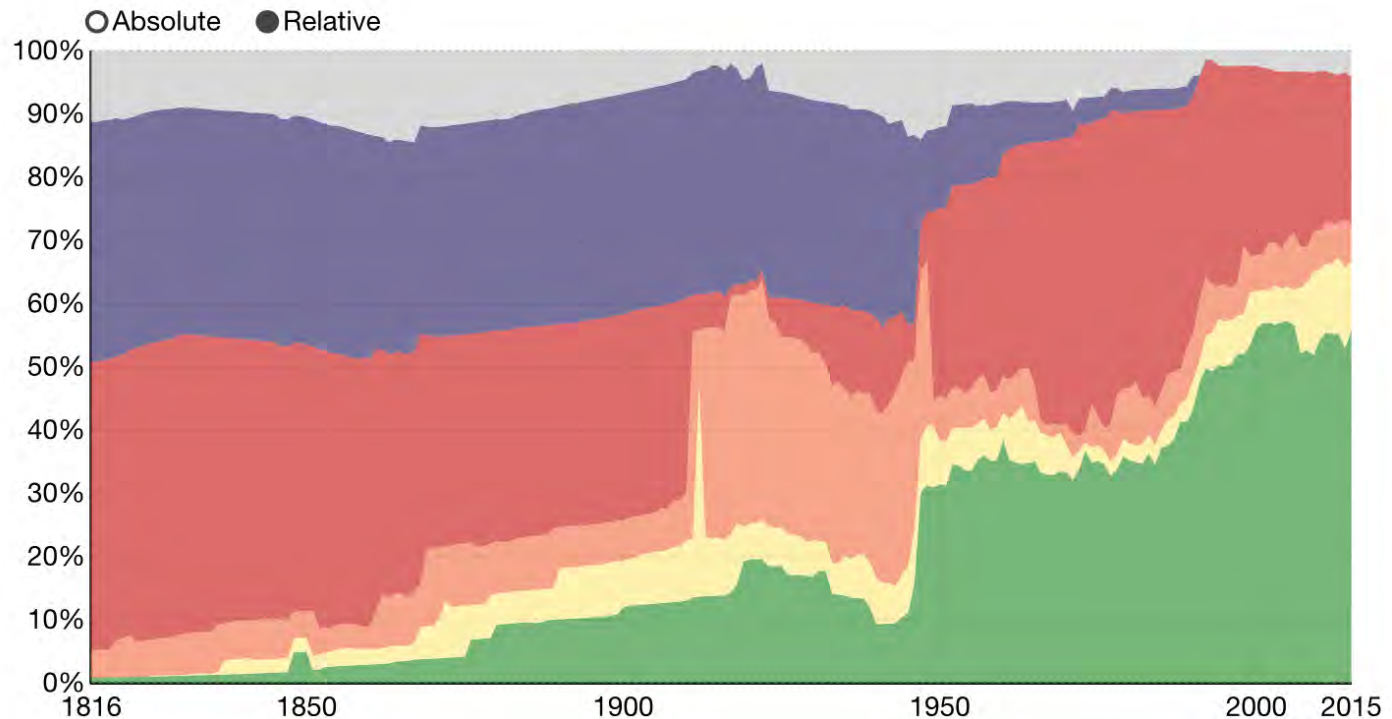
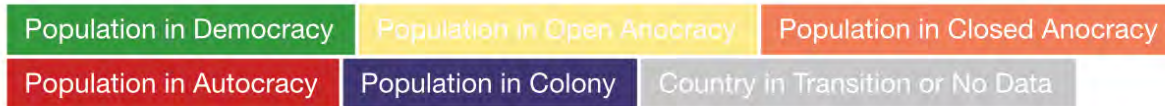
II. Democracy as an result of struggle

What led to this wave of democratization in the late 20th century?

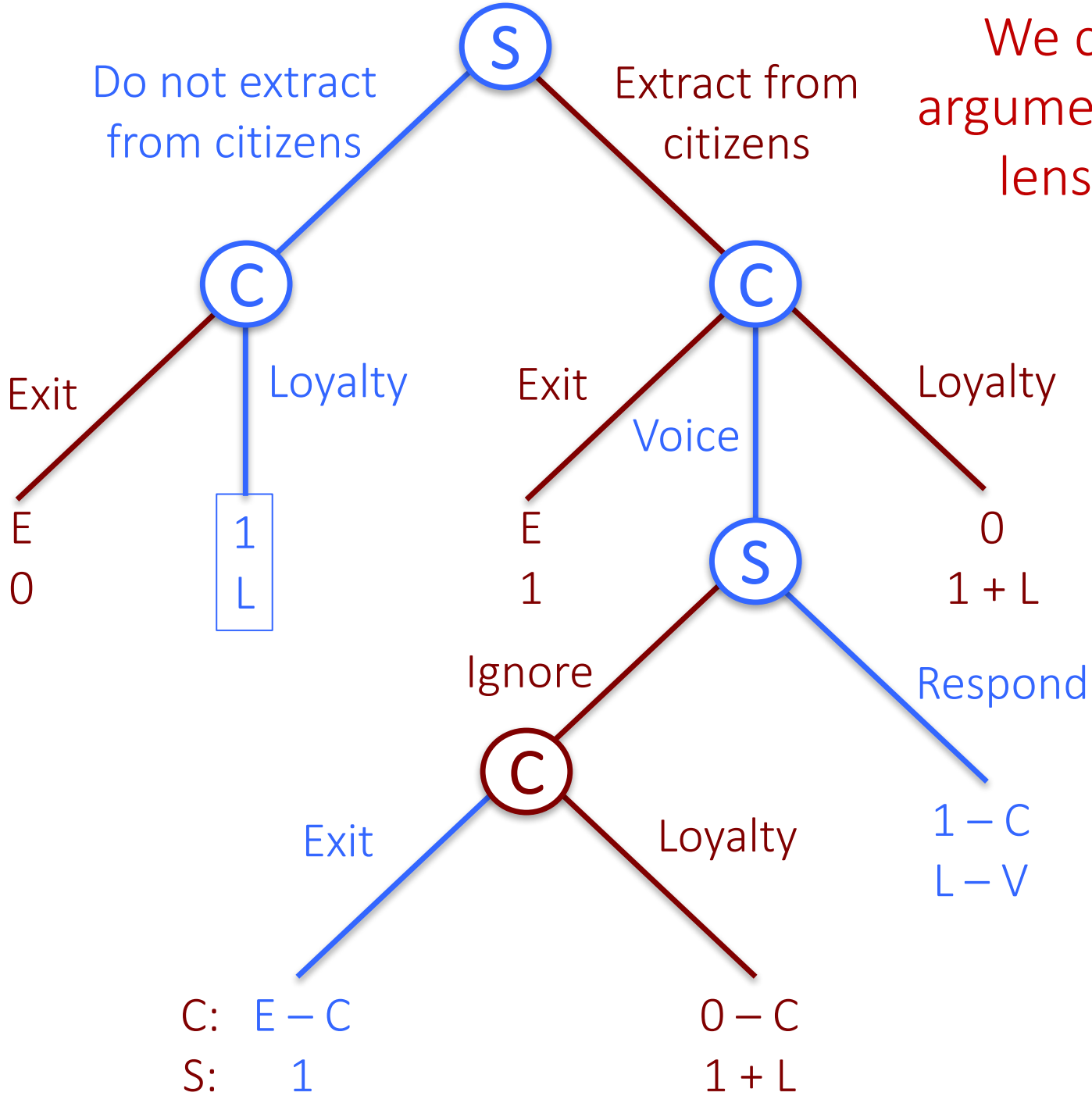
Number of world citizens living under different political regimes



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We can view various arguments through the lens of Exit, Voice & Loyalty



Every country experience has been different, but there are some common arguments for democratization in the late 20th century.
In order of (my personal view of) importance:

1. A diffusion of democratic norms and with it a delegitimation of authoritarian rule
2. An increasingly organized civil society able to coordinate national conferences of elites, mass movements, or even protest
3. Many autocracies lost legitimacy after failing to deliver growth, or being associated with economic crisis, especially in the 1980s
4. Economic crises meant that many regimes were too fiscally or organizationally weak to coopt, repress or placate opposition or sustain their patrimonial network and hold on power

Every country experience has been different, but there are some common arguments for democratization in the late 20th century.
In order of (my personal view of) importance:

5. Tools of violent oppression became more costly due to credible threats of international intervention, and technology made it easier to communicate abuses
6. Slowly growing middle classes and more educated populations have sometimes demanded representation, redistribution, and political rights
7. Western donors have pressured some regimes to democratize or otherwise supported elections and popular movements

These arguments and the EVL lens emphasize the process of democratization as one of internal struggle, which outsiders can influence in a limited fashion

“There is really only one process of democratization, and that is a process of struggle. Democracy is never given, it is always taken.”

—Claude Ake, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*

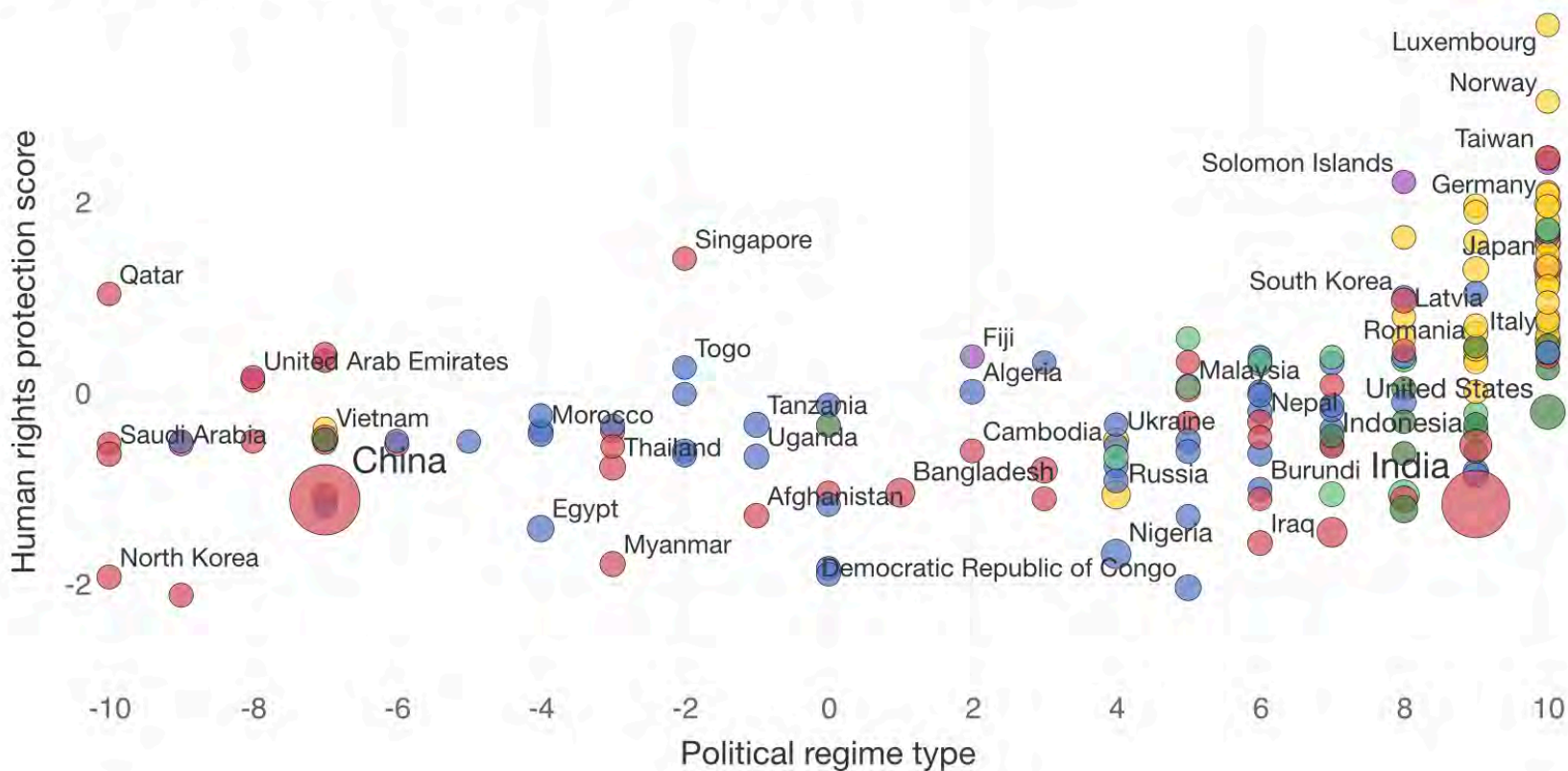


Since 1990, however, many newly democratizing countries have evolved into another, intermediate type: the semi-authoritarian state

Human rights vs type of political regime, 2014

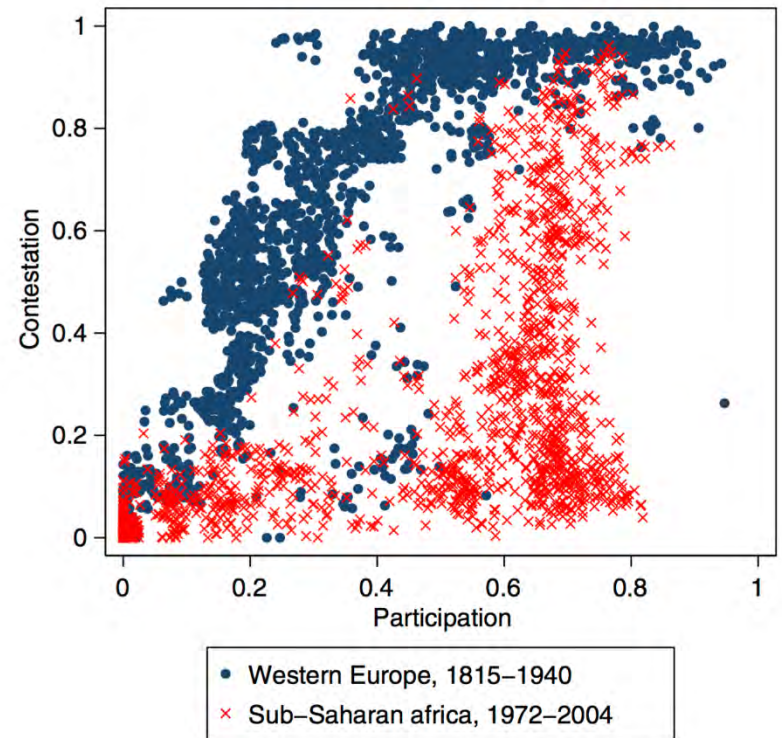
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Our World
in Data



These semi-authoritarian states have proliferated in the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East

- Means holding regular elections and permitting the creation of a few opposition parties, a scattering of independent civic groups and independent newspapers
- Leaders allow enough political freedoms to gain themselves credit and legitimacy as reformers
- These regimes also maintain a strong enough hold on the levers of power to ensure that no serious threats to their rule emerge



Are autocratic elections simply window dressing?

- Mimicry that is designed to have elections just clean enough to:
 - get access to foreign aid and military assistance?
 - Or membership in key organizations and trading relationships?



The deadly Texas coral snake, *Micrurus tener* (the mimic)



The harmless Mexican milk snake, *Lampropeltis triangulum annulata* (the model)



Several aspects of elections and legislatures can serve a useful purpose in autocracies, beyond window dressing

1. **Signaling.** Large victory margins show opponents that opposition is futile because it shows the regime is able to buy off or intimidate the populace to vote for it
2. **Information.** Helps regime to identify areas of low support or social discontent to address them and keep the regime stable
3. **Patronage.** A way of measuring what elites need to be co-opted, or rewarding those who engage in costly actions on behalf of regime (distributing local patronage for votes)
4. **Credible commitment.** They may be a way to give some power to elites to more credibly commit to a bargain.
5. **Monitoring.** Legislatures provide a forum for opposing elites and the ruler to interact and bargain over policy.

