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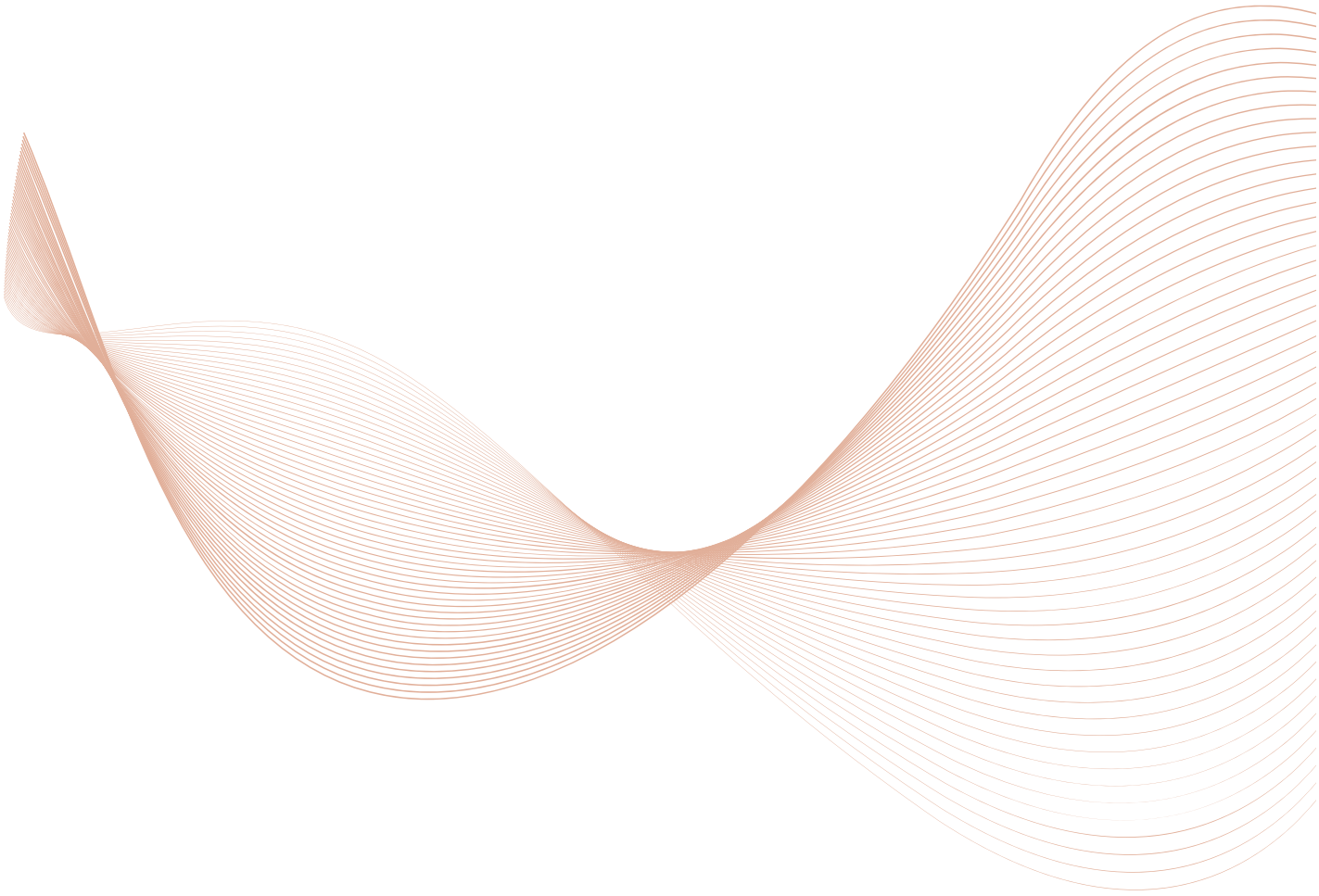
"Democratic Survival in the Muslim World"



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Democratic Survival in the Muslim World

Guest Editors' Introduction

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The widespread presumption that Islam is incompatible with democracy is based on claims that Muslim political culture, Islamic doctrine, and Islamic institutions prevent democracy from taking root in the Muslim world. These claims are as tiresome as they are inaccurate. They overlook the fact that multiple Muslim-majority countries (MMCs) have transitioned and have proven to be deeply committed to democracy since the latter half of the past century. They also downplay the degree of popular demand for democracy, even as the last decade witnessed the stunning wave of pro-democracy protests and uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

But if the Muslim world is not exceptional in this case, neither is it impervious to the threat of autocratic resurgence we see around the world today. In addition to the MENA region, democracies in MMCs across Southeast Asia, the Balkans, Central Asia, and West Africa encounter ongoing, and sometimes critical, challenges to their survival.

In this issue of *Democracy and Autocracy*, we shift focus away from whether Islam and democracy are compatible to examine the survival of democracies in the Muslim world. To this end, our introduction offers a new framework around a key conceptual intervention. Current literatures on democratic "survival" ask how to consolidate democracy with the expectation that it will triumph as the "only game in town" (Przeworski 2005). We move away from this line of thinking and offer a reconceptualization of survival as the *struggle* to endure in the face of equal or stronger forces of resistance. Instead of framing survival as a question of *mortality*, we posit a view of survival as a test of *vitality*. Further, we view democratic survival not as an outcome but as a process towards resilience – that is, how the regime struggles in the face of adversity and whether it continues to strive. In this vein, rather than approaching democratic survival as unidimensional and taking on binary forms, we argue that it can be best understood as two-dimensional and taking on multiple forms (Schedler 1998).

Dimensions of Democratic Survival

The first dimension of democratic survival is **duration**, or the length of time that a country maintains a certain level of democracy since its initial transition to democracy. Duration can be long or short. The level of democracy is not an arbitrary score, but is based on the regional context of the country in question. Specifically, a country is considered to endure if its level of democracy is above the average level of democracy for the countries in its region as well as the world average.

Comparing the level to both the regional and world average is important because it provides both geographical and temporal context. The length of time is a function of the number of years that a country remains at this level. Specifically, if a country's level of democracy remains above both the regional and world average for at least one decade (which corresponds roughly to two or more election cycles) – even if interrupted by periods in which this level declines – we consider its duration to be long; if less, we consider the country's duration to be short. This measure is similar to democratic consolidation in that it emphasizes endurance.[1] However, it takes a much longer view, allowing for the possibility that democracies can endure despite experiencing periods in which they falter.

