

THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY: Processes and Causes in Different Contexts

Theory/ Model

Since 1974, many countries from different regions over the world have abolished their authoritarian regimes and introduced a democratic political system. Social scientists as well as political practitioners discuss whether these young democracies will fall back into their authoritarian pasts and what kind of conditions might assist their struggle for democratic survival. The overall label for this wide topic is ‘Consolidation of Democracy (CoD)’. Inserting myself into this broad debate, my central *research questions* are as follows: What factors account for CoD? Are any of these factors universal or does their impact vary with the setting in which they operate?

In order to answer these empirical questions, some theoretical and conceptual problems have to be solved first. On the side of the dependent variable (DV), it has to be conceptually clarified what a consolidated democracy looks like. On the independent variables (IV) side, it has to be investigated which theories of CoD exist in the literature and, additionally, whether these theories formulate universal or context sensitive hypotheses.

The *scientific relevance* of my research derives from several theoretical, conceptual, and empirical shortcomings in the existing CoD literature: There are already many valuable CoD studies on single countries and specific regions like Latin America and Eastern Europe (e.g. (Diamond/Linz/Lipset 1989a), (Rueschemeyer/Huber/Stephens 1992)). However, only a few of these compare a more extended range of countries in a systematic way and hardly any analysis includes the whole post-1974 population (or a representative sample of it). Additionally, the problem with the few existing medium-to-large-N CoD studies is not only that they conceptualise the dependent variable CoD in a ‘thin’ way (Coppedge 1999), but they also often rely on just one indicator,¹ most of the time the highly questionable Freedom House index.² As another shortcoming it has to be mentioned that even though many different (groups of) hypotheses have been generated and many explanatory variables have been tested, few attempts have been made to include them all in one study in order to simultaneously test their impact empirically. Additionally, almost none of the major CoD theories seems to be sensitive to the *context* in which the main variables operate; this is like saying that the *mechanisms* through

¹ For instance, (Gasirowski/Power 1998) conceptualise democratic consolidation either as the ‘successful carrying out of two consecutive Post-Founding Elections’, as the ‘survival of an alternation in executive power through constitutional means’ or as ‘twelve years of survival of the democratic political regime’.

² For methodological and substantial critiques on the Freedom House index see e.g. (McHenry 2000), (Munck/Verkuilen forthcoming).

which an IV exerts its impact on the DV often remains unclear. What is needed, thus, are *conjunctural theories*.

I try to deal with the shortcomings in the CoD literature both on the concept of the DV and on the theories of CoD in the following way: Dealing with my dependent variable, I do not conceptualise CoD in a ‘thin’ way, i.e., I measure CoD with more than one indicator and I recognise its multidimensionality.³ As can be seen in Appendix 1, my *Multilevel Model of a Consolidated Democracy* consists of a behavioural and an attitudinal level, the former being subdivided into mass behaviour and elite behaviour.

On the IV side I apply two different strategies. In my first approach, I try to build a statistical model, which includes all major CoD factors mentioned in the literature (for a list of CoD theories see Appendix 2). The aim of this procedure is to find out which of the IVs explains most of the variation of the DV when controlled for competing explanations. However, this approach – although being straightforward in the light of my research question – creates not just technical problems (it suffices to mention multicollinearity and lack of degrees of freedom) but also epistemological pitfalls: The finding of correlations between IVs and the DV does not disentangle the *mechanisms* through which a causal variable exerts its influence on the outcome.

Hence, I apply a second approach in order to find the causes for CoD. Instead of including all relevant CoD factors from all theory groups, I rather concentrate on one or two of them and contextualise the effect of the causal variable. This is to be done by introducing variables that reflect the context in which the causal factor operates. The question of which aspects of the context are relevant has to be answered by conjunctural theories. This kind of theory makes statements about the different effects of one and the same variable concerning the setting in which it is placed.