The same features contribute to the function and stability of democracy even in highly unequal places

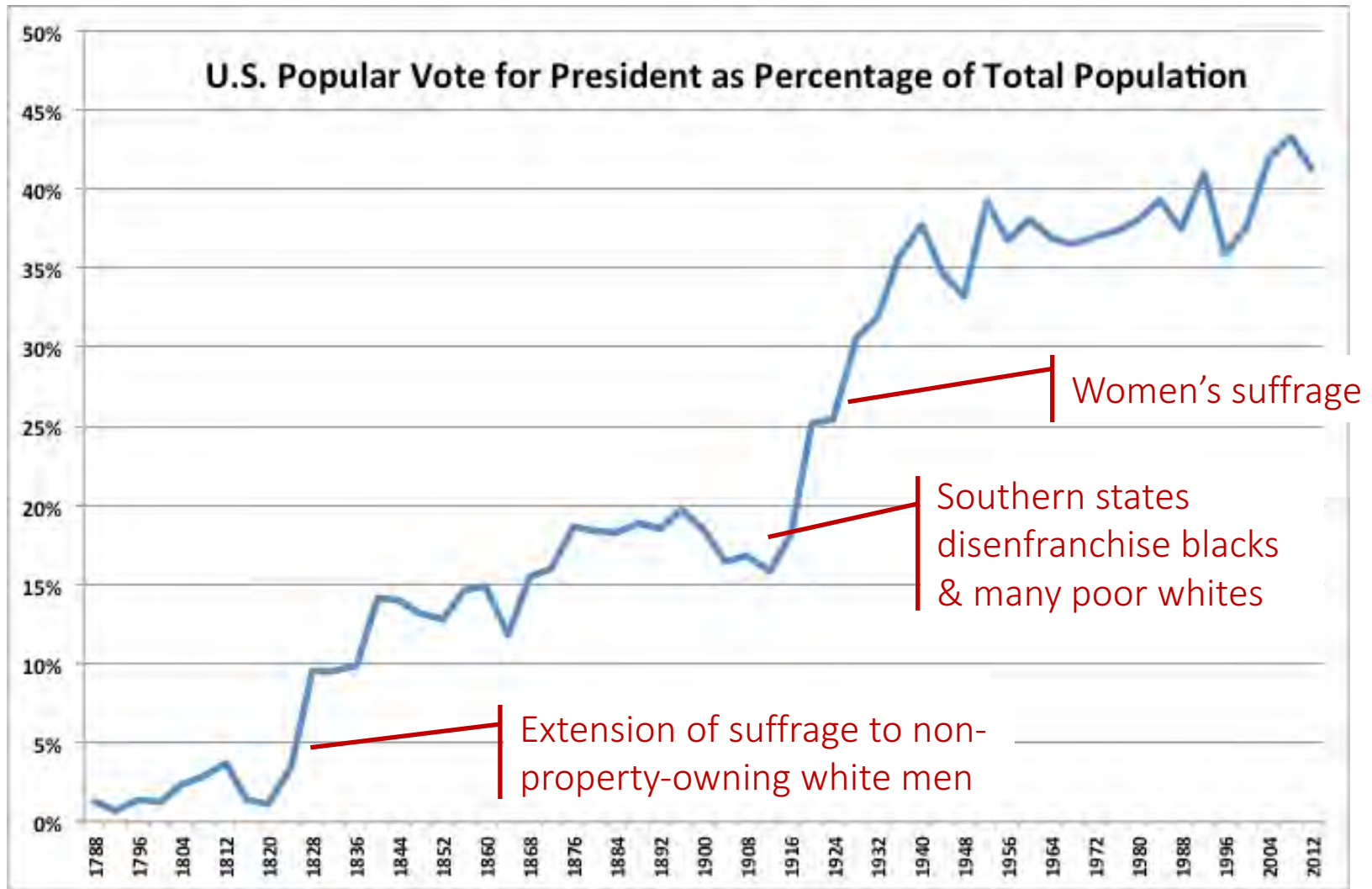
- Flawed elections are a peaceful way for opposition to exercise voice, and compete for spoils, without ceding full power
- Elites with disproportionate material and mobilizational power need a way to prove and communicate their strength
- Democratic institutions provide a means to divide spoils
 - Among elites in the legislature
 - And those who are not: Powerful local actors who are not in the legislature can also claim patronage from elected officials
- These institutions can provide peaceful forums to re-bargain as power changes over time
 - Help to solve information asymmetries and commitment problems?
- Thus wherever power is unequally democracies will tend to be corrupt, to buy votes, or limit competition

Before norms of universal suffrage were established, early democracies simply excluded the less powerful from participation

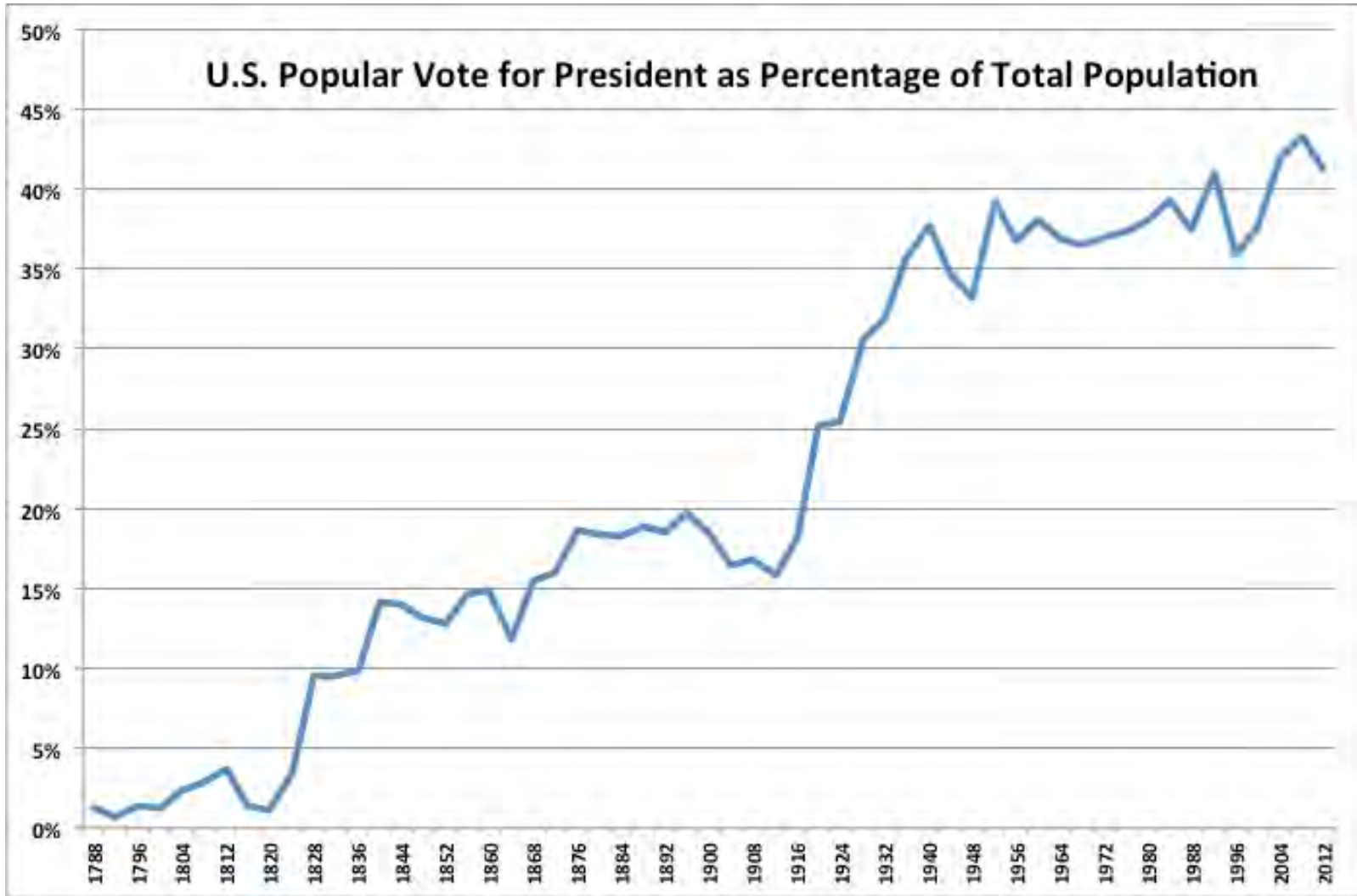
Who could vote in Great Britain?

- 1432 Men owning large property (aristocracy)
- 1832 + Men who rent large property (1 in 7 males)
- 1867, 85 + Men in urban areas with property
- 1918 + all Men >21, + Women >30 with property
- 1928 + Women over 21 without property
- 1969 + Men and women 18-20

In the early history of the U.S., most states allowed only white male adult property owners to vote



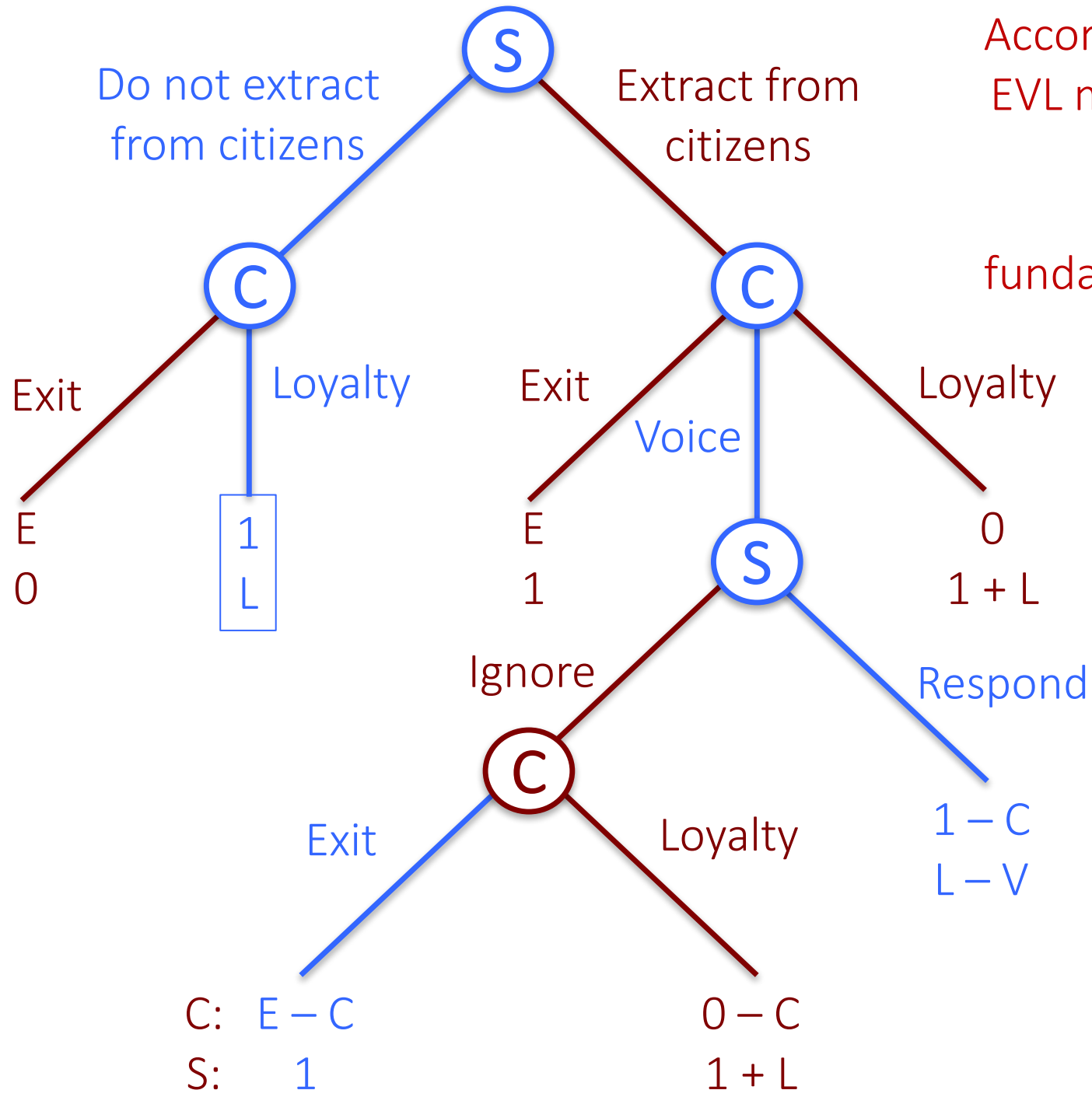
But what should we expect from small movements towards democracy in autocracies? Should we see steady progress towards full democracy?



Many scholars are skeptical. In principle, the functional aspects of autocratic elections could make these regimes stronger

The possible functions of autocratic elections

1. **Signaling.** Large victory margins show opponents that opposition is futile because it shows the regime is able to buy off or intimidate the populace to vote for it
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According to our simple EVL model, we will only see democratic progression if the fundamental balance of power changes

One underrated consideration: Democratic practice

- Elites and the state have had decades if not centuries to practice coopting and coercing the population
- Many autocratic regimes have relatively little experience with active civil societies and how to manage them
- Populations in many countries have little experience as a civil society in a defined state



Besides facilitating peaceful bargains, partial democratization can be a stepping stone to further democratization

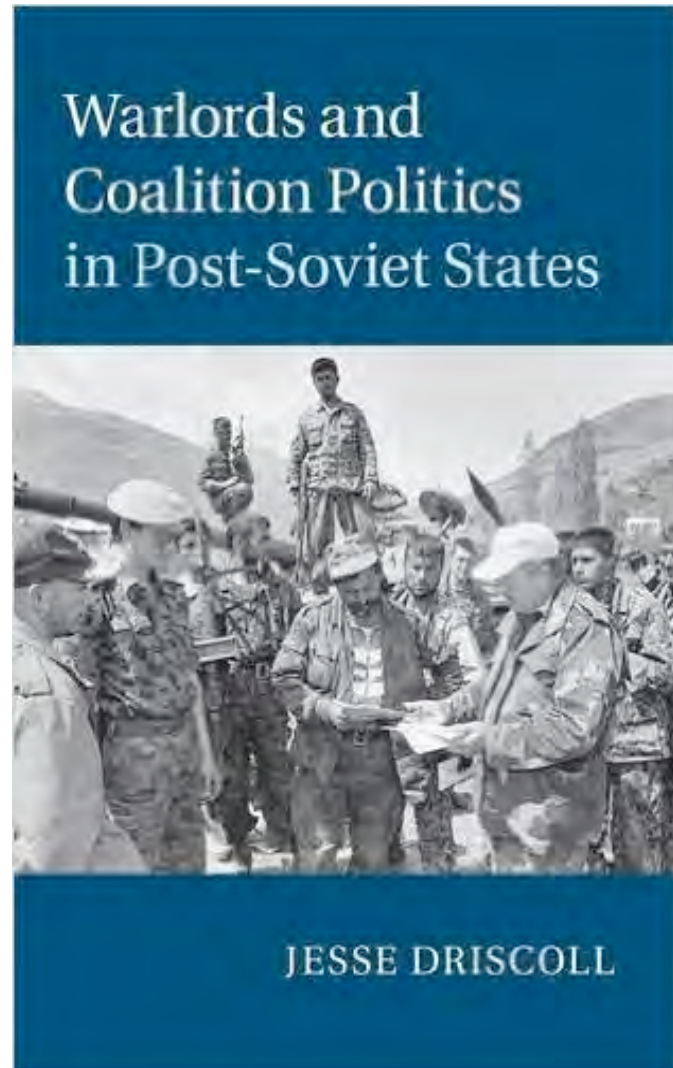
“Democratic governments have come into being slowly, after extended prior experience with more limited forms of participation during which leaders have reluctantly grown accustomed to tolerating dissent and opposition...”

- Jeane Kirkpatrick



There are cautious success stories

- In Georgia and Tajikistan, puppet Presidents managed to play warlords off one another and consolidate power within a decade
- Civil society constrained President over time, leading to one of the region's stronger democracies



Citizens begin to learn and acquire democratic norms



Thus the non-competitive election could be the starting point for internal struggle



III. But will democracy promote development? Or is democracy a result of development?



“You gotta remember the smartest thing the Congress did was to limit the voters in this country. Out of three and a half to four million people, two hundred thousand voted. And that was true for a helluva long time, and the republic would never have survived if all the dummies had voted along with the intelligent people.”

- Richard Nixon
White House tapes (1971)

Do countries need a base of economic development before they can democratize?



“I do not believe that democracy necessarily leads to development. I believe that what a country needs to develop is discipline more than democracy. The exuberance of democracy leads to disorderly conduct which are inimical to development.”

- Lee Kwan Yew (1992)

What are some possible democratic disadvantages?

- Democratic decision-making can be slow and costly
 - Deliberation and contestation slows any process of reform
 - Minority interest groups can block reforms that benefit everyone else
- Citizens may be present-biased or myopic
 - “Populist” policies may hinder aggregate growth
 - Citizens may be present-biased or myopic
- Elections bias politicians to short-term observable reforms, and away from costly long term ones
 - They will not be rewarded for long term investments or for policies with hard-to-observe effort and outcomes

What are some possible autocratic advantages?

- Longer time horizon
 - Survival dependent on welfare-enhancing policies
 - Takes into account the well-being of present and future generations
 - Foster savings and accumulation
 - “Control passions of the poor”
 - Undertake long-term reforms and investments
 - Presumably this is what is meant by “enlightened”
- Technocratic ability
 - Can make executive decisions faster – radical reform
 - Good implementers

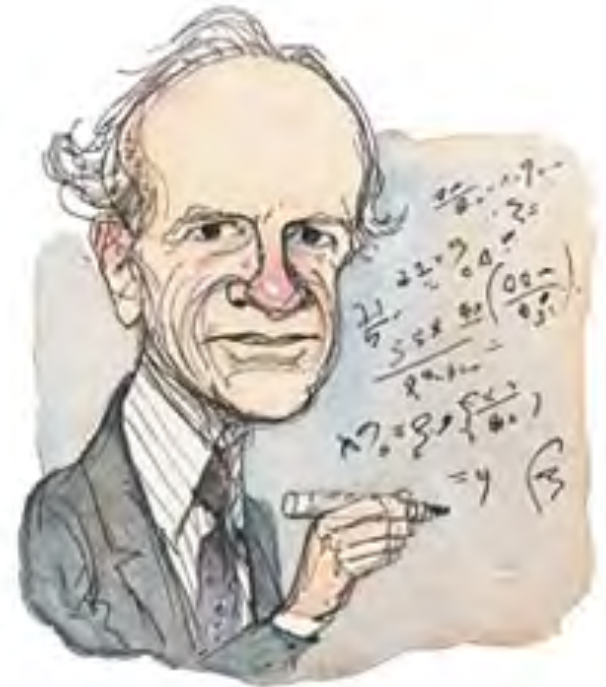
The appeal of autocrats

“Visionary leaders can accomplish more in autocratic than democratic governments because they need not heed legislative, judicial, or media constraints in promoting their agenda.