The second dimension is **trajectory**, or the overall trend in a country's level of democracy since its transition, which can be upward or downward. Alongside duration, this is key to conceptualizing survival as resilience because it captures the notion of continuing to strive – that is, a country's determination to improve its level of democracy over time – and views improvement over the long-term rather than on a yearly basis. Unlike duration, a country's trajectory is not measured by comparing its level of democracy to the regional average, but rather, to its own starting point. It is considered to be upward if its level trends above this starting point and downward if it trends below this starting point. Specifically, we determine trajectory based on the number of years a country's level of democracy remains at or above or below its level in the preceding year since the year of transition; if a country remains at or above its level for a majority of years, we consider it to have an upward trajectory, and if not, we consider it to have a downward trajectory.

1 The emphasis on two or more election cycles at a certain level of democracy is consistent with what was once the most common indicator of democratic consolidation: the "two-turnover" test (Huntington 1991, 266-67).

Democratic Survival in Majority-Muslim Countries: Ideal Types & Cases

Based on these two key dimensions, we develop a typology of democratic survival that produces four ideal types: **Thriving** (long duration, upward trajectory); **Backsliding** (long duration, downward trajectory); **Striving** (short duration, upward trajectory); and **Waning** (short duration, downward trajectory). (See Figure 1). We illustrate these types with reference to eight MMCs, some of which are assessed in this newsletter: Albania, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mali, Senegal, Tunisia, and Turkey. These countries represent four distinct regions of the world: East Central Europe (ECE)/Eurasia (Albania and Kyrgyzstan); West Africa (Mali and Senegal); Southeast Asia (Indonesia and Malaysia); and MENA (Tunisia and Turkey). These countries not only transitioned to democracy at different times but also have had varying levels of democracy over time.

Figure 1: Democratic Survival in MMCs

	Duration	
	Short	**Long**
Trajectory — **Upward**	**Striving** (Albania, Malaysia, Mali, Tunisia)	**Thriving** (Indonesia, Senegal)
Trajectory — **Downward**	**Waning** (Kyrgyzstan)	**Backsliding** (Turkey)

While there are many ways to measure the level of democracy, we utilize the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Electoral Democracy Index (EDI). This Index captures the essence of what it means to be a democracy without the trappings of liberal (usually Western) cultural values, and also avoids adopting a minimalist (Schumpeterian) approach. It does so by focusing on the role of elections as the core feature of a democracy, and includes those aspects of the political system that increase the likelihood that these elections will result in democratic outcomes. Thus, alongside whether the chief executive is elected, it includes separate measures for the degree to which elections are "free and fair" as well as "freedom of expression," "associational autonomy" and "inclusive citizenship." In the words of its designers, the purpose of V-Dem's EDI is to operationalize Robert Dahl's highly influential concept of "polyarchy" by aggregating indicators of its "core 'institutional guarantees' " (Teorell et al. 2016, 3).

The majority of MMCs in our sample are classified as **Striving** because, although they have a short duration, they have an upward trajectory; this suggests that they are continuing to struggle to hold onto democracy despite adversity.

Both Albania and Mali transitioned to democracy in 1991. Since then, Albania's level of democracy has only been above both regional[2] and world levels for one year (2017), though it has been above its regional level for three consecutive years (1993–95) and above the world level for two consecutive years (2014–16). Its level of democracy, however, has continued to improve; since 1992, its EDI score has either increased or stayed the same for 16 out of the past 28 years (1992–2019).

Although Mali has thus far failed to meet the threshold of having a level of democracy that remains above both the regional and world averages for a decade, it has come close. Its EDI score was above both the regional[3] and world average from 2002 thru 2011, but has since then fallen below. Like Albania, its trajectory has been upward (and even more so); Mali's EDI score has either increased or stayed the same for 19 out of the past 28 years (1992–2019). And yet, as Jaimie Bleck, Marc-André Boisvert, and Boukary Sangaré argue in this issue, events over the last decade have revealed the fragility of Mali's democracy despite its persistence, underscoring its struggle to maintain democracy.

Malaysia and Tunisia both had their "transitional moment" roughly two decades later than Albania and Mali, but have exhibited similar tendencies. Malaysia experienced what many scholars describe as its first competitive election in 2008 (Abbott 2009), and its level of democracy has since remained below both the regional and world averages. Like Albania and Mali, however, its level has continued to improve despite this; Malaysia's EDI score has either increased or stayed the same for 8 out of the past 11 years (2009–2019). In its most recent election, as described by Lily Zubaidah Rahim in this issue, a newly formed coalition (*Pakatan Harapan*) defeated the long-standing ruling coalition (*Barisan National*), only to collapse two years later; this is indicative of Malaysia's struggle to sustain its upward democratic trajectory.

Tunisia transitioned to democracy as part of the Arab Spring in 2010, and has been consistently above both the regional and world averages since 2012. Like Mali, its democracy is less than one decade old, and thus, does not yet meet the threshold for long duration. However, it comes close, suggesting that it could soon move to the thriving category. Tunisia has also had an upward trajectory. Albeit not as steep as some of the other MMCs in this category, Tunisia's EDI score has either increased or stayed the same for five out of the past nine years (2011–2019).

The smallest number of countries in our sample fall into the **Waning** and **Backsliding** categories: Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, respectively. Both categories suggest that democracy is under threat, but in different ways depending on the duration of its democratic experience. Kyrgyzstan is a new democracy with very minimal inroads made in stabilizing democratic norms and institutions, and so seems less likely to survive compared with Turkey, which is an established democracy with a longer history of democratic norms and institutions, and so has greater potential to rebound.

Like Albania and Mali, Kyrgyzstan transitioned to democracy in 1991 and its duration has been short; although its level of democracy has consistently been above the regional average since 1992, it has never been above the world average. However, in contrast to both these countries (as well as Malaysia and Tunisia), Kyrgyzstan's trajectory is downward: its EDI score has decreased in 15 out of the past 28 years (1992–2019).

Turkey shares with Kyrgyzstan a downward trajectory; since its transition to democracy in 1983 (Ahmad 1985), its score has decreased in 19 out of the past 36 years (1984–2019). However, it differs from Kyrgyzstan (as well as the MMCs in the **Striving** category) in that its duration is long; Turkey's EDI score was consistently above both regional and world averages for almost two decades (1984–2013) before it began to fall below both in 2014. As Şebnem Yardımcı-Geyikçi argues in this issue, Turkey faces a significant internal threat to democracy with the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its attempts to centralize power in the executive. However, this downward slope is very recent; Turkey's historical experience as one of MENA's few long-standing democracies provides some hope that it will ultimately persevere.