Methodology

Multivariate analysis

In general terms, my research is located in the area between comparative case studies and large-N studies. The countries under study - something around 35 - will show a great variety on the different independent variables and the dependent variable. Such a method can be labelled as the concomitant variation method in which the aim consists in finding patterns of co-variation. Technically, I work with quantitative data and apply different statistical techniques like cluster

³ It should be underlined that, despite this complexity, the CoD concept can be applied to my different cases without causing ‘conceptual stretching’ (Sartori 1970). This is so, because my CoD concept is not classical but radial. It formulates the maximum requirements for consolidation. Cases that fulfil all criteria may or may not exist and they represent the primary category. Countries lacking different CoD features are the secondary categories and they can be put together in different types of CoD. For the idea of non-classical concepts see (Collier/Mahon 1993).

analysis, factor analysis, and (logit and probit) regression. In addition to these common techniques, I employ the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) technique.⁴

The application of these different kinds of techniques is justified by my research aims: Regression analysis helps to identify universal factors for CoD, indicating the impact of each single variable by assuming that it has the same effect in all countries, regardless of the context in which it is observed. On the contrary, the application of QCA helps to find different causal patterns for the same outcome CoD. Hence, QCA is the appropriate technique for contextualising the effect of a variable, i.e. to find the mechanisms which link the IVs and the DV (for a graphical illustration of the different causality in QCA and standard statistical techniques see Appendix 3).

Sample

The universe of relevant cases for my study has a temporal rather than a spatial limitation, hence, my research is an era rather than an area study (Lijphart 1971: 688, Fn 35). I am interested in those countries which experienced a democratic transition after 1974 regardless of their geographical position. Due to problems of limited data I might, however, be forced to drop some cases (for a list of cases see

Appendix 4). I will try to avoid tapping into the selection bias trap which consists in dropping cases in a systematic way without mentioning the impact of this case selection on the scope of inference (Collier/Mahoney 1996).

Data

The data for measuring my DV is currently produced in the context of a larger project run by Prof. Schmitter at the European University Institute in Florence (Italy). Several scholars code the relevant countries on an annual basis on a democratisation scalogram with 38 items from which I take just some in order to measure CoD (see Appendix 1). Given the diversity of my IVs, the data will be drawn from different sources like Keesing's World Record, election data, constitutional texts, World Bank reports, to mention just a few. Due to the fact that I want to use the technique of QCA, the data has to be brought into a dichotomous form.⁵

⁴ For an overview of this relatively new and unknown technique see (Ragin 1987), (Ragin 1994a), (Ragin 1994b), (Amenta/Poulsen 1994), (Berg-Schlusser/Quenter 1996), (Berg-Schlusser/De Meur 1997), (Janoski/Hicks 1994).

⁵ For the possibility of using non-dichotomous data in QCA see (Ragin 1994b).

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Appendix 1: Concept of CoD with indicators

	Electoral component	Liberal component
Elites Behaviour	<p>C2: regular elections are held and their outcomes are respected by public authorities and major opposition parties+C3: The elections have been free and fair</p> <p>C7: 1st rotation-in-power or significant shift in alliances of parties occurred within the rules established</p> <p>C8: 2nd rotation-in-power or significant shift in alliances of parties occurred within the rules established</p>	<p>L1: Significant public concessions at the level of human rights</p> <p>L7: Independent press and access to alternative means of information tolerated by government</p> <p><i>Liberal rights of the citizens are respected and protected – no systematic, large scale human rights violations (Civil Liberty Index of Freedom House)</i></p> <p>C9: Agreement, formal and informal, on association formation and behaviour</p>
Mass Behaviour	<p>C4: No significant parties or groups reject previous electoral conditions</p> <p>C5: Electoral volatility has diminished significantly</p>	<p>C12: Agreement, formal and informal, on rules of ownership and access to media</p> <p>C1: No significant political party advocates changes in the existing constitution</p>
Mass Attitudes	<p><i>support for democracy minus support for non-democratic regime forms</i> (World value Survey and Latinobarometro)</p>	

- The *electoral component* is translated in practice both by the right to vote and the right to stand for election. In a presidential democracy, the president and members of parliament have to be elected in free and fair elections. In a parliamentary democracy only the recruitment of members of parliament has to be based on free and fair elections. I do not take the institution of referendums into consideration because it is not a necessary requirement for a democracy but instead leads to a normatively stronger and loaded type of democracy which can be called a 'republican' model of democracy (Fuchs 1999).

- The *liberal component* is translated in practice by the equal application of the freedom to form and express one's own opinion, the freedom to build and join political parties and interest organizations, the freedom of assembly, the freedom of mass media and the right to demonstrate. For a similar conceptualisation of liberal rights see (Dahl Robert Alan 1971), (Dahl Robert Alan 1989), (Diamond/Linz/Lipset 1989b: xvi), (Coppedge Michael/Reinicke Wolfgang H. 1990: 63f), (Bollen 1993: 1209), (Diamond 1996a: 55). For a wider understanding of liberal rights, including also human rights see e.g. (Jagers Keith/Gurr Ted Robert 1995: 471), Freedom House (1997), (Diamond 1996b: 23f) and (Tetzlaff Rainer 1994: 32).