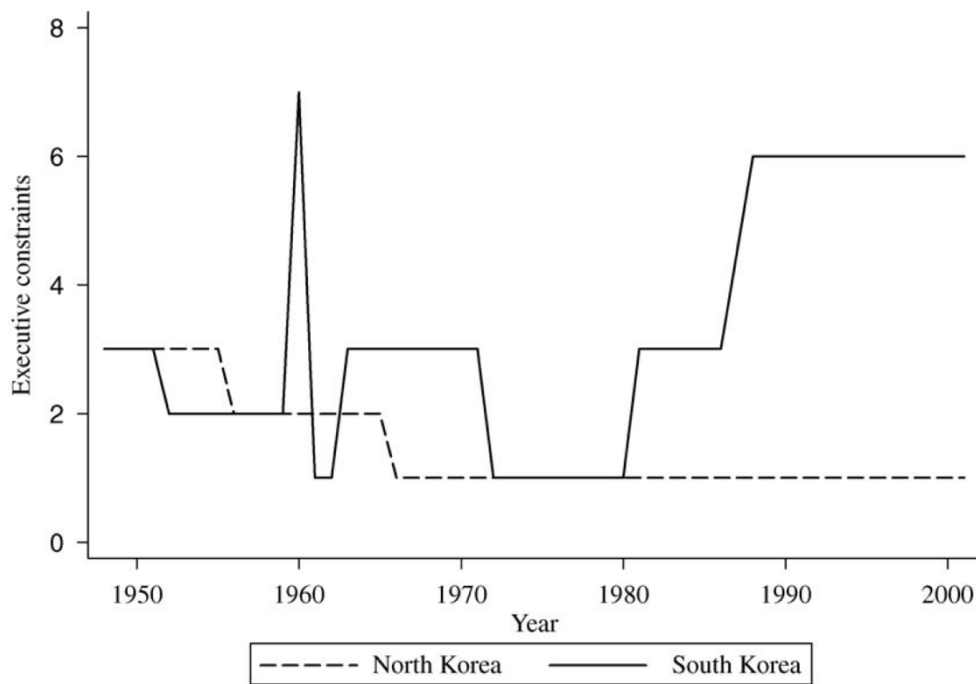
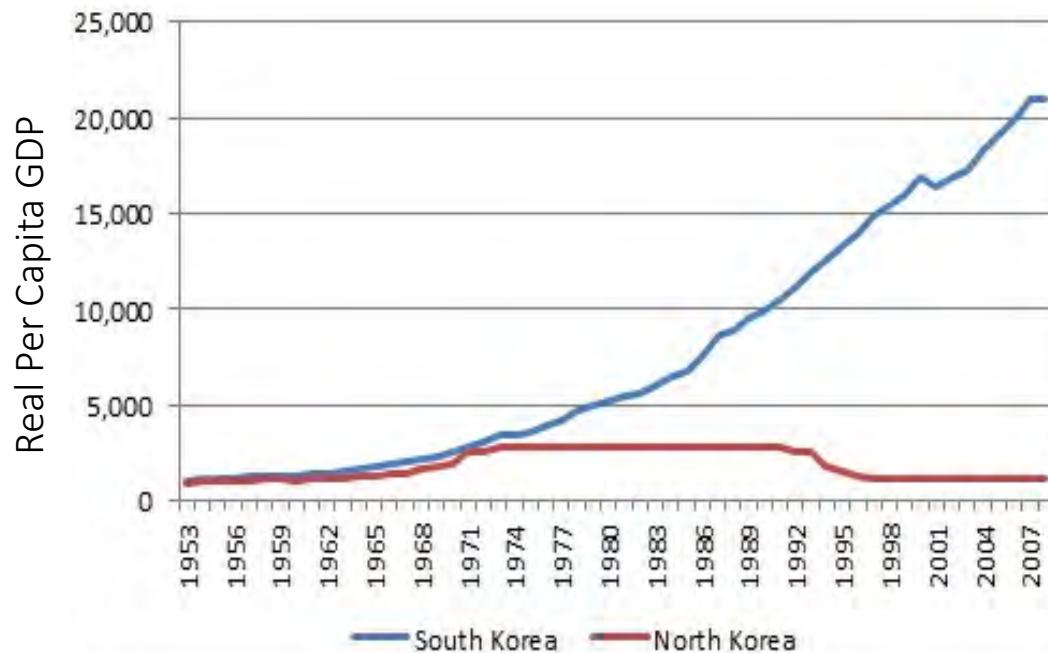
In the late 1970s, Deng Xiaoping made the decision to open communist China to private incentives in agriculture, and in a remarkably short time farm output increased dramatically.

Autocratic rulers in Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Chile produced similar quick turnabouts in their economies by making radical changes that usually involved a greater role for the private sector and private business.”

--Gary Becker, 2010



A common example:
South Korea's take-
off preceded its
democratization

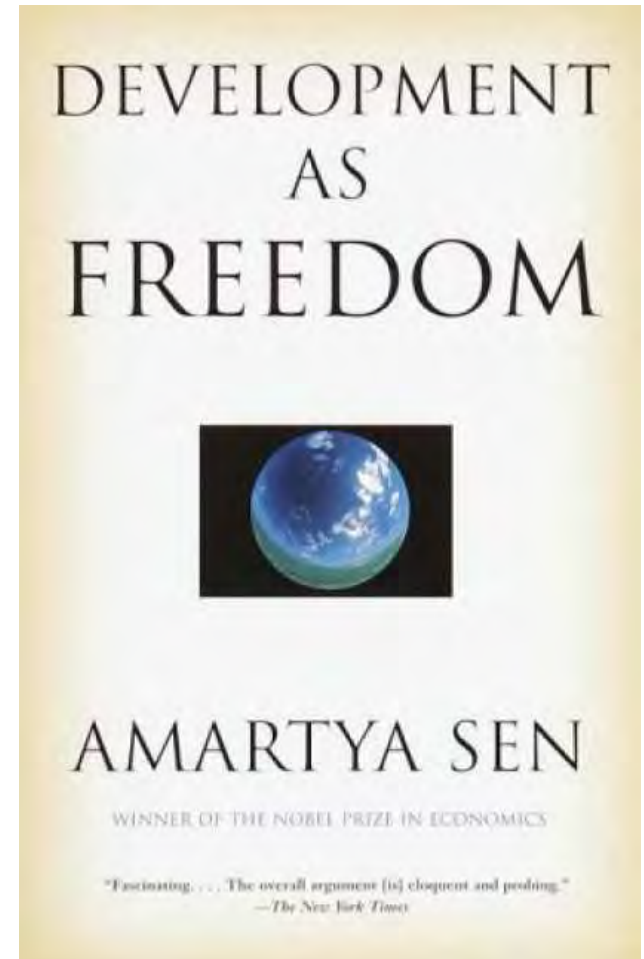


Three arguments for democracy over autocracy

1. The intrinsic value of self-determination
2. Democracy is instrumentally useful in keeping governments accountable to all
3. Autocracies are highly risky (Feeling lucky?)

1. The intrinsic value of self-determination

- Economic development is a means, not an end
- Freedom has intrinsic value—it is an end
- Political freedom is a fundamental part of human freedom in general
- Some freedoms — freedom from coercion, freedom to participate in civic life — are contrary to autocracy



2. Democracy is instrumentally useful in keeping governments accountable to all

Amartya Sen argues that the true test of autocracy versus democracy is when a state faces a calamity

"...no substantial famine has ever occurred in any independent and democratic country with a relatively free press. We cannot find exceptions to this rule, no matter where we look..."

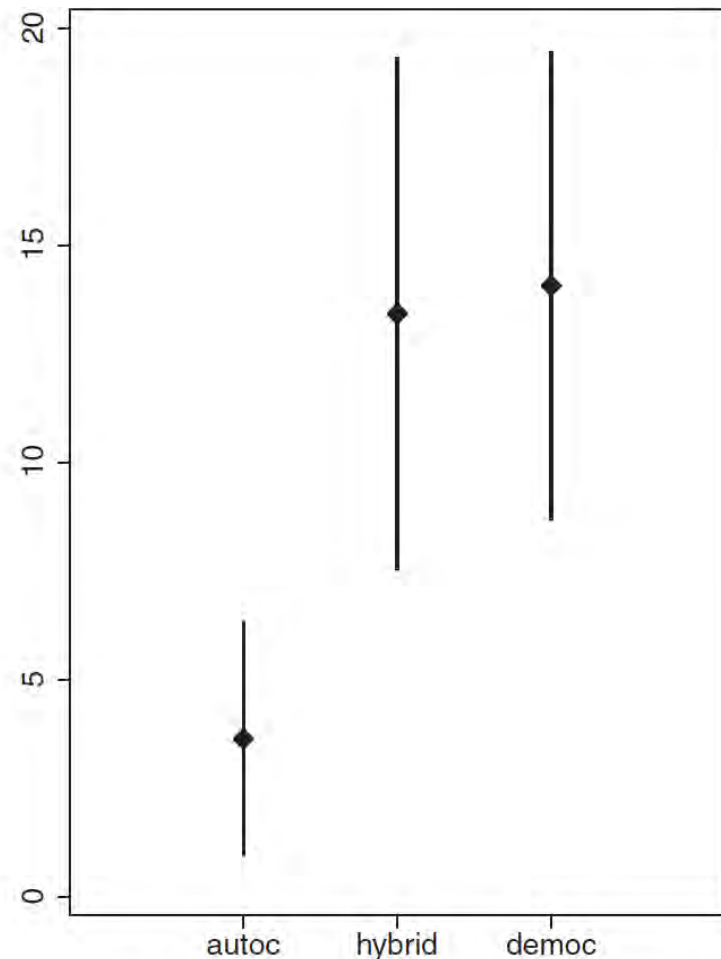
Famines are easy to prevent if there is a serious effort to do so, and a democratic government, facing elections and criticisms from opposition parties and independent newspapers, cannot help but make such an effort..."



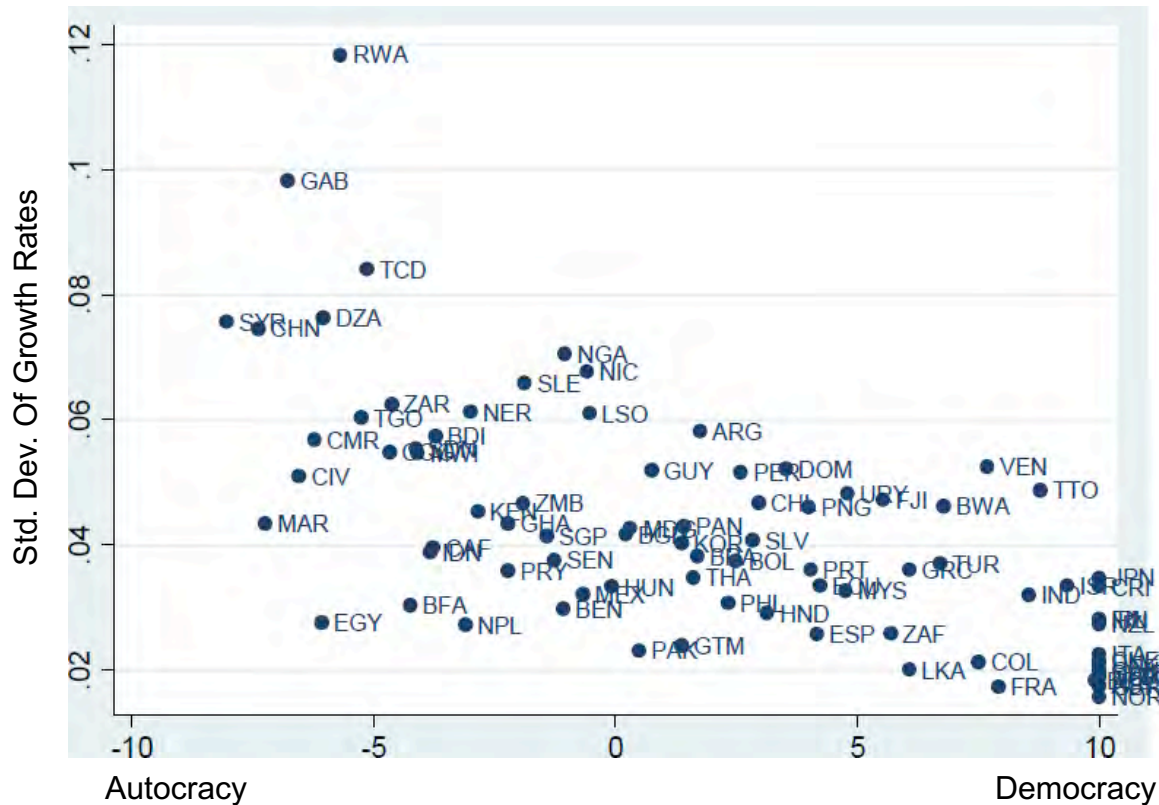
On the margin, democracies provide incentives to more equally share growth, even in good times

- One example: Calories
- Democracies and hybrid regimes—which combine elements of autocracy and democracy—are better at translating economic growth into total calorie consumption among the poor than autocracies

Effect of a \$100 increase in GDPpc on total calories consumed by the poorest 20%



3. Autocracies are risky



1. No relationship between democracy (or autocracy) and growth
2. But democracies have lower variance in growth
3. A few high growth episodes in autocracies bring up their average

The median autocracy performs worse
A subset of authoritarian countries have performed
extraordinarily well, pulling up the average

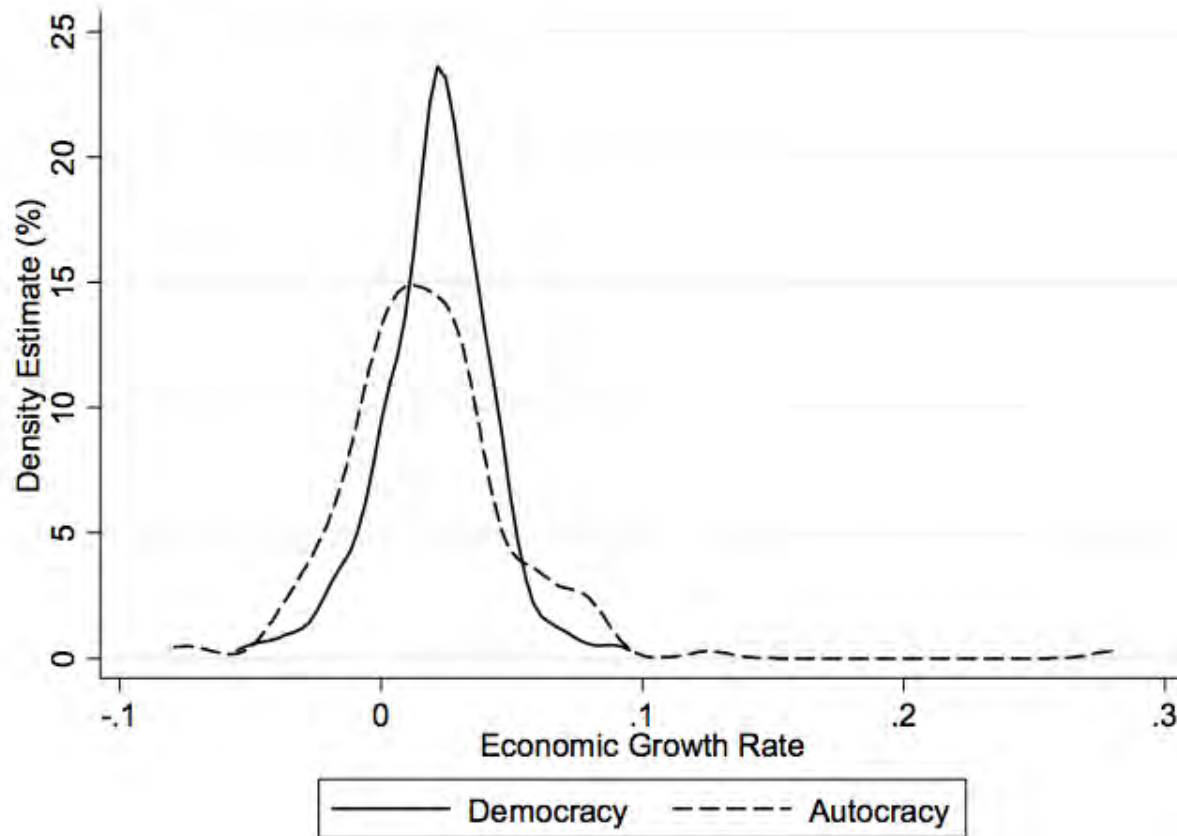


Figure 1: Economic Growth Distributions among Democracies and Autocracies

Meanwhile, we may have selective attention and memories

Average articles per country (New York Times, 1960 to 2008) in each category of Growth and Autocracy

		Growth 1960-2008		
		Big Failure	Not Big Success or Big Failure	Big Success
Democracy, 1960-2008	Autocracy	5,705	14,890	41,952
	Democracy		16,222	

An example: What happens when autocrats die?

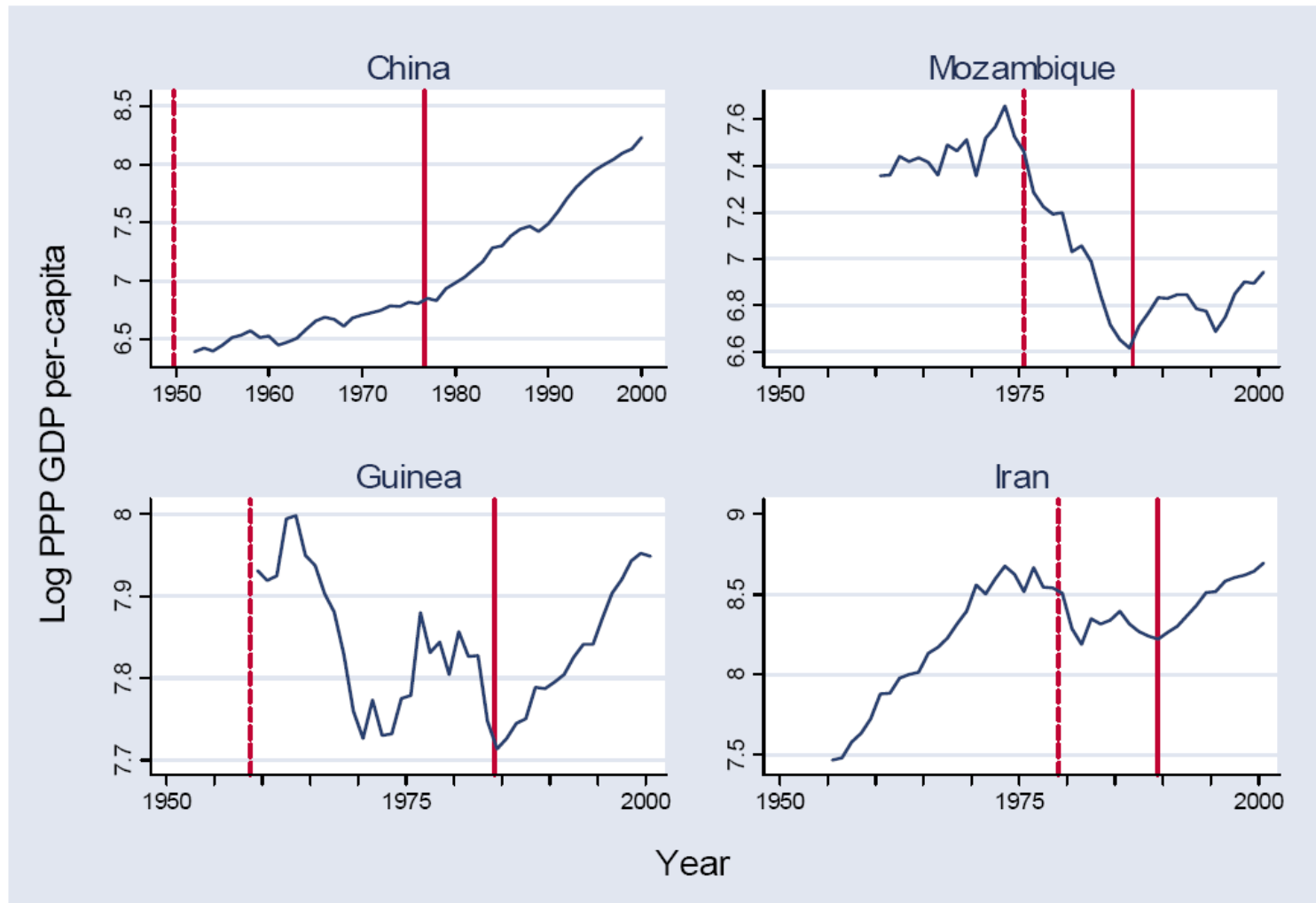


Figure I
Growth and Leader Deaths

What we learn from “Do Leaders Matter?”