Finally, two of the MMCs in our sample are classified as **Thriving** because they have both a long duration and an upward trajectory, suggesting that they are resilient in the struggle for democratic survival. Regarding duration, the level of democracy for both countries has been above their respective region's average and

2 We compare Albania to the Balkans region rather than the entire ECE, but the result would be the same; its level of democracy has come close to the ECE region, but only surpassed it once (2013).
3 It is worth noting that Mali's score has been above the regional average for almost 3 decades (1992–2011), but for the majority of those years was below the world average.

the world average for more than a decade. In the case of Indonesia, which transitioned to democracy in 1998, the country's EDI score has been consistently above both the regional and world average since 2000. Senegal's score has been above both the regional and world average for even longer – since 1978 (43 years). Regarding trajectory, they are both upward, yet Senegal's is arguably more secure. While Indonesia's EDI score has either increased or stayed the same for 11 out of the past 21 years (1999-2019), Senegal's has either increased or stayed the same for 28 out of the past 43 years (1977-2019).

Democratic Survival beyond the Muslim World

Our reconceptualization of democratic survival as *struggling to endure in the face of challenges* has several advantages. First, it illuminates the two-dimensional nature of democratic survival as duration and trajectory such that survival is not only a function of the length of time a country has been democratic, but also of the overall arc of its democratic transition. Second, it facilitates the creation of a typology that produces four ideal types (**Thriving**, **Backsliding**, **Striving**, and **Waning**) to capture meaningful variation that is often ignored. Specifically, our approach provides a way to differentiate among the many MMCs that have transitioned to democracy, revealing not merely the variation in their level of democracy but more importantly in the degree of their vitality. MMCs, it turns out, vary considerably when it comes to their current state of survival – and this variation is cross-national as well as cross-regional. It is noteworthy, for example, that at least one MMC from each of the four diverse regions we include here is in the category of **Striving**. Third, understanding democratic survival as a process explicitly recognizes that democratic regimes evolve over time. We provide a dynamic measure of democratization such that countries can and do move from one ideal type to another as democracy thrives or falters and trends in an upward or downward direction.

Finally, our comparative framework and typology can travel beyond the Muslim world and inform the study of comparative democratization more broadly. The global crisis of democracy we witness in the world today, including in advanced Western democracies, requires us to reconsider prior assumptions of the Western model as the final and ideal type in democratic survival. Rather, we develop a new agenda for research by fundamentally reorienting what it means to survive as a democracy and shifting focus away from the triumph of democracy in the short-term towards survival as a constant struggle to right the course of democracy over the long term. This approach is admittedly led by a good measure of cautious optimism. Yet it is also a more realistic view of the turbulence that underlies even the most long-lasting democracies around the world.

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Mali's Persistent and Fragile Democracy

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Introduction

During the last decade, Mali has experienced a governance crisis: two coups, a security crisis stretching beyond national borders, increasing Islamist militant attacks, heightened local tensions and intercommunal violence, and a violent post-electoral crisis. This is in stark contrast to the two previous decades, when Mali exemplified a stable, successful democratization (Vangroff and Kone 1995, 45). Still, despite various weaknesses, Mali exhibits a resilient, if "uneven," state of pluralism (Bleck and Logvinenko 2018). This essay seeks to understand Mali's democratic resilience by unpacking both its fragile features as well as its enduring qualities. First, we provide an overview of Malian governance and the country's political history. Second, we argue that the introduction of multi-party elections has been insufficient to build an effective Malian state. Both in its projection of military power and the efficiency of its bureaucracy, state weakness continues to block the country's democratic consolidation. Third, we highlight the role of elites in frustrating democratic representation and accountability. Finally, we describe the factors that will likely continue to contribute to Mali's democratic resilience.

The State of Malian Democracy

Mali possesses many requisite components of procedural democracy, including multi-party elections, a vibrant civil society, substantial political competition and turnover in legislative and mayoral races, and three executive alternations of power via the ballot box. However, it falls short on more substantive metrics including weak party institutionalization, inadequate checks on the executive, and a deficient judicial system. Citizens consistently cite corruption and misgovernance as pervasive problems (Whitehouse 2013), which are cited as root conditions for the current conflict in northern and central Mali (Bleck, Dembele and Guindo 2016; Raleigh and Dowd 2013). Malians' protests led to the eventual fall of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK), who, despite his anti-corruption platform, engaged in nepotism and failed to address widespread corruption (Whitehouse 2013; Whitehouse 2014).

Despite these problems, Malians express a consistent and enduring attachment to democratic values and multi-party elections (Coulibaly and Bratton 2013). They routinely take to the streets to protest proposed constitutional amendments, unfair judicial rulings, and unpopular legislation, and this contentious politics often succeeds in blocking or reversing unfavorable government action. It is notable that the leaders of the 2012 and 2020 coups framed their contribution as helping Mali to save "its democracy" (Whitehouse 2013). Despite criticisms of the judicial system, there is enduring popular support for the constitution. As Wing (2015) demonstrates, the Malian Constitution of 1992 emerged from an inclusive, participatory process, consistent with deliberative and consensual norms characterizing pre-colonial governance, which has given it enduring legitimacy. After the 2012 coup, there was strong popular commitment to preserving the constitution and using it to guide the transition; this is consistent with historical resistance to any perceived attempts to manipulate the constitution without adequate grassroots consultation (Wing 2015).

The Evolution of Governance in Mali

Due to the significant role that pre-colonial political culture continues to play in Mali, it is important to explore some of the democratic elements of historic governance. Mali's current territory overlaps with several pre-colonial kingdoms. Constructed on peaceful foundations, the Malian empire governed largely for the good of its constituents (Ki-Zerbo 1973, 65). Its longstanding conflict mitigation mechanisms continue to benefit much of Malian society by generating peaceful alliances across ethnic groups (Dunning and Harrison 2010; Samassekou 2011; Hellweg 2020). While these consensual and deliberative features of pre-colonial governance have strengthened Mali's democratic heritage (Pringle 2005),[1] they are in tension with the idea of one-man/one vote.

Colonization featured limited opportunities for subjects to participate as citizens. In Diallo's words, Mali's robust pre-colonial governance system had its "democratic wealth plundered by colonialization" (2013, 245). France's militarized colonial administration contributed to the normalization of the armed forces as a legitimate power and a "modernization force" in

1 Malian societies also feature less democratic institutions, such as the role of military intervention to destabilize poor political equilibriums (Whitehouse 2013), the continuing relevance of hierarchical caste structures and legacies of slavery (LeCocq 2002; Rodet 2015; Sangare 2013), and widespread gender gaps in political knowledge and participation (Gottlieb 2016b; Bleck and Michelitch 2018).

contrast to local traditional powers (Boisvert 2020). This administration created tension between colonial forces and customary ruling powers on the question of the state's legitimacy, and organized the entire French Sudanese population as 'subjects' that would not share the benefits of 'citizens,' such as those living in Dakar or Abidjan (Mamdani 1995).