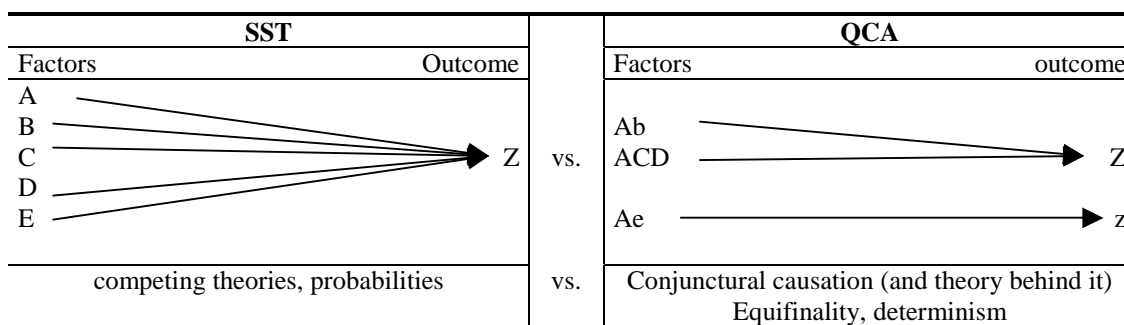
- *Cursive* items are not included in the scalogram of (Schmitter 2000).

Appendix 2: Theories of CoD

Theory groups and their hypotheses	Selection of (empirical) studies
<i>Aspects of Modernisation:</i>	
Socio-economic development	
Welfare, Standard of living	(Reisinger 1999), (Barro Robert J 1994)
Social Mobilisation	
Social Structure	
Middle Class	(Moore 1966), (Rueschemeyer/ Huber/Stephens 1992)
Mass Class	
New Class	
Mass Political Culture	
Civic Culture	(Putnam 1993) (Seligson 1999), (Muller/Seligson 1994), (Inglehart Ronald 1997), (Welzel/Inglehart 1999)
Postmodernity	
Elite Political Culture	
Elite Settlement	
Elite Pacts	
Political Culture/ Intermediary Structure	
Civil Society	(Diamond 1999)
Social Capital	
Congruence Culture-Structure	

Theory groups and their hypotheses	Selection of (empirical) studies
Sequences of Development Growth of State first Nation Building First Competition before Inclusion Institutions before Participation	
<i>Non-Modernisation Aspects:</i> Cultural Composition/ Cleavages Protestantism Western Culture Ethno-Religious Homogeneity Ethnic-Linguistic Homogeneity	(Inglehart Ronald 1997), (Reisinger 1999), (Muller 1995)
Historical-cultural factors Years lived in (semi)democratic conditions Previous Regime Type British Colonial Legacy	(Gasiorowski/Power 1998), (Barro 1994), (Muller 1995) (Reisinger 1999), (Muller 1995), (Linz/Stepan 1996), (Lipset 1999) (Reisinger 1999), (Muller 1995)
Path-dependence theory Mode of transition	(Reisinger 1999), (Karl/Schmitter 1991), (Stepan 1986)
Institutional Design Superiority of Parliamentarism Superiority of Consociationalism Superiority of Power Concentration Coherence Disproportionality of the institutional structures Superiority of Proportional Representation	(Linz 1990b), (Linz 1990a),(Frye 1997), (Shugart/Carey 1992) (Jagers /Gurr 1995) (Frye 1997), (Reisinger 1999) (Lijphart 1994)
Regime Performance Systemic Performance Military expenditures and number of militaries	(Gasiorowski/Power 1998)
International/ Transnational Factors Diffusion (Values and Best Practices) Western Powers Homogeneity of Environment Dependency	(Reisinger 1999)

Appendix 3: Causality in QCA and SST.



Capital letters indicate the presence and small letter the absence of a variable

Appendix 4: Cases

<i>Southern Europe:</i>	Greece, Portugal, Spain
<i>Latin America:</i>	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay
<i>Eastern Europe:</i>	Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Albania
<i>Former Soviet Republics:</i>	Russia, Georgia, Mongolia, Ukraine, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia
<i>Africa:</i>	South Africa, Nigeria
<i>Asia:</i>	South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines
<i>Middle East:</i>	Turkey