- Economic growth rates change significantly when autocratic leaders are unexpectedly removed from office, but such changes are less obvious under democracy
- Possible reasons:
 - Democratic leaders represent will of electorate not narrow “selectorate”
 - Democratic power less personalized, more institutionalized

Do you want to play leader roulette?



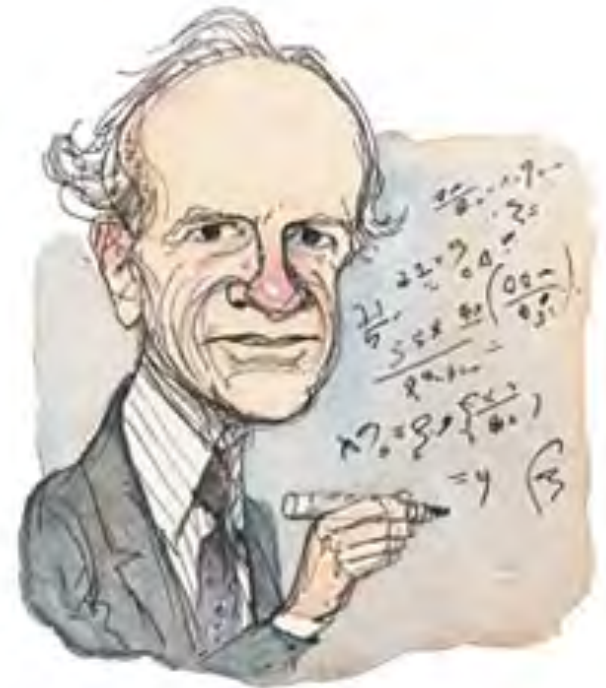
Autocracies are probably most risky when they are more weakly institutionalized

“Of course, the other side of autocratic rule is that badly misguided strong leaders can cause major damage.

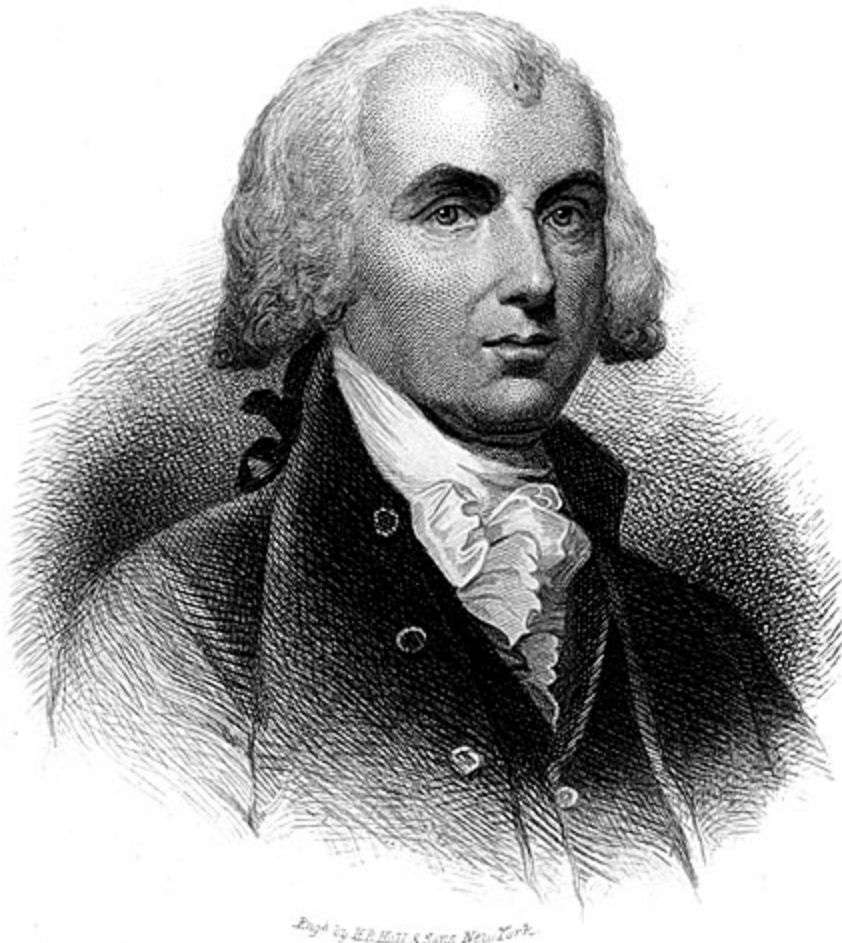
[In democracies,] ...Visionaries’ accomplishments are usually constrained by due process that includes legislative, judicial, and interest group constraints.

On the other hand, bad leaders in democracies are also constrained, not only by due process, but also in addition by the reporting of a free competitive press and television, and nowadays too by a competitive Internet..”

--Gary Becker, 2010



This begins to get us back to checks and balances on
power



IV. Democracy on the margin

What might small advances in democratization
do?

Enfranchising poorer voters leads to more redistribution in Brazil (a functioning democracy)

- Brazil uses written ballots but 1/4 of adults are unable to read/write
 - Thus large number of error-ridden and blank ballots are cast
- In 1998 election, municipalities with more than 40,500 registered voters used electronic voting machines that are visual and do not require reading/writing
- This caused a large de facto enfranchisement of less educated voters
- This led to the election of more left-wing state legislators, increased public health care spending, utilization (prenatal visits), and infant health (birthweight)

There's a big discontinuity in voting at the 40,500 population mark in 1998

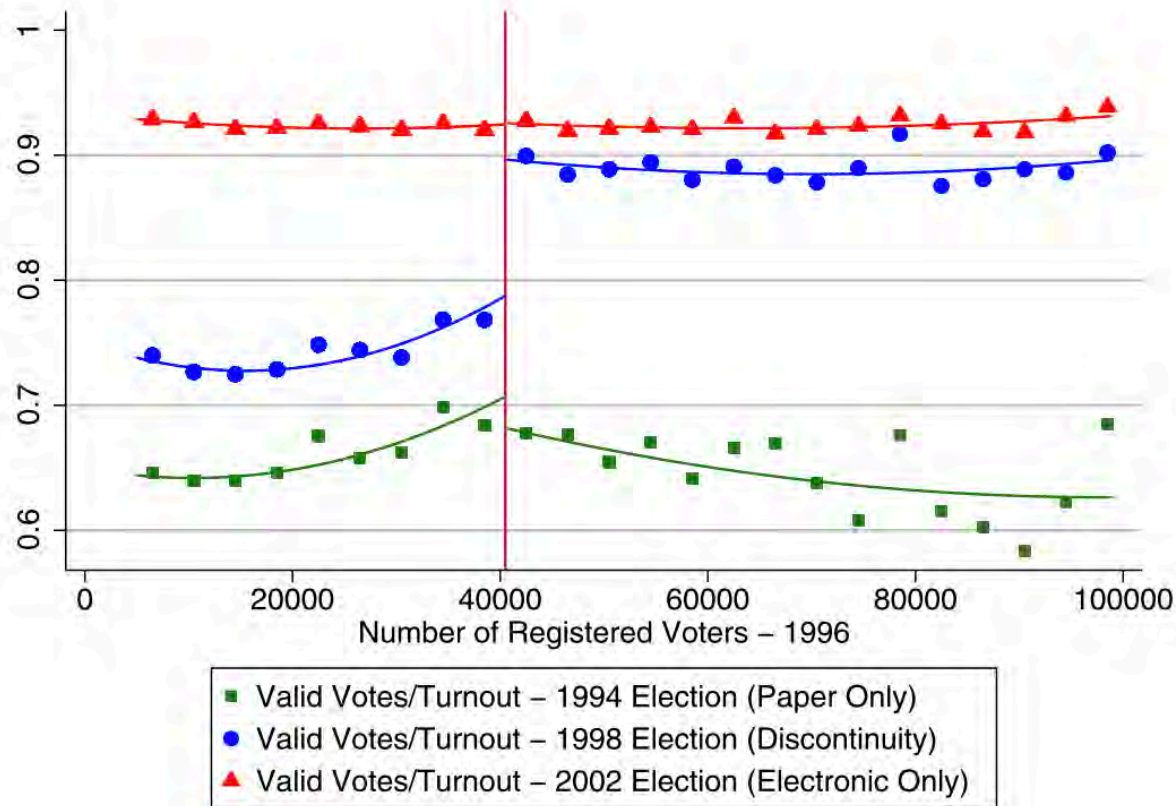
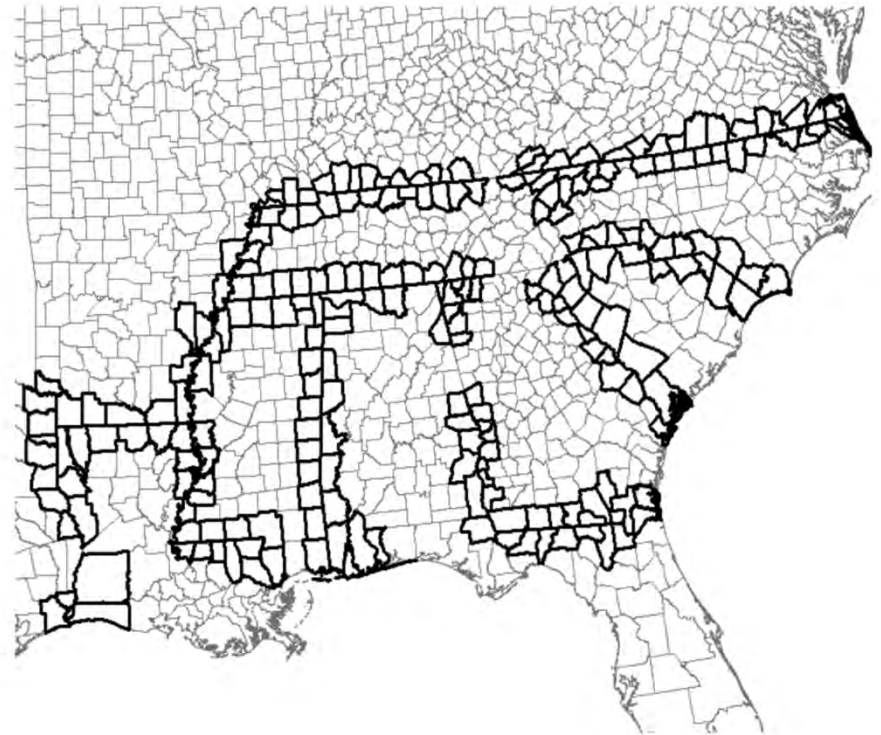


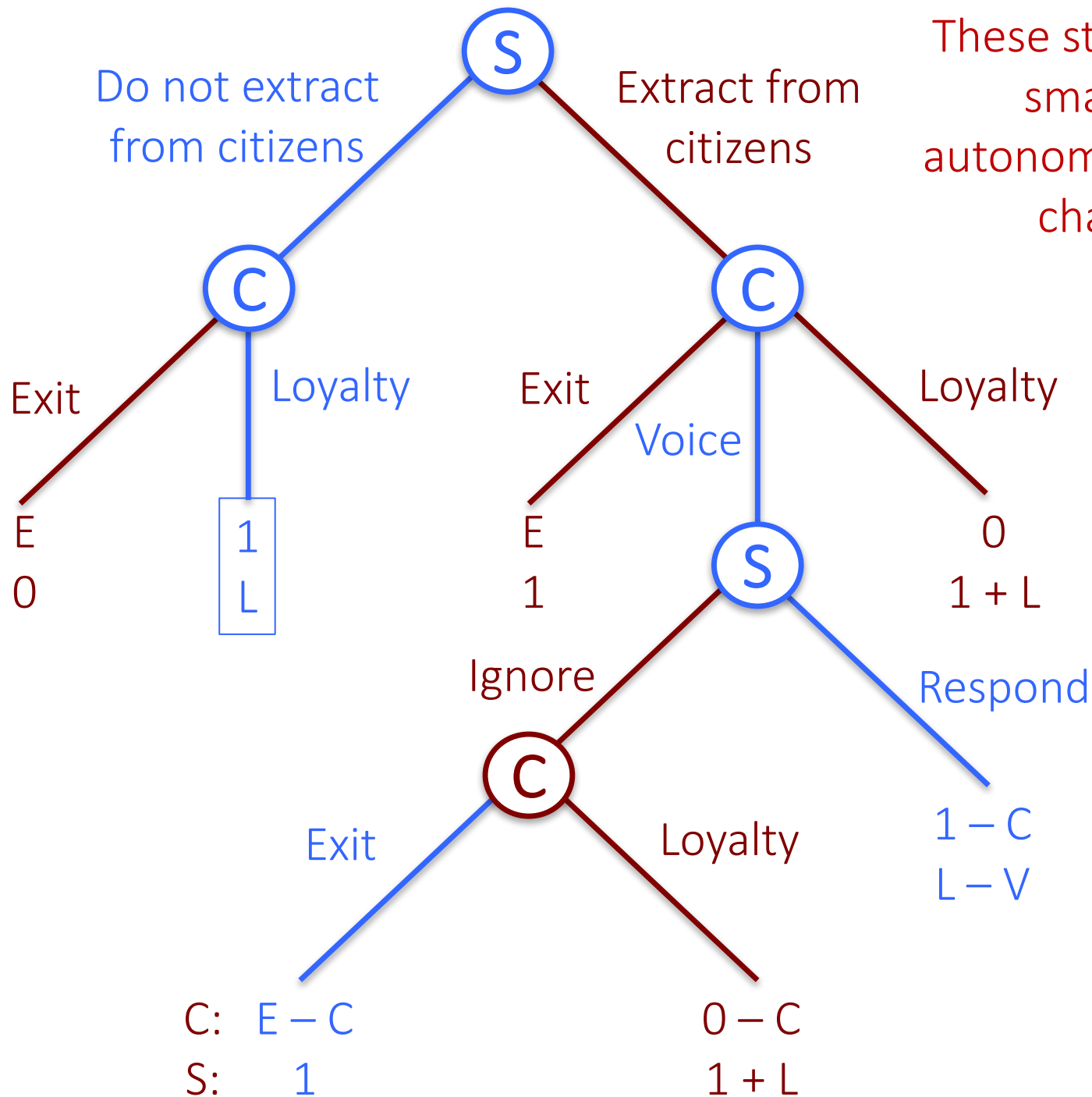
FIGURE 2.—Valid votes/turnout—local averages and parametric fit. Each marker represents the average value of the variable in a 4000-voter bin. The continuous lines are from a quadratic fit over the original (“unbinned”) data. The vertical line marks the 40,500-voter threshold.