Mali inherited weak institutions from France at independence, including limited infrastructure and civil service (Amselle 1978; Diarrah 1990). The creation of a singular Malian community with a capital in Bamako caused tension within northern communities that sought their own state (Boilley 2012; Keita 2005). President Modibo Keita made progress in establishing schools, but had to rely heavily on nongovernmental organizations and non-state actors for service provision (Mann 2003). The Traore military regime, which removed President Keita in a 1968 coup, did little to expand state capacity or political inclusion. In 1991, following the military's violent suppression of student protests, Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) led a coup, which led to multi-party elections in 1992. Subsequent elections took place in 1997, 2002, and 2007 and led to two transitions of power – first to Alpha Oumar Konare and later to the coup leader ATT. However, these elections were also plagued by low participation rates, weak party linkages,[2] and, in the case of the 1997 elections, accusations of electoral manipulation which led to an opposition boycott (Diarrah 2000).

Scholars have shown how competitive elections have been insufficient to generate efficient public goods. In Mali's weak party system with limited transparency, electoral competitiveness is associated with lower public goods provision (Gottlieb and Kosec 2019), and municipal governance is marked by pervasive collusion among members of local governance councils (Gottlieb 2015). Like other low-income states, Mali holds regular elections and exhibits relative freedoms of press and of association, but it failed to achieve an equitable rule of law or an effective legislative branch that can constrain executives (Bleck and Logvinenko 2018). The National Assembly has mostly acted as a rubber stamp. Similarly, the national justice system is perceived as corrupt; many citizens turn to customary chiefs and religious leaders to arbitrate disputes (Goff, *et al.* 2017).

Elections in the Context of Conflict

The 2012 coup arrived less than two months before the scheduled presidential elections. The incumbent, ATT, was set to step down after his two-term mandate. His regime was facing a security crisis as well as stinging critiques of misgovernance and corruption (Hagberg and Korling 2012). On March 22nd, junior officers staged a coup, paralyzing the army's chain of command. Soon pushed aside by various jihadist and Al-Qaeda affiliated groups, the junta failed to consolidate power in the context of international sanctions, and a transition government was established according to the constitution's rules. When jihadists threatened to break the status quo in January 2013 and move south, a French-led military intervention was launched. Presidential elections were hastily organized in August 2013, followed by legislative elections in November, ending the transition and installing an elected president (IBK), a former prime minister and repeated opposition contender. He was already a favored candidate before the coup and won on a security and anti-corruption platform with Mali's highest-ever voter turnout (Whitehouse 2014). His party won 66 out of 147 seats in the National Assembly, which enabled him to build a majority coalition.

Municipal elections, originally scheduled for 2014, were plagued by delays related to security, but were finally held in 2016. Hamadou Kouffa (leader of a sub-group of the jihadist umbrella Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM)) described voters as "unbelievers" in a sermon shared on social media to dissuade voting. Armed groups disrupted or even prevented local elections in many of the country's northern and central communes.

Low turnout plagued the 2018 presidential elections; IBK was reelected despite widespread dissatisfaction with his performance. Due to security challenges and public sector strikes, legislative elections were postponed until 2020. Again, violent extremist groups threatened voters and attacked some polling stations, forcing them to close. The Coalition of Electoral Observers, however, declared the election to be mostly fair.

Legislative elections were finally held in April 2020. While campaigning, opposition leader Soumaila Cisse was kidnapped by extremists and held until October 2020.[3] The Territorial Administration announced provisional results indicating an opposition victory in the capital of Bamako, but the Constitutional Court later

2 President Toure's "consensus politics" – encouraging bandwagoning among all political parties (Baudais and Chauzal 2006) – further damaged the prospects for a strong opposition. His "Citizens' Movement" encouraged independent candidates to run with the movement and without the stigma of partisanship.

3 Cisse was freed during the post-coup transition, though negotiations had been initiated by the IBK government.

overturned these results. This decision, accompanied by rising popular discontent with increasing insecurity and poor governance, sparked anti-regime protests and calls for the president's resignation. Three main coalitions of civil, religious, and political society actors marched to denounce "chaotic and predatory governance" and call for the President's resignation under what became known as the *Mouvement du 5 Juin, Rassemblement des Forces Patriotiques* (M5-RFP). In the July 10th protests, at least 13 civilians were killed, generating even greater criticism of the government. On July 12th, the president dissolved the Constitutional Court in a failed attempt to diminish tension. On August 18th, senior officers staged a coup to remove IBK.

State Weakness

The period of multi-party elections, both before and after the 2012 coup, highlights key democratic deficits: uneven pluralism, pervasive inequality from the political elites to the citizenry, and regional inequalities in governance between Bamako and the periphery. Since independence, efforts to change the dynamics of Bamako's core governing power and its largely symbolic projection of power onto the periphery have never succeeded. Even before the onset of the current conflict, the state historically failed to provide basic services of education, justice, security, and infrastructure. Traditional and religious leaders, as well as non-governmental organizations, continue to supplement or substitute for the state.

With no permanent presence of state institutions, state security forces have come to symbolize foreign repression (Boisvert 2020; Magassa 2017). The state has never had a monopoly on violence within its sovereign borders (Boisvert 2016), the security apparatus having been designed to safeguard Bamako rather than protecting the country's borders. Meanwhile, Bamako citizens have criticized the government's inability under ATT and IBK to reduce crime (Whitehouse 2013). Since independence, Mali struggled to ensure civilian control of its armed forces, choosing coup-proofing methods rather than fostering professionalism within the ranks. Modibo Keita created a political militia within the armed forces to police soldiers (Diallo 2016). Moussa Traoré, though he possessed a military background, depleted the armed forces while ensuring that a loyal core would defend him (Diallo 2016). Since 1991, succeeding regimes continued to weaken the military while relying on corruption to foster a loyal set of elite forces. This worked while defense was not a significant policy issue. The government negotiated with nascent rebels, leaving the military without a security role.

The 2012 crisis forced the regime to reconsider this strategy (Boisvert 2020). IBK invested in military equipment to overcome decades of neglect, but without enacting necessary reforms. The Malian Armed Forces face an exponentially deteriorating security situation, now being accused of killing non-combatant civilians (Bencherif 2020). Foreign training brought limited tactical gains on the field, but did not help curb corruption and nepotism among the ranks. Meanwhile, soldiers are facing increasing risks and blame the government for not doing enough to support their mission.

Since independence, Mali has faced three waves of rebellions in the north (early 1960s, 1990s, 2006-2009). While the first rebellion was violently repressed, later ones were resolved through negotiations and political agreements; elite cooptation became a way to postpone major reforms and meet citizen demands (Boilley 2012). In December 2011, a new rebellion was initiated, fueled by the northern population's increased dissatisfaction with social or economic development. Thus, the *Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad* (MNLA) emerged amidst a deteriorating regional security situation characterized by the kidnapping of foreigners and increasing attacks against governmental forces from Al-Qaeda affiliated groups. The MNLA and other insurgent and jihadist groups captured two-thirds of the country's territory; the military could not regain any ground until the French intervention in 2013. In the interim, many bureaucrats fled the center and the north of the country – further weakening the state's position and leaving the population vulnerable (Bleck and Michelitch 2015). Service provision deteriorated further, with a tremendous number of school closings as a result of insecurity, jihadist targeting, and school strikes (Adam, Golovko, and Sangare 2017).

Two umbrella groups, the *Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad* (CMA) and the *Plateforme des mouvements du 14 juin*, signed the Algiers Peace Accord in June 2015. Its signatories included only groups from the north of the country; jihadist groups were excluded. The security situation has worsened since 2015. Splinter groups have broken from the Accord's official signatories, and communities have increasingly relied on self-organized militias, often loosely coordinated by politicians and individual members of the security forces. Self-defense militias, seen as a non-ideological alternative able to contain jihadist groups, have violated human rights with state support (Tobie and Sangaré 2019; UN Experts report on Mali 2020), further polarizing violence-stricken communities (Assanvo, *et al.* 2019).

The proliferation of these groups reveals state weakness. Jihadist groups now focus on community engagement and exploitation of local tensions to bolster their own legitimacy. Notable among them is JNIM, which rose in connecting local grievances to global jihad (Sandor & Campana 2019; Thurston 2019). The state's failure to protect communities from self-defense groups and their attacks on civilians has created a fertile ground for these groups to build support for their cause. In their delivery of security and justice, jihadist groups offer an ideological alternative to secular, democratic institutions that have turned their back to citizens – building a case that democracy is not compatible with Malian and Islamic values.

Overall, the state's inability to deliver on security, justice, and basic social services has created an unprecedented spiral of ethnic tension and intercommunal violence in central Mali, while the situation in the north remains unaddressed. These security challenges, as well as the tensions between the core and periphery, will continue to plague any future regime that fails to offer minimal services to all its citizens.

Weak Linkages to Grassroots Interests: the Political Class, International Community, Military, and Civil Society

Elected leaders are increasingly seen as corrupt and out of touch with the general population; Afrobarometer data reveals declining trust in the president and members of the national assembly since 2005, as well as declining satisfaction with democracy since 2002 (Bratton and Coulibaly 2013). Most political elites are focused on a strategy of extraversion to maintain aid flows and military support from the international community rather than any real accountability to their constituencies (Bergamaschi 2014). Policymaking is often unmoored from social realities and favors elite cooptation rather than building popular legitimacy. Mali remains a centralized state, and discussions on decentralization and institutional reform have constantly been derailed despite being a component of the 2015 Algiers Accords (Carter Center 2020).

The international community's focus on electoral politics rather than deep-seated institutional reform contributes to "uneven" democracy. After each coup, there has been an emphasis on the return to multi-party elections (Bergamaschi 2014) without adequate analysis of state capacity, other democratic institutions, such as rule of law or local ownership, or political culture. The increasingly unpopular Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the main foreign actor during the two transitions, has played virtually no role in supporting governance reform. Other international actors have emphasized only a security agenda to halt regional instability. Spectators have been frustrated with the lack of condemnation of the several corruption scandals despite the increasing anger in Mali against IBK. Also present in 2012, strong anti-foreign (especially anti-French) resentment mounted during the 2020 protests.

The 2020 junta, in its first public address, declared its actions a "popular insurrection." Like the members of the three previous juntas (2012, 1991, and 1968), this junta framed its role as preserving the constitution and preventing the country from falling into chaos (Boisvert 2020). The 2020 coup was comprised of newer military leaders with foreign training. Unlike in 2012, the armed forces appeared unified behind the 2020 coup leaders, but the military still faces serious challenges, including the need for institutional reform, despite important investment from the international community. International training improved the capability to exert violence, but the military still lacks an effective military justice apparatus, a strategy to fight corruption and nepotism, and a well-functioning chain of command (Tull 2019; Cold-Ravnkilde, and Nissen 2020; Boisvert 2020). In this context, the armed forces are another facet of a weak state that resists reforms and democratic oversight.

While Mali boasts a vibrant civil society, it lacks strong and stable partisan affiliations. Civil society organizations play an important role substituting for or complementing the state (Diallo 2013). However, they have not translated into effective lobbies within party politics. Mali remains characterized by party fragmentation and weakness. Parties are active during the campaign period, but dormant the rest of the time. They remain highly personalized without discernible political platforms. Partisanship and electoral competition continue to be viewed as an elite enterprise, where various members of the *classe politique* compete for power among themselves rather than as venues for preference aggregation among the masses.

In contrast, various elements of civil society – notably religious leaders – have been successful in organizing protests to achieve policy outcomes. This type of religious engagement in politics – as a "fourth branch of government" stepping in to check the executive – is welcomed by many Malians (Bleck 2020). It suggests the power of contentious politics in the absence of strong democratic institutions as a counter-balance to executive power. However, Mali has not seen the emergence of mass-based Islamic parties. Rather,

leading clerics, both within and outside the High Islamic Council, have chosen whether to endorse various candidates, lobby for legislation, and counsel the political elite, while maintaining a discourse separating religion and the state (Lebovich 2019). This strategy enables religious elites both to maintain tight influence over governance and enough room to remain "outside the political fray" (Bleck and Thurston 2021). Leaders typically govern in a top-down fashion, maximizing their own power rather than representing broader religious constituencies.

In Mali, social networks have been able to make similar policy gains through contentious politics. The *Antè Abana* movement was able to challenge a 2017 constitutional amendment, and the regime abdicated by renouncing constitutional reform and advocating dialogue with the people. In 2020, the M5-RFP, inspired by the experience of *Antè Abana*, conducted most of its activities online. Massive social media campaigns, including those based in the U. S. and France, criticized the regime, culminating in protests, during which tens of thousands of people from different social and political backgrounds responded to the call of the M5-RFP to fight against impunity, to expand access to basic social services, and to address grievances of those on strike.