We see similar effects with the 19th century disenfranchisement of black citizens in the U.S. South

- Test the effects of poll taxes and literacy tests on political competition
- Comparing adjacent county-pairs that straddle state boundaries:
 - Each lowered overall electoral turnout by 8-22%
 - Increased the Democratic (anti-Black) vote share in elections by 1-7%
 - Reduced the teacher-child ratio in black schools by 10-23%, with no effects on white teacher-child ratios
 - Estimates that black incomes fell 15%, while landowners had a 12% gain in incomes



These studies suggest that small changes in state autonomy (L) from process changes can have big effects on citizen bargaining power



What about larger scale enfranchisement?
Village elections in China, (locally) enfranchising a billion people



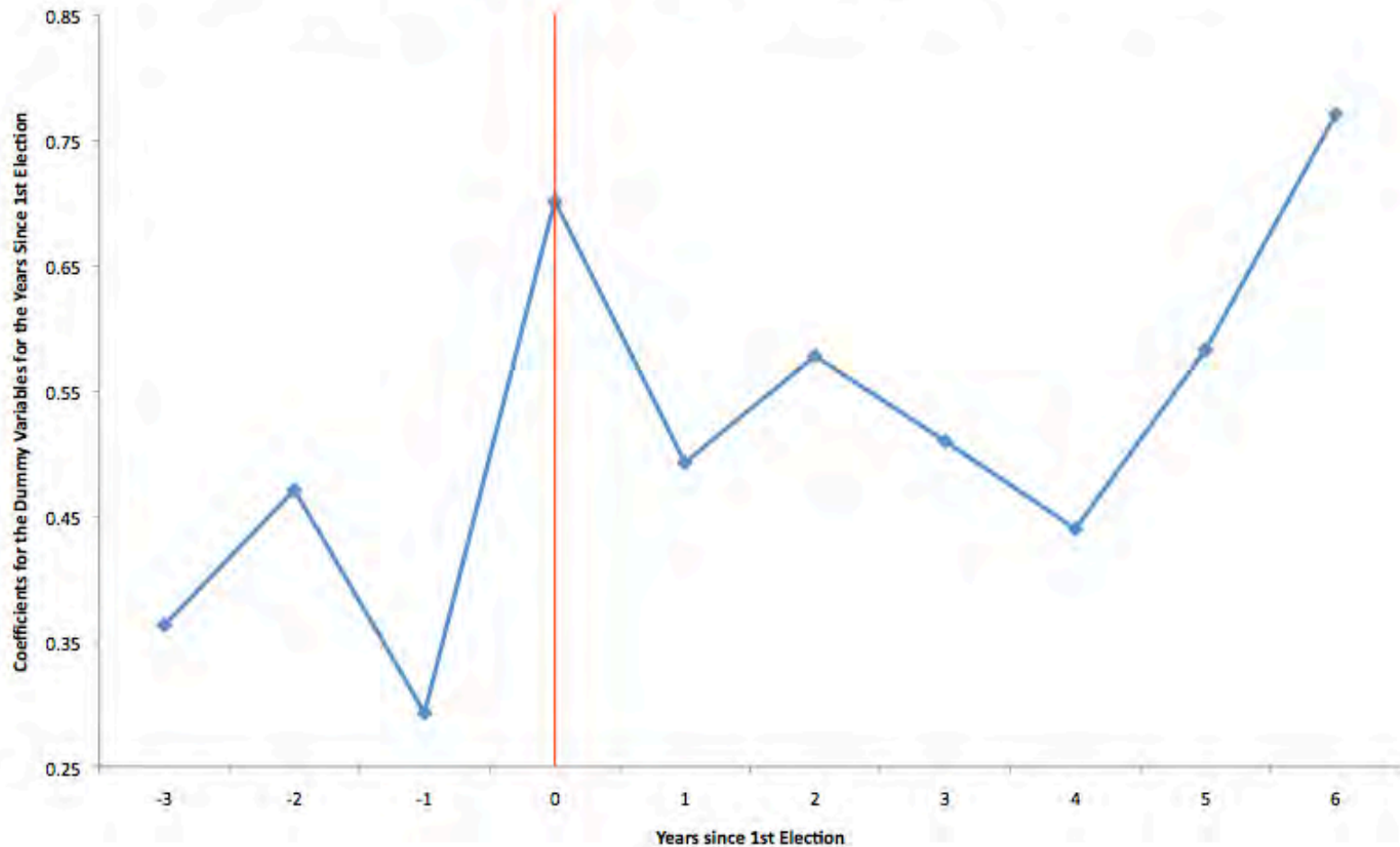
A natural experiment

Martinez-Bravo, Padró i Miquel, Qian and Yao

- Chinese government rolls out elections (and possibly some financial decentralization) unsystematically
- Why? In autocratic countries, it is difficult to control local officials, and local elections one way to do so
 - Weak channels to receive feedback from citizens
 - Lack of information and appropriate oversight often results in the misbehavior of local officials
- Historically, the village government was comprised of two bodies that were appointed by the Communist Party: the Communist Party Branch and the Village Committee
 - The reform put the Village Committee up for election and left the Party Branch unchanged
 - Main role is provision of local public goods such as schooling, irrigation or village roads

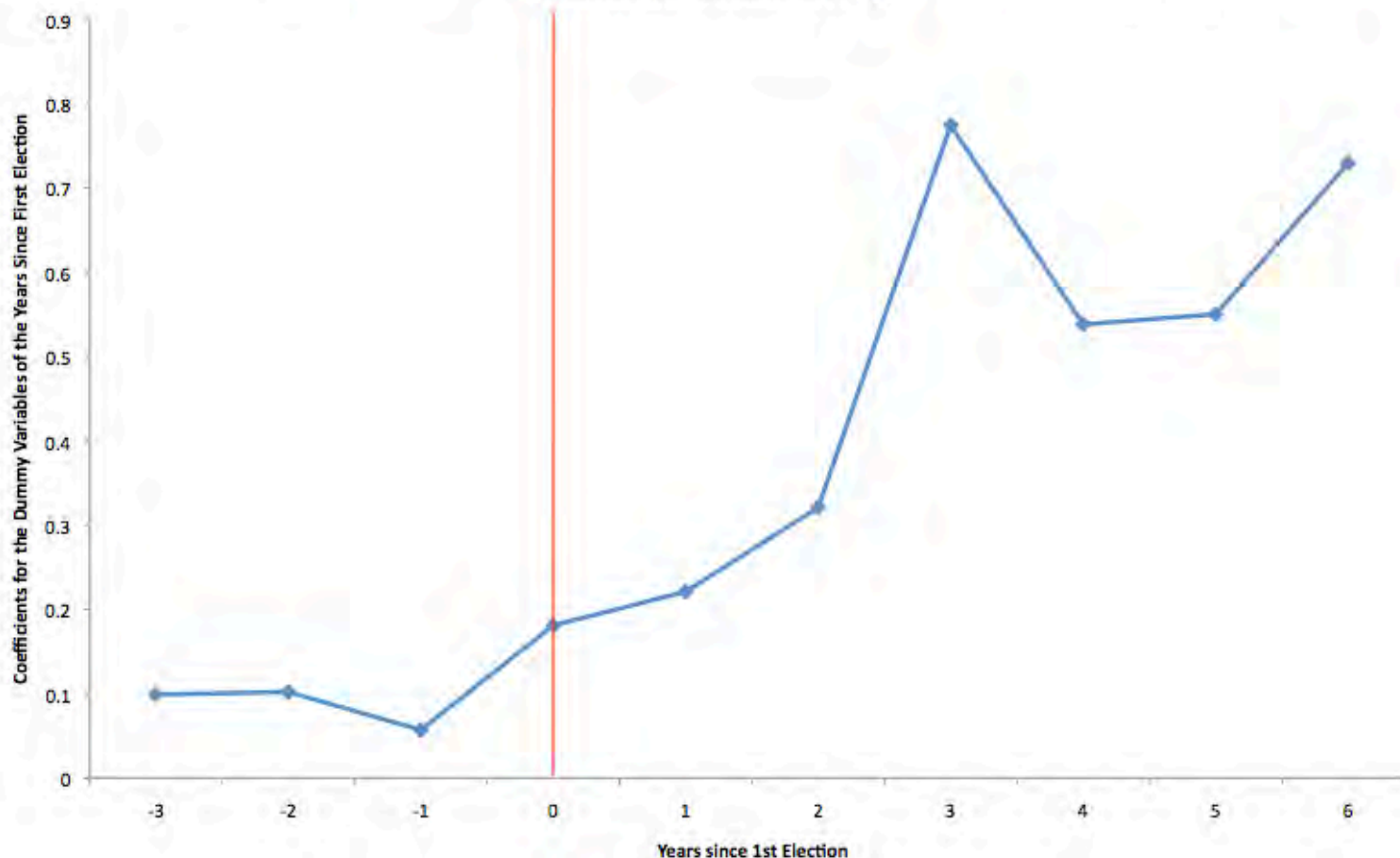
Document the economic and political history of 200 nearly representative villages from 29 provinces, 1982-2005, and compare outcomes in early and late democratized villages

Figure 4: The Effect of Elections on Ln Total Public Goods Expenditure



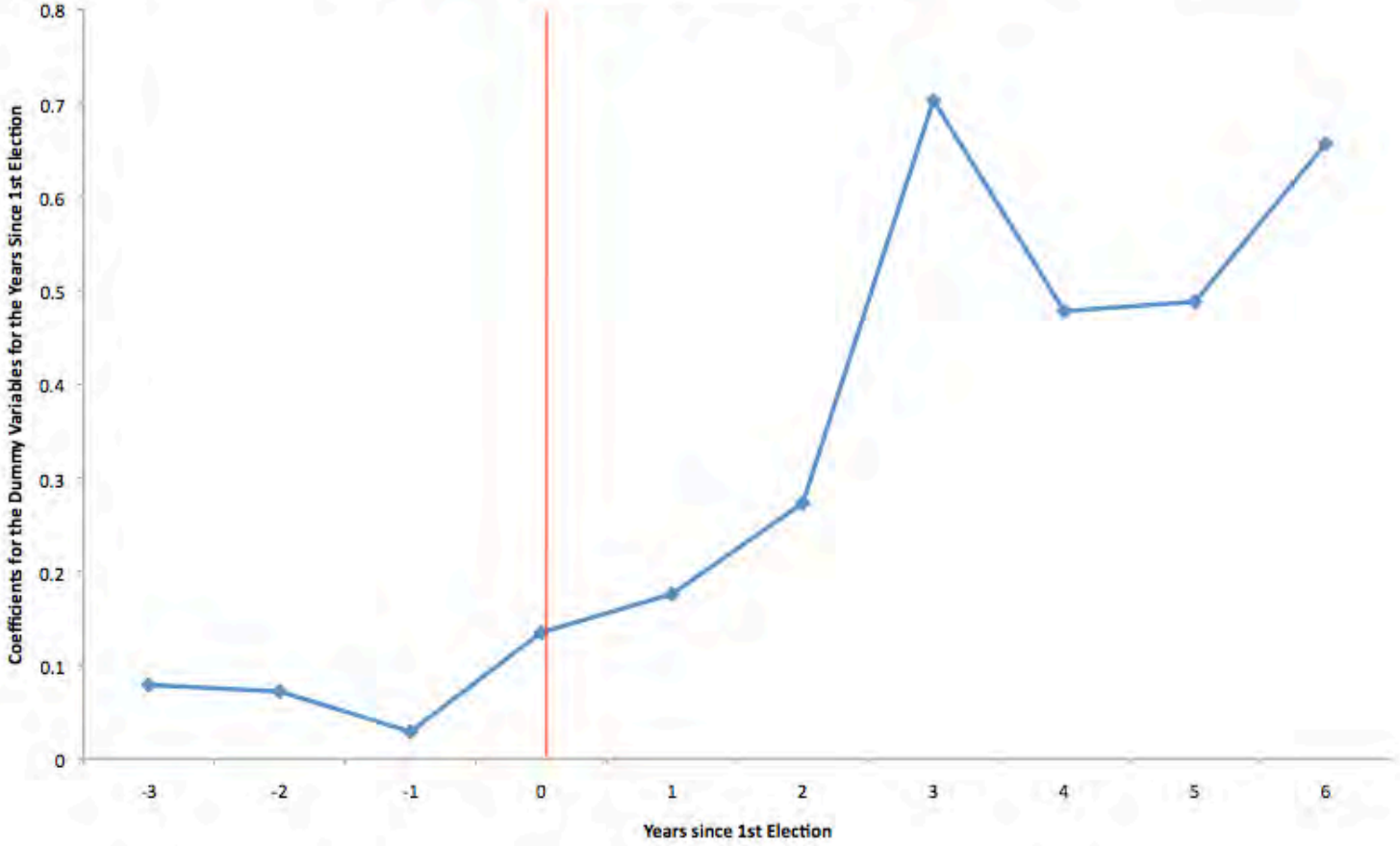
Elections seem to have increased the willingness of citizens to pay for public goods (and decreased inequality) because the elected government is more accountable to citizens

Figure 5: The Effect of Elections on Income Redistribution
(Ratio of incomes for households in the first pre-election income decile to households in the tenth pre-election income decile)



Elections reduce the amount of land leased to enterprises, lower corruption, and redistributes it back to households, reducing inequality

Figure 6: The Effect of Elections on Land Redistribution
(Ratio of farmland for households in the first pre-election farmland decile to households in the tenth pre-election farmland decile)



V. External democracy promotion

Aid given with the explicit goal of advancing democracy overseas. Not (for our purposes) military intervention

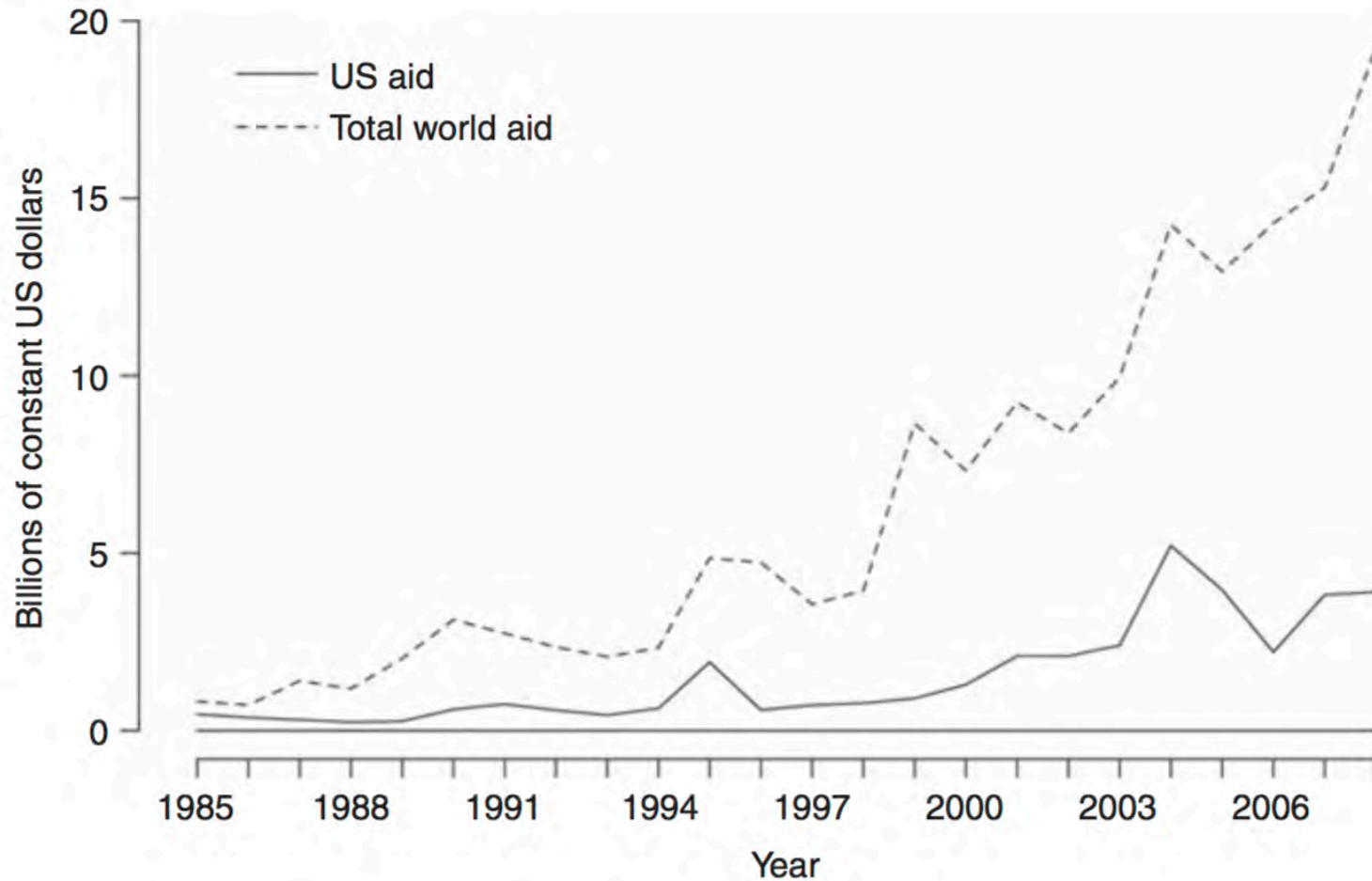


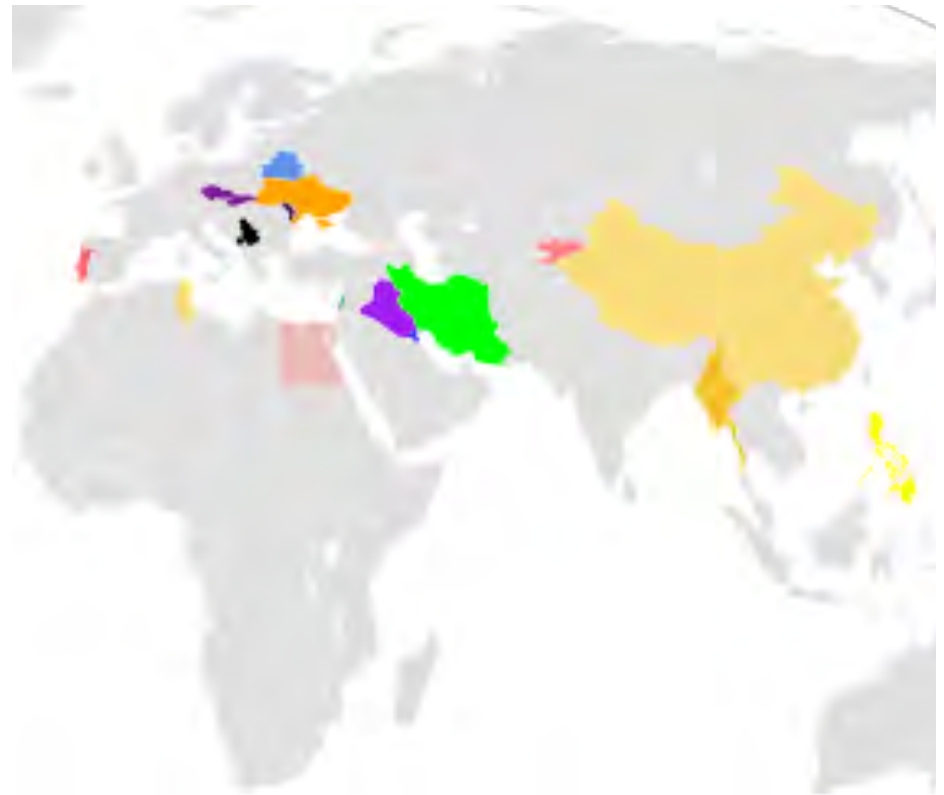
Figure 1.1 The rise of democracy assistance.
Data source: Tierney et al. (2011).