However, this large-scale protest movement has not consolidated into formal party activity. Elite lobbying and mobilization that characterizes religious leaders' involvement in politics is consistent with a broader "top-down" civil society focused on elite negotiation rather than grassroots movements gaining a voice in the corridors of power.

The Future of Malian Democracy

We anticipate that the Malian population will continue to demand democratic reforms. People will not accept a return to dictatorship; however, the population is also yearning for better democratic performance, including more accountability, domestically conceived policy, and stronger independent institutions. More than twenty years of experience of competitive, multi-party elections have been insufficient to build strong parties with linkages to civil society, consistent rule of law, or more efficient and responsive governance. Considering the institutional weakness of the other branches of government, the armed forces have framed their interventions as necessary to counter executive overreach. Similarly, religious leaders describe their own interventions as stepping in to protect the public from elites' pursuit of their own ambitions. These contentious strategies highlight pervasive institutional weakness. How might Mali move from its state of uneven pluralism to a more consolidated democracy?

To date, Malian democracy has failed to adequately incorporate traditional democratic practices and fully embrace decentralization.[4] Exceptions include the 1992 national conference and the *Espace d'interpellation démocratique* (Wing 2002). However, this type of consultation and public deliberation has not been adequately institutionalized. While the government engaged in recent consultations with various civic groupings, there is a widespread yearning for a mass-based consultation – particularly of those living in the periphery. In order to convert on Mali's cultural democratic capital, governance must integrate systems of consultation and deliberation into its institutional structure on a more regularized and permanent basis. The decentralization process was aimed at taking the socio-cultural realities of the *"terroirs"* into account in the governance of the communes. Despite a massive decentralization campaign (Wing and Kassibo 2014), the budget and power emanate from the political elite in the capital. In many cases, deconcentrated authorities, appointed from Bamako, still oversee local elected officials. Two newly established regions in the north – Taoudeni and Menaka – are not yet represented in the National Assembly, which threatens the decentralization strategy that the 2015 Algiers Accord rests on. The future of successful governance in Mali will require both a widespread consultation of Malian citizens and grassroots civil society, as well as a serious examination of the success and failures of decentralization.

Military weakness, and the state's broader inability to project power into the periphery, will continue to plague any future regime. It is unclear what the drivers of a much-needed increase in state capacity will be. In order to establish rule of law or any kind of social contract with the population, the Malian state will need to find a way to make itself useful and relevant outside of the capital, especially in delivering security and social services.

Despite these challenges, two emerging trends – increasing connectivity and the role of the diaspora – give the authors additional hope for democratic resilience. Social media has been crucial in bringing out the M5-RFP message. Like other sub-Saharan countries, Mali's level of mobile internet connectivity has grown dramatically over the last fifteen years and

4 While the Malian constitution has not yet formally incorporated elements of the Kurukanfuga, it was a part of the Preamble of the Draft Constitution of the 4th Republic of Mali, aborted in 2012 after the coup d'état, and again in 2017 following a popular movement against the referendum.

will only continue to do so. Greater connectivity yields greater access to information and facilitates political expression. As we see with the M5-RFP protests, it also constitutes a means to pressure governments – especially for youth, frustrated and aspiring to change. WhatsApp and Facebook enabled political organization and exchange leading up to recent protest movements. Greater internet connectivity also provides a platform for those in the periphery to make their perspectives heard. The internet has helped mobilize the population against the armed forces' abuses of the population in the center and highlight public service disparities in rural areas, but it has also helped jihadist and armed groups share messages and amplify local voices in response to Bamako's narrative – even in areas with low literacy, as low-cost smartphones allow people to easily share videos and images.

The authorities see social media as a threat to their power rather than a way to consolidate democratic discussions. President Keita's December 2019 law on the repression of cybercrime,[5] while timely and relevant, contained provisions that pose potential threats to online privacy and freedom of expression, particularly given Mali's democratic failures and low press freedom ratings. A majority of Malians believes the law was intended to repress freedom of expression and target certain activists and bloggers. There will continue to be significant resistance to governmental attempts to control online space. The population has quickly adapted its strategies to sidestep censorship, including using VPNs.

Mali's diaspora can recalibrate the balance of power between the centralized state and the periphery's inhabitants, and potentially strengthen opposition parties. The diaspora already plays a key role in the economy, as well as family and community decision-making, contributing $900 million (812 million euros) in 2018 (Lorgerie 2019). The diaspora plays an important political role by developing local projects and helping craft regional agendas, as most of the emigres are coming from outside the Bamako area (Sougane 2014). It actively participated in the National Inclusive Dialogue (DNI) and national consultations. Since 2015, the High Council of Malians Living Abroad and the High Council of the Malian Diaspora advocate for representation in the National Assembly; six diaspora representatives are included in the 121-member national transitional council created in September 2020. If these groups are able to start funding opposition candidates, we may see the emergence of a stronger and more viable opposition coalition (Arriola 2013).

Conclusion

New technologies and an increasing voice from the Malian diaspora have the potential to build grassroots civil society and linkages with parties. In addition to the urgency of incorporating these new voices, Mali also has tremendous state-building work ahead of it in order for democracy to deepen. This includes working to build strong, inclusive, and stable governance institutions so that all Malians can sustainably access services in the periphery of the country. The stability of Mali's democracy also depends on the stability of the country. A concerted effort must be made to resolve the conflict in the north and center of the country.

The organization of credible, transparent, and universally accepted elections is a strong expectation of the Malian people. The upcoming electoral transition, which is scheduled approximately a year and a half from now, presents an opportunity to carry out far-reaching reforms to strengthen institutions, rather than just an instatement of a new political class. For the consolidation of Malian democracy, the political class must win the confidence of the Malian people, which requires the establishment of a new social pact between politicians and the citizenry, where the armed forces has no role beyond its security one. This will necessitate a real grassroots engagement between parties and grassroots civil society – including civic education and the training of partisan activists.

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Triumph of Malay Supremacy? Ethno-Nationalist Backlash and Betrayal of the Democratic "New Malaysia" Ideal

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Introduction

The electoral defeat of authoritarian regimes does not necessarily result in sustained democratic deepening. Regime change via elections may instead trigger anti-democratic backlashes, political careening and instability. Dan Slater (2013, 730) describes this phenomenon as one where the polity has neither collapsed nor firmly consolidated but displays "a variety of unpredictable and alarming sudden movements such as lurching, swerving, swaying and threatening to tip over....It captures rather well the sense of endemic unsettledness and rapid ricocheting that characterizes democracies that are struggling but not collapsing." In many respects, Malaysia's political trajectory represents the phenomenon of political careening following the electoral defeat of the *Barisan Nasional* (National Front; hereafter, BN) government in May 2018, after holding on to power for more than 60 years.