What do democracy promoters do?

1. In the 1980s and 1990s, US and EU often supported dissidents and political organizations
2. Increasingly, they are more likely to support programs that do not disturb the status quo
 - Monitor elections
 - Improve local governance
 - Teach civics
 - Support civil society groups
 - Train the media
 - Train political parties
 - Encourage women to run for political office

What has support for civil society and opposition actors looked like?

- e.g. National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican (IRI), Freedom House, and the Open Society Institute
- Help locals develop the ability to do election monitoring (e.g. parallel vote counts)
- Provided backing to independent civic groups (e.g. new student organizations) that could foster broad civic engagement in the electoral process
- Trained and sometimes provide equipment or other material assistance to opposition parties to help them campaign effectively



e.g. The “Color Revolutions”

Some limitations

- Inherently difficult, if not impossible, to understand the impact of this kind of support
- Plus a natural bias towards overstatement
 - e.g. “the end of history” and democracy triumphant
 - Some Western NGOs have a tendency to claim substantial credit for political events in which they played only a minor role
- The US government has not been consistent in its support for democracy, acting in its hard interests rather than lofty ideals



What do democracy promoters do?

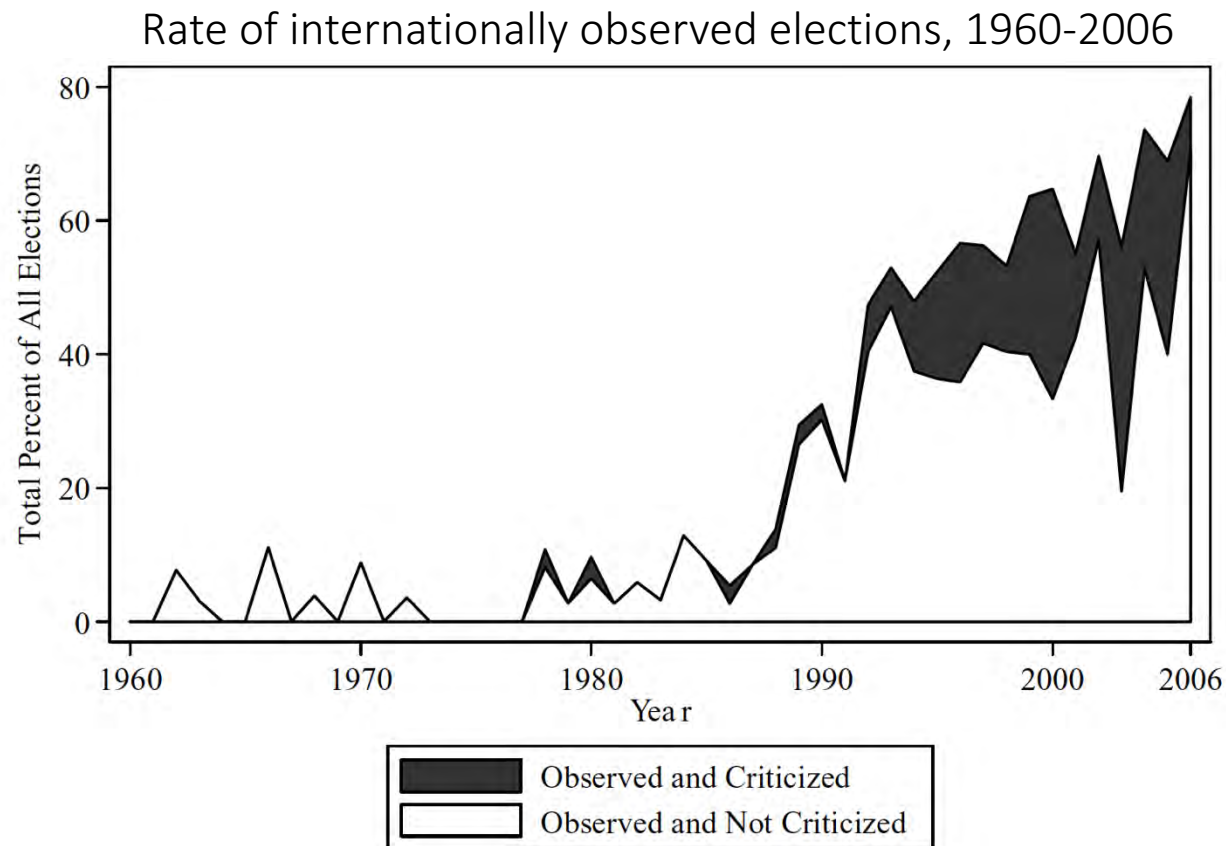
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Why might democracy NGOs have increasingly focused on electoral processes rather than outcomes?

- Large-scale US and EU funding has led to a professionalization of democracy promotion
- Programs and organizations are tied to donor funding cycles, which are focused on elections
- Donors are also focused on short term, measurable outcomes
 - Civil society promotion and opposition capacity building are examples of difficult-to-measure programs
- In competing for these donor funds, organizations learn how to be measurably effective and change tactics to win funds
- Has led organizations to focus more on processes not outcomes

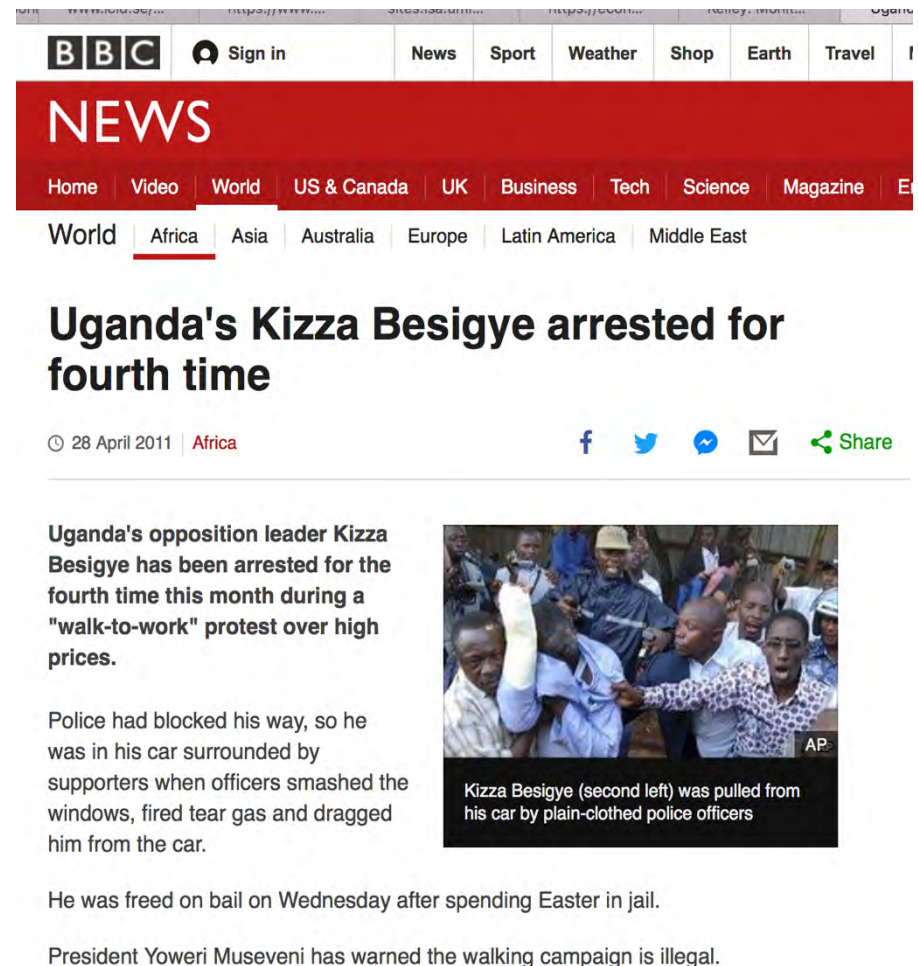
Thus interventions such as election monitoring have become almost ubiquitous

- Not inviting observers has become an signal that a government was not democratizing, giving even pseudo-democrats reason to invite observers and risk a negative report.



But could reducing election day fraud simply displace electoral manipulation to other avenues?

- Fixing aspects of the process may help on the margin, but has not changed fundamental imbalances of material, mobilizational or military power
- In Uganda, election day is fairly clean, but:
 - Opposition leaders are harassed and arrested
 - Ruling party misuses state funds for reelection
 - Vote buying is endemic



The image is a screenshot of a BBC News article. At the top, the BBC logo is visible on the left, and navigation links for 'Sign in', 'News', 'Sport', 'Weather', 'Shop', 'Earth', and 'Travel' are on the right. Below this is a red banner with the word 'NEWS' in white. Underneath the banner are more navigation links: 'Home', 'Video', 'World', 'US & Canada', 'UK', 'Business', 'Tech', 'Science', 'Magazine', and 'E'. The 'World' link is selected, and a sub-menu shows 'Africa' as the active category. The main headline reads 'Uganda's Kizza Besigye arrested for fourth time'. Below the headline, the date '28 April 2011' and the category 'Africa' are shown. To the right of the date are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Messenger, Email, and a general 'Share' button. The article text begins with 'Uganda's opposition leader Kizza Besigye has been arrested for the fourth time this month during a "walk-to-work" protest over high prices.' This is followed by a paragraph: 'Police had blocked his way, so he was in his car surrounded by supporters when officers smashed the windows, fired tear gas and dragged him from the car.' To the right of this text is a photograph showing a group of men, with one man in the center (Kizza Besigye) being pulled away from a car by several plain-clothed police officers. Below the photo is a caption: 'Kizza Besigye (second left) was pulled from his car by plain-clothed police officers'. The article concludes with two more paragraphs: 'He was freed on bail on Wednesday after spending Easter in jail.' and 'President Yoweri Museveni has warned the walking campaign is illegal.'

An example: Uganda has high rates of vote buying

- 85% of respondents reporting that politicians “often” or “always” give gifts as part of political campaigns
- 35% of survey respondents said they had been offered incentives to vote in elections, several months before the 2016 election
- These are typically small amounts per person, but are designed to create a sense of reciprocity

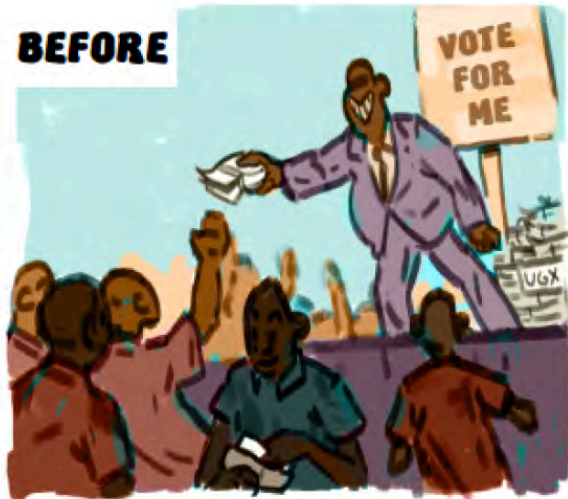


We studied a National Democratic Institute anti-vote selling campaign

You wouldn't sell your soul. You wouldn't sell your village's future.

WHY SELL YOUR VOTE?

BEFORE



AFTER



Stand together with your community and
don't sell your vote.

It is your chance to demand a better future!

ACFIM
ALLIANCE FOR ELECTION
CAMPAIGN FINANCE MONITORING

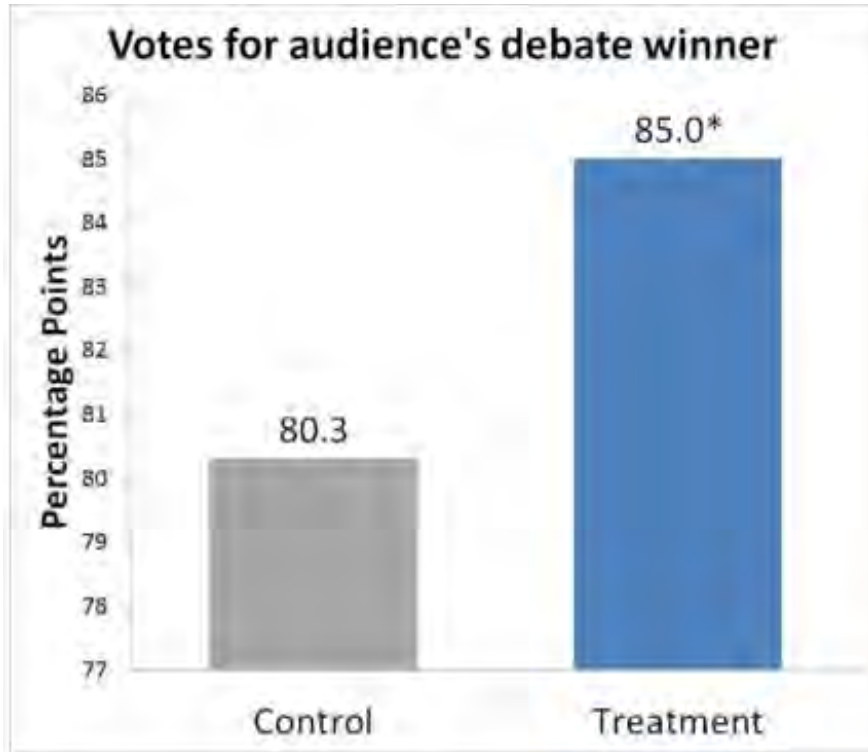
Large effects, though not for the expected reason

- The campaign did not stop voters from accepting cash and gifts
- Opposition candidates actually increases their vote buying and campaigning
- The anti-vote selling campaign seems to have persuaded some voters to take the money but vote their conscience
- Incumbent (mostly ruling party) candidates lost significant vote share
- Difficult to predict what will happen in future elections
 - Will politicians shift their tactics to
 - Or will they shift to campaigning based on issues: policies and public goods?

Bidwell, Casey & Glennerster: What is the effect of starting candidate debates in Sierra Leone for MP elections?



A randomized trial in 14 constituencies (112 polling stations) suggest that debates changed how people voted



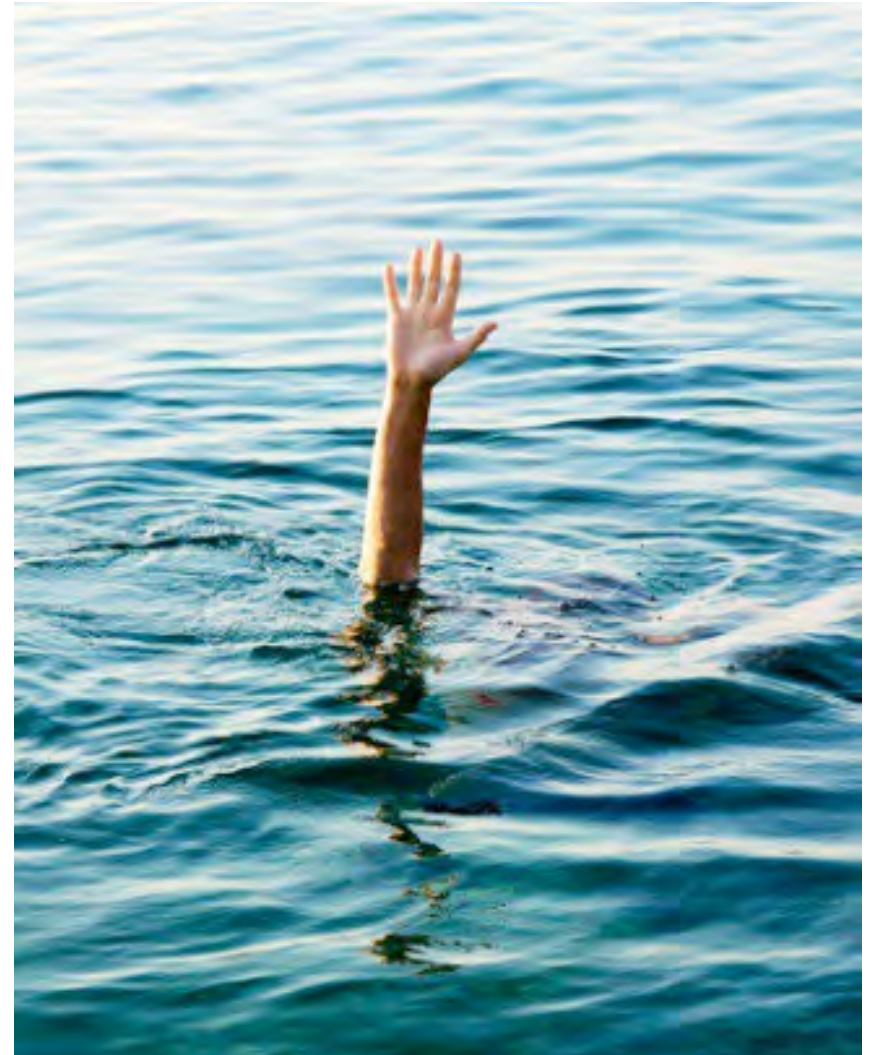
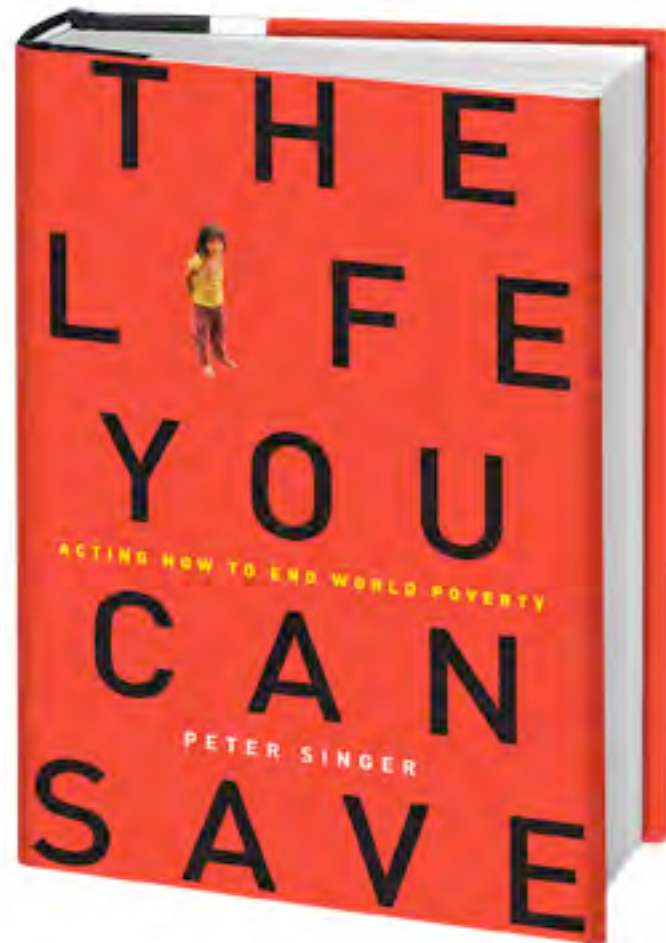
- In 2012 hosting MP debates increased voter knowledge
 - MP job responsibilities
 - Candidate qualifications
 - Candidate's positions and issues
- Changed how people voted
- Did much better than informative videos and radio reports
- Supporting debates may be a way to promote greater information without being accused of helping one side

Another way to view the evolution of democracy promotion: A shift to incrementalism

- Yes, bureaucratic incentives to be measurable and short term have changed the nature of democracy promotion
- But at the same time, they've led NGOs to avoid undertaking reforms of a complexity and scope that make it impossible to
 - disentangle causes and effects
 - to know what they are really doing
- With professionalization has come a new focus on piecemeal progress

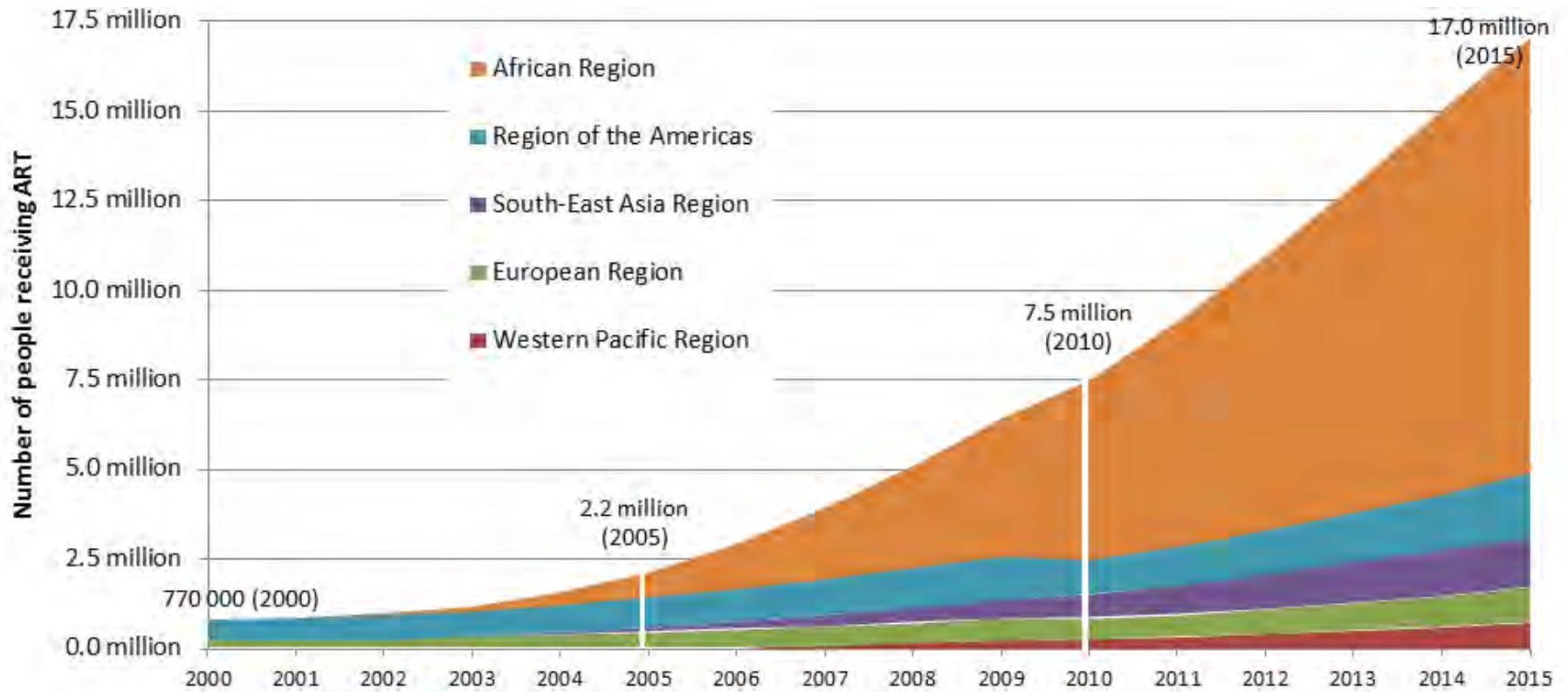
VI. Some general principles for acting in the world

Singer's frames aid in a moral fable:
Would you ruin designer shoes to save a drowning child?

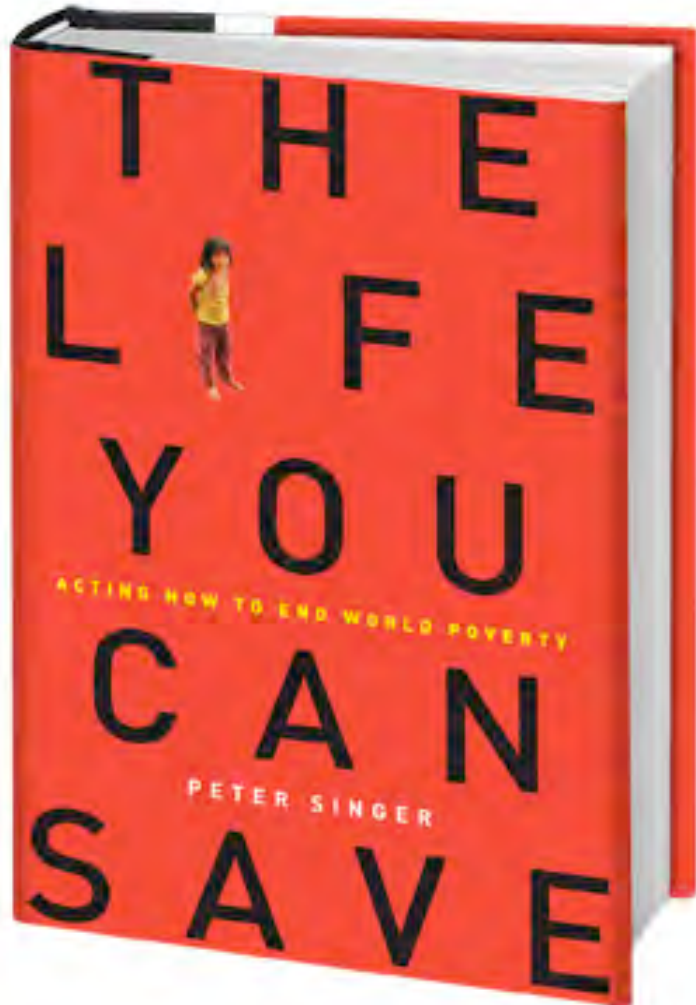


It's true, some forms of aid save lives directly

Estimated # of people receiving Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) therapy

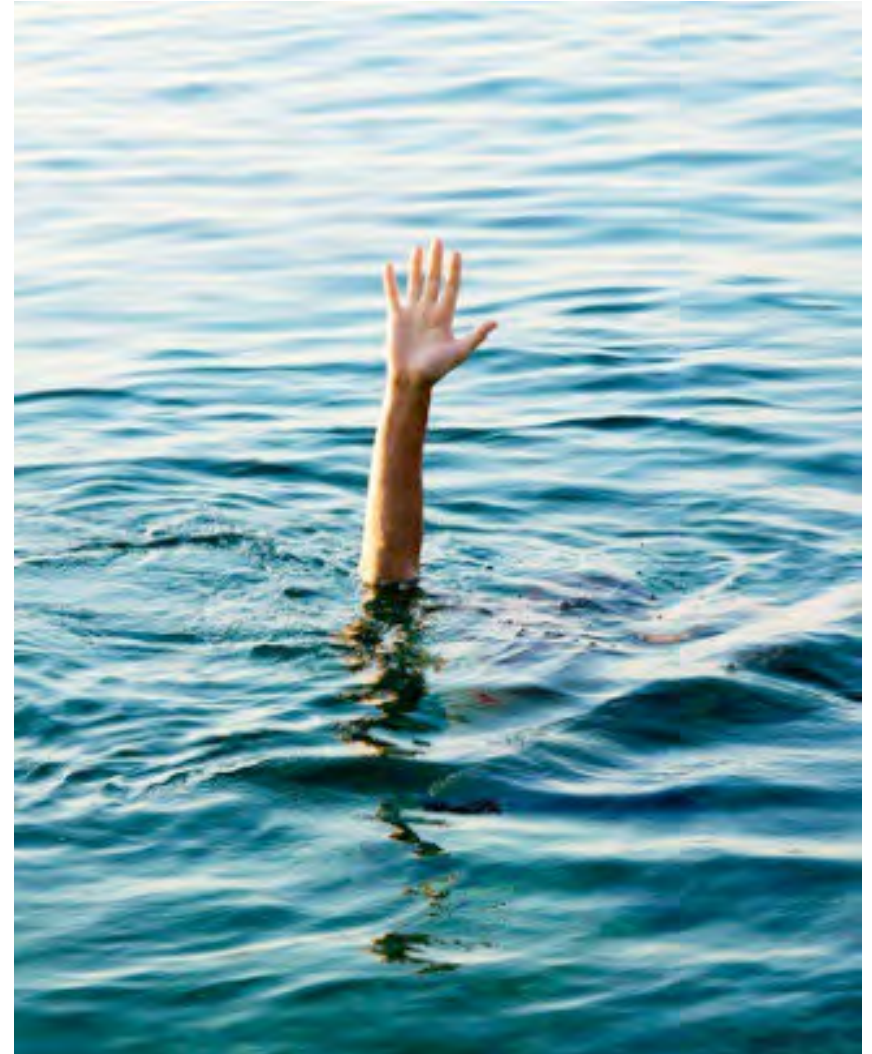


But is Peter Singer an anti-politics machine?



The moral questions associated with most aid are often a little more complex

- What if you don't know how to swim?
- What if saving the child means more children would swim there and drown?
- What if this is a ploy for an accomplice to simply steal your nice shoes?
- What if saving someone is fraught with uncertainty and obstacles



“The anti-politics machine”

- Development projects are apolitical machines that exist to provide social services
- Cliques, factions, inefficiencies and corruption are seen as impediments rather than strategic reactions to the environment (and the aid)
- Disguises partisan and interested interventions as impartial and disinterested
- Solving poverty and implementing programs is not seen as a social or political problem, but a technocratic one

Very few things in development are as simple as swimming out to a drowning child and carrying him to shore

Is your activity...		Does producing successful outcomes from your activity....
Transaction intensive?		Require many agents to act or few
Locally discretionary?		Require that the implementing agents make finely based distinctions about the "state of the world"? Are these distinctions difficult for a third party to assess?
Service or imposition of obligation		Do the people in direct contact with your agents want or not want the agent to succeed?
Based on a known technology		Is there an accepted handbook or body of knowledge for doing what you are trying to do or will this require innovation (not just context)

Figure 5.1. Four key analytic questions about an activity to classify the capability needed

Vaccinations, ARTs, and other interventions are logistically intensive but simple. There is a strong argument for doing them.

Complexity and degree of capability required ↓

		Examples	
		Health	Finance
Policy making/elite services		Iodization of salt	Monetary policy
Logistics		Vaccinations	Payment systems
Implementation intensive service delivery		Curative care	Loans
Implementation intensive imposition of obligations		Regulation of private providers	Regulation of private providers
Wicked hard		Preventative health	Equity financing of start-ups

Figure 5.2. The five types of activities that have different capability needs in implementation

Indeed, this is why so many countries have been so successful at reducing avoidable mortality

Maternal mortality rate around the world



Number of women who die from pregnancy related causes while pregnant or within 42 days of pregnancy termination per 100,000 live births.

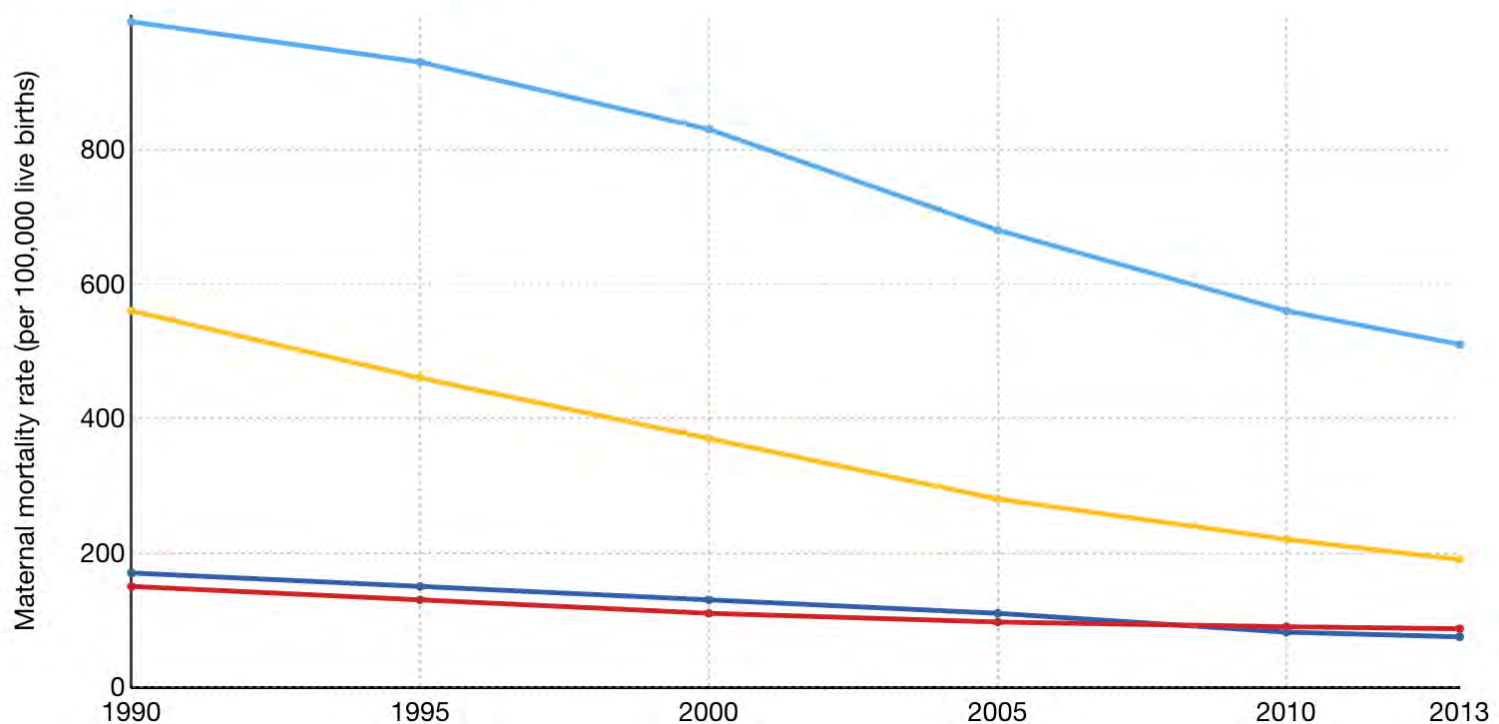
East Asia & Pacific (developing only)

India

Latin America & Caribbean (developing only)

Sub-Saharan Africa (developing only)

+ Add country

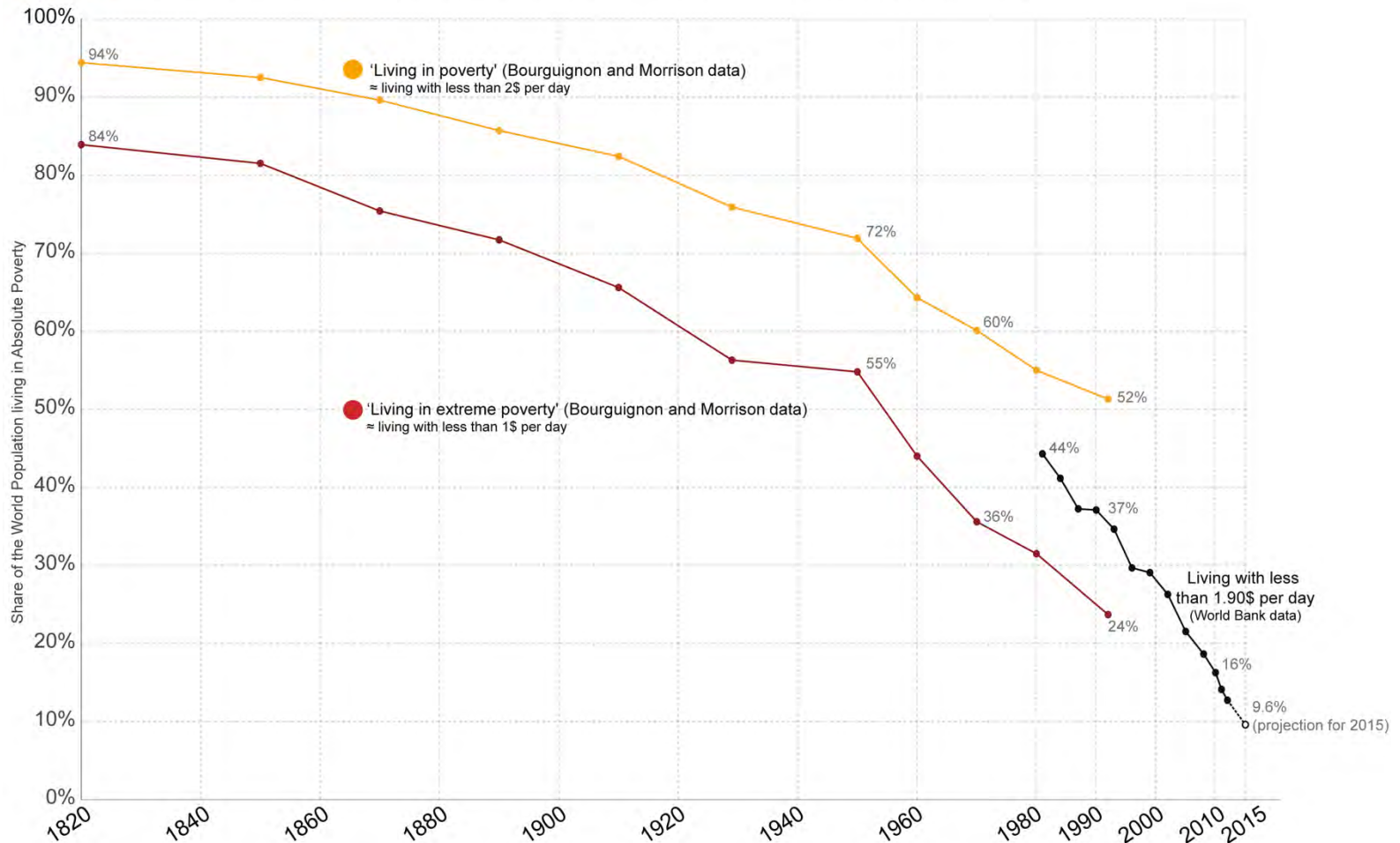


Tackling the most extreme forms of poverty might also be straightforward (at least outside the most fragile states)



Share of the World Population living in Absolute Poverty, 1820-2015

All data are adjusted for inflation over time and for price differences between countries (PPP adjustment).