Not long after defeating the BN, the fledgling *Pakatan Harapan* (Coalition of Hope; hereafter PH) coalition government displayed the classic careening symptoms of "lurching, swerving, swaying" and finally collapsing in February 2020. PH's collapse has been commonly attributed to the deep-seated historical tensions within the PH coalition between Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad (leader of the United Malaysia Indigenous Party; hereafter *Bersatu*) and the *Parti Keadilan Rakyat* (Peoples Justice Party; hereafter PKR) leader, Anwar Ibrahim. These leadership tensions were exacerbated by the intense intra-party rivalry between PKR Deputy President Azmin Ali and PKR President Anwar Ibrahim.

Leadership tensions and ideological divisions can stymie a newly elected coalition government in delivering its ambitious democratic reform agenda. For the newly elected PH government, intra-coalition divisions were complicated further by its weak electoral support from the numerically dominant Malay community, whose entrenched privileges were threatened by the reform agenda and who proved widely susceptible to anti-PH rhetoric propagated by ethno-nationalist and Islamist opposition parties.

While intra-PH tensions were pivotal to PH's collapse, this article focuses instead on the less scrutinised role of the ethno-nationalist *ketuanan Melayu* (Malay dominance/supremacy) doctrine – in particular the reluctance of PH's politicians to address the contradiction between the *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine and the coalition government's "New Malaysia" reform agenda. The article considers the ethno-nationalist proclivities of PH's Malay leadership to explain their reluctance to confront the divisive *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine and their eventual capitulation to ethno-nationalist pressure from opposition parties. This capitulation to ethno-nationalist and conservative Islamist pressure – intent as it is on undermining the inclusive New Malaysia reformist agenda – emboldened opposition politicians to collude with PH forces that were less than fully committed to substantive political and policy reform.

Contending Narratives: Ketuanan Melayu and Malaysia Baru

The United Malay National Organisation (UMNO)-led BN coalition, which has dominated elections for over half a century, was unexpectedly defeated by the PH coalition in the May 2018 general election. BN's credibility and grip on power had been severely weakened by the multi-billion-dollar 1MDB (1 Malaysia Development Berhad) corruption scandal, which implicated then Prime Minister Najib Razak, his business associates and international banks such as Goldman Sachs. In many respects, the corruption scandal was reflective of the culture of money-politics, clientelism and patronage which flourished during BN rule. This governance culture had been facilitated by deepening levels of non-transparent state intervention in the domestic economy via state agencies and government-linked companies, fuelled in large part by fiscal expenditures derived from oil and gas revenues (Gomez, *et al.* 2017).

Elected to government on an agenda of good governance and political and policy reform, PH's coalition parties – PKR; Democratic Action Party (hereafter DAP); *Bersatu*; and *Amanah Nasional* (National Trust Party, hereafter *Amanah*) – hastily drafted an ambitious election manifesto titled *Buku Harapan* (Book of Hope) (2018). In the manifesto, PH pledged to address the culture of corruption, money-politics and non-transparent governance within the framework of a democratic and equitable *Malaysia Baru* or New Malaysia.

Despite the mantra-like status of New Malaysia, PH remained ambiguous with regard to the relationship between the New Malaysia agenda and the rights and privileges of the dominant Malay *bumiputera* (indigenous) community. The Malay-based party (*Bersatu*) in the PH coalition, an offshoot of the Malay-based UMNO, failed to clarify its position in terms of the ethno-nationalist *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine. Similarly, *Amanah*, an offshoot of the Islamist party PAS (*Parti Islam Se Malaysia* or the Islamic Party of Malaysia) did not clarify its commitment to the country's secular democratic constitutional foundations or the Islamic state ideal, as championed by PAS and other conservative Islamists. Instructively, PH's election manifesto did not clarify whether the New Malaysia agenda would extend equal citizenship rights to all Malaysians regardless of race, language or religion. Equal citizenship rights would entail a reconfiguration of the *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine, including state-sponsored ethnic-based affirmative action programs and policies.

The *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine is based on the idea that as the traditional owners of *Tanah Melayu* (Land of the Malays), Malays and other *bumiputeras* (literally: sons of the soil) have special rights and privileges, including the right to socio-political dominance in perpetuity. According to this logic of entitlement, non-*bumiputeras* cannot expect to be accorded equal citizenship rights, such as holding senior leadership positions in government (Rahim 2013).

It is worth noting that the term *ketuanan Melayu* does not appear in the Malaysian Federal Constitution and was not articulated by nationalist leaders at the time of independence. For example, UMNO's submission to the Reid Commission's deliberations on political independence acknowledged that the "special position" of Malays "should not in any way infringe the legitimate interests of the other communities or adversely affect or diminish the rights and opportunities at present enjoyed by them" (cited in Funston 2016, 19).

It was only after the May 13, 1969 race riots that the *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine began to take shape. Following the riots, the Sedition Act was amended, making it illegal to discuss 'sensitive' issues such as the special position of *bumiputeras* and the national language – enabling the *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine to develop without challenge. A comprehensive affirmative action programme, referred to as the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1971–1990), was geared towards enhancing the marginal economic status of the Malay and *bumiputera* communities and eradicating the identification of economic function with race.

In many respects, the 1969 riots represented a critical juncture in Malaysia's political trajectory. Inter alia, it ended the post-colonial government's relatively inclusive and conciliatory approach to ethnic politics and nation-building (Horowitz 2014, 9). Malaysia's post-1969 model of governance, aided by the architecture of the NEP and electoral reapportionments, became increasingly premised on Malay dominance.

As the NEP approached its scheduled expiration in 1990, the racial exhortations of UMNO politicians became more pronounced. In August 1986, a more fulsome formulation of the *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine was publicly unveiled by UMNO politician Abdullah Ahmad. Abdullah asserted that the NEP was integral to the 'social contract' of the 1957 independence negotiations and that "the political system in Malaysia is founded on Malay dominance [and] …the NEP must continue to sustain Malay dominance in the political system in line with the contract of 1957" (*The Straits Times*, September 9, 1986). Abdullah's controversial speech was purposefully delivered in Singapore – where the Malay minority had been relegated to the socio-economic and political margins in the city-state governed by a Chinese-dominated Peoples' Action Party (PAP) government (Rahim 1998/2001).