Data sources: 1820-1992 Bourguignon and Morrison (2002) - Inequality among World Citizens, In The American Economic Review; 1981-2015 World Bank (PovcalNet)

The interactive data visualisation is available at OurWorldinData.org. There you find the raw data and more visualisations on this topic.

Licensed under CC-BY-SA by the author Max Roser.

In such cases, centralized public sector solutions can solve some of these problems

- Can internalize negative externalities and other forces that impede coordination
- Can plan large-scale efforts
- Can marshal large funding
- Can use coercion where needed

These all have elements of a “2017 problem”

Andrews, Pritchett & Woolcock (2015)



Figure 6.1. How would you get from St Louis to Los Angeles in 2015?

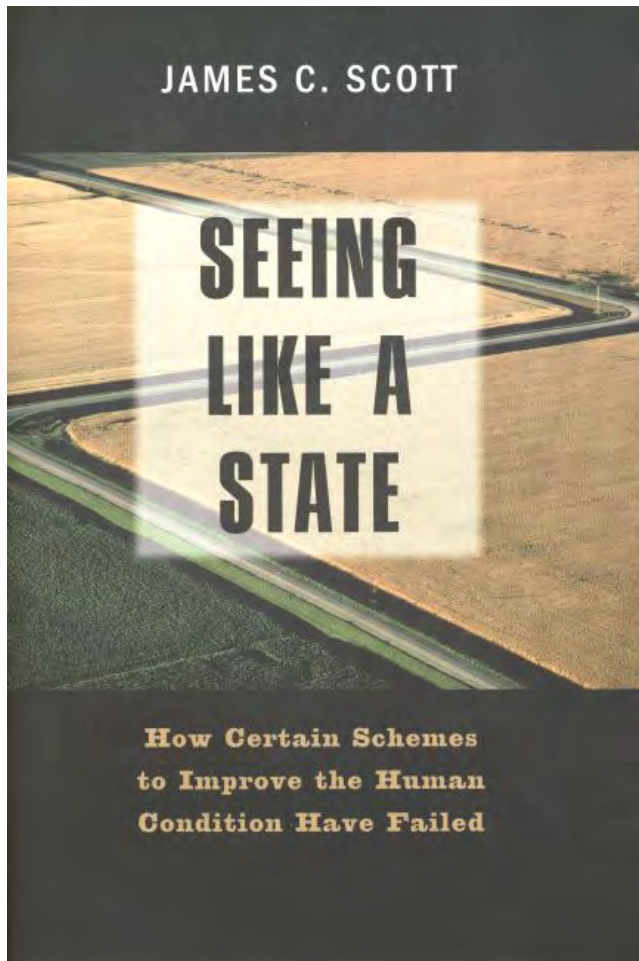
Source: Google Maps

But more challenges, maybe the most important ones,
are more of an “1804 problem”



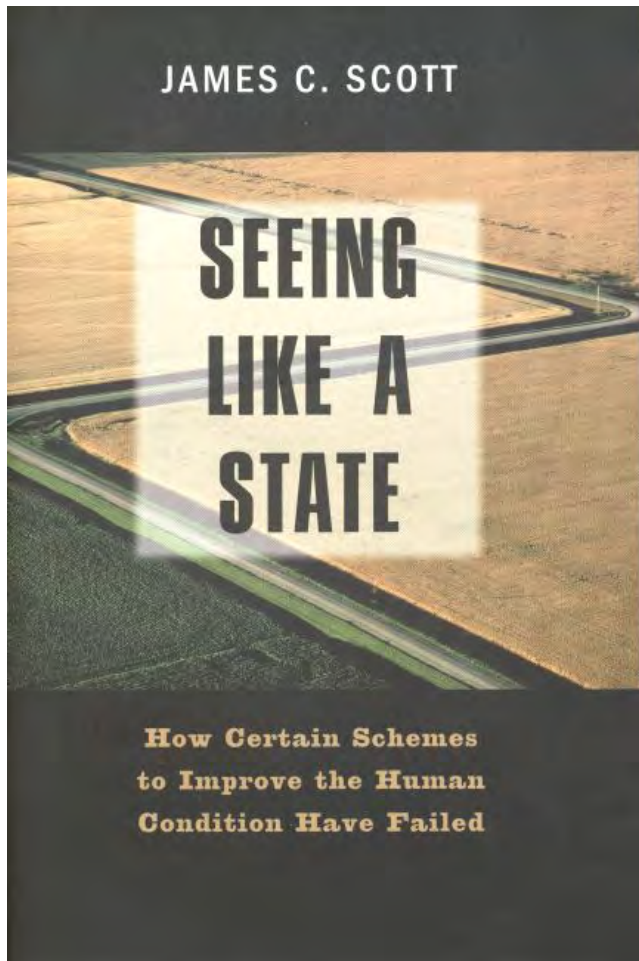
Figure 6.2. How would you get to the west coast from St Louis in 1804?

Jim Scott: The root problem is an unerring confidence in the ability to engineer progress



- We mistake our ability to solve some types of problems for an ability to solve all problems the same way
- Scott calls this “High modernist ideology”
 - Byproduct of scientific and industrial progress
 - Confidence in the ability of scientific management to achieve satisfaction of wants and needs
 - Rational order is a means and an end
 - Note: Serves the interests of some over others

What spells disastrous social engineering?

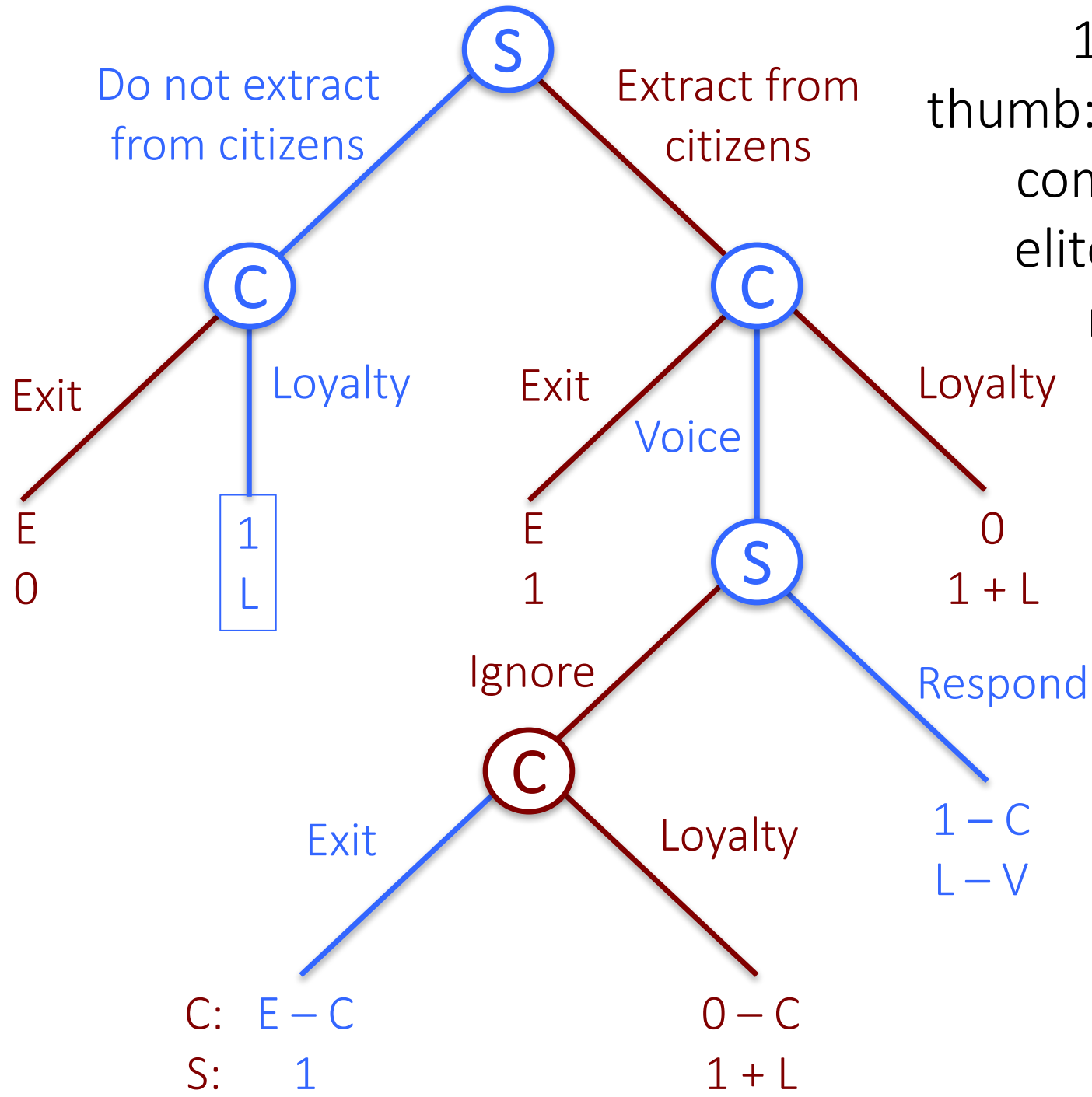


1. Ideological, self-confident belief in scientific and technical progress
2. Bureaucratic reordering of nature and society
3. State with coercive power
4. Weak civil society

Non-democracies seem to be more vulnerable to grand plans that risk going awry

Three things to remember

1. All politics is bargaining
2. The piecemeal social engineer
3. "It depends"



1. A good rule of thumb: Most politics is competition within elites and between ruling elites and citizens

2. Again and again in this class we've seen the benefits of an incremental approach

- Economic reform
- Military intervention
- Foreign aid
- State capability
- Democracy promotion

“The piecemeal engineer knows, like Socrates, how little he knows. He knows that we can learn only from our mistakes.

Accordingly, he will make his way, step by step, carefully comparing the results expected with the results achieved, and always on the look-out for the unavoidable unwanted consequences of reform...”



“The piecemeal engineer... will avoid undertaking reforms of a complexity and scope which make it impossible for him to disentangle causes and effects, and to know what he is really doing.”



“Such 'piecemeal tinkering' does not agree with the political temperament of many 'activists'.

Their programme, which too has been described as a programme of 'social engineering', may be called 'holistic' or 'Utopian engineering'.”



“Holistic or Utopian social engineering, as opposed to piecemeal social engineering, is never of a 'private' but always of a 'public' character. It aims at remodelling the 'whole of society' in accordance with a definite plan or blueprint...”





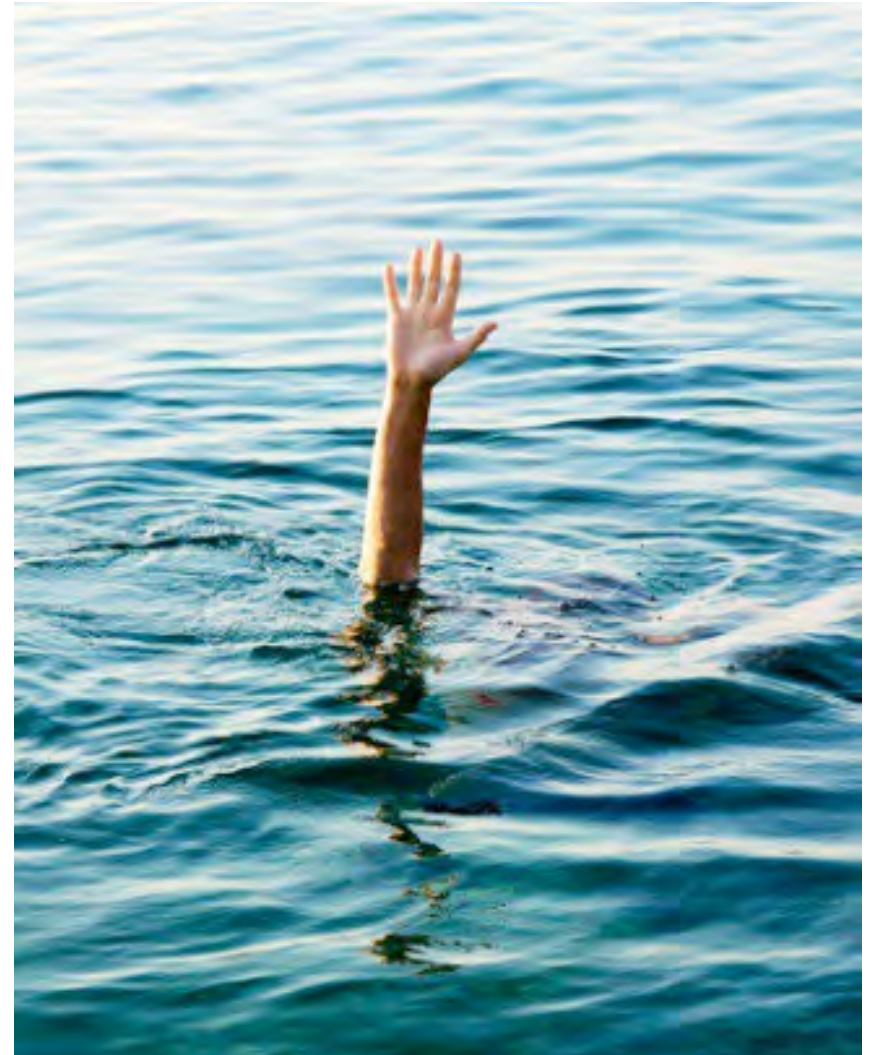
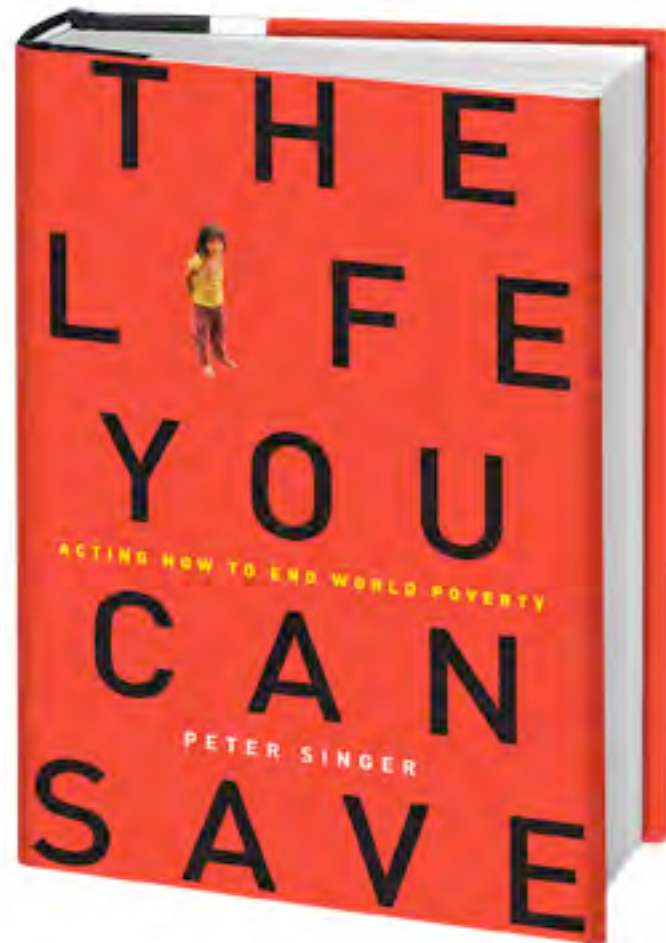
Chinese leader Den Xiaoping described China's economic strategy as "crossing the river by feeling each stone"

Village democratization is a striking example: A massive but gradual social experiment



3. Finally: What is the answer to every question?

The story of development is a story of hubris:
The Savior with The Answer



*It ain't what you
don't know that
gets you into
trouble.*

*It's what you think
you know that just
ain't so.*

—Mark Twain