Abdullah's speech heralded UMNO's shift from recognising the citizenship rights of ethnic minorities to one embracing Malay supremacy – retreating from the country's inclusive secular constitutional moorings. Henceforth, the *ketuanan Melayu* narrative became integral to UMNO's lexicon and Malay identity, positioning the Malays and other *bumiputera* communities at the core of the Malaysian nation whilst relegating non-indigenous Malaysians to the status of the perpetual 'Other.' Having positioned Malays at the core of Malaysian identity, the primacy of the Malay language, culture and Islam were henceforth considered beyond public discussion and non-negotiable. The *ketuanan Malayu* doctrine has become so embedded in the national narrative that many politicians from the

Malay-dominated *Bersatu* and PKR parties subscribe to or are sympathetic to the *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine.

Ketuanan Melayu's Default Status

Underlying political tensions and ideological inconsistencies between PH's coalition parties and politicians were compounded further by its repeated by-election defeats and floundering public support – as reflected in numerous polls. Under intense pressure, the default position of key PH Malay leaders was to increasingly capitulate to ethno-nationalist *ketuanan Melayu* demands rather than to steadfastly maintain a principled commitment to the New Malaysia reform agenda.

PH's capitulation to the lure of ethno-nationalism can be understood within the context of Donald Horowitz's (2014, 8) observation that "ethnic politics is a high-stakes game, and there are strong inclinations to stay with what is familiar." Staying with the familiar appears to have been the default position of key PH leaders from Malay-based parties such as *Bersatu* and PKR. As past champions of *ketuanan Melayu*, *Bersatu* leaders such as Mahathir Mohamad retreated from the New Malaysia reform agenda, particularly when the electoral incentives for persisting with this agenda failed to reap electoral returns – epitomised by PH's repeated by-election defeats to BN parties.

Phil Robertson attributes the PH's stalled reform agenda to its lack of political will "to stand up for principles" in the face of opposition pressure (Human Rights Watch 2020). Rather than defend the rationale underpinning human rights conventions, the PH government withdrew from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), apparently because it was spooked by the massive rallies against the Rome Statute and ICERD organised by Malay ethno-nationalists. This was a battle Prime Minister Mahathir was not willing to wage, preferring instead to focus on economic and institutional reforms. The abandonment of PH's international human rights pledges is unsurprising in view of Mahathir's autocratic proclivities during his more than two decades as Prime Minister (1981-2003). By caving to ethno-nationalist pressure, PH's New Malaysia began to resemble the BN's conservative governance paradigm.

PH's reluctance to vigorously counter the rhetoric of ethno-nationalists bestowed a modicum of credibility to these allegations. By not challenging the claims that UN conventions were Western constructions and irrelevant to Islamic notions of justice, such claims received some measure of respectability (*Malaysiakini*, December 7, 2018). These capitulations emboldened opposition politicians to double-down against PH's reform agenda, relying primarily on the divisive *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine.

After decades of state propagation, *ketuanan Melayu* has cultivated a political environment of "pernicious polarization," where "people increasingly perceive and describe politics and society in terms of 'us' versus 'them'" (McCoy and Somer 2018, 2). In severely polarised societies, issue-based differences are often trumped by the politics of social identity (McCoy, Rahman and Somer 2018, 19). Notwithstanding their social privileges and political clout, dominant ethnic groups in polarised societies often feel aggrieved and under siege – believing that their entitlements are under threat. PH's New Malaysia agenda triggered this siege mentality and threat perception.

Book of Evasion

PH's election manifesto *Buku Harapan* (Book of Hope) makes no mention of *ketuanan Melayu* nor attempts to integrate the concept of Malay rights within the context of the reformist New Malaysia agenda. The lack of clarity on what New Malaysia actually meant in relation to multiracial nation-(re)building persisted right up to PH's collapse.

In Promise 11, "Restore the Dignity of the Malays and Malay Institutions," *Buku Harapan* (2018, 36) pledged "[t]o ensure that Malaysia remains as a harmonious country that retains the special position of the Malays" without clarifying whether the "special position of the Malays" implies that the NEP's ethnic-based affirmative action policies will remain. *Buku Harapan* (37) does however promise to set up a *Majlis Perundingan Keharmonian Rakyat* (Congress for the Harmony of Citizens) "to allow the fostering of better racial and religious relations within the framework of the Federal Constitution." It also promises to uphold "the Malay and Islamic agenda which would be tabled and debated in Parliament each year…". However, the manifesto did not clarify the relationship between the "Malay and Islamic agenda" and *ketuanan Melayu*. This ambiguity enabled the *ketuanan Melayu* apparatus to operate unencumbered. Importantly, this ambiguity allowed the ideologically disparate PH coalition parties to cooperate without major disagreement and to appeal to Malay voters concerned with the BN's corruption in the leadup to the 2018 general election.

Buku Harapan's (2018, 19-20) Promise 3, titled "Sharing the nation's wealth in a targeted and equitable way" goes some way towards forging a multiracial New Malaysia – albeit employing the lens of class/needs analysis. Honing in on this analysis, PH affirmed that it would ensure that

> "our nation's wealth is shared more equitably by the Bumiputera and every citizen regardless of race and religion, including especially the Indians and *Orang Asal*. The B40 group is already facing a difficult life. But M40 is facing hurdles too. Both groups will receive targeted help from the *Pakatan Harapan* Government."

Social security programs based on this needs-based approach would target low-income households or B40 (bottom 40 percent) "living in rural areas, especially in Kedah, Kelantan and Sabah." Whilst the class-based pledges appear socially progressive, the targeting of predominantly Malay and *bumiputera* semi-rural and rural areas was a means of appeasing the Malay community and *ketuanan Melayu* advocates.

However, the obliqueness of PH's New Malaysia agenda and evasion of the *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine made it possible for ethno-Islamists from UMNO and PAS to pursue their campaign of disinformation and destabilisation. These campaigns gained considerable traction particularly with the electorally potent Malay community, which makes up about 60% of Malaysia's population.

Malay receptivity to the anti-PH disinformation campaigns is unsurprising when placed within the context of the PH coalition receiving only approximately 30% of the Malay vote in the 2018 general election. PH's electoral breakthrough was thus facilitated by the resounding electoral support it received from non-Malay voters and non-Malay *bumiputeras* from East Malaysia (Rahim 2018b). Alternative models based on multiracialism and equal citizenship rights and slogans, such as New Malaysia, are perceived as threatening to many Malays – recipients of state largesse via the NEP, government endowments and subsidies. Nearly 80% of public servants (strongly represented in the bottom 40% of the population and referred to as M40) are Malays, and welfare payments and cash transfers to poor households have benefited Malay households (Weiss 2020, 109). For many poor, rural, less educated and lower middle-class Malays saddled with low wages and high debt, ethnic-based affirmative action programmes serve as a safety-net and vehicle for social mobility. Since its weak electoral showing in the 2008 general election, UMNO has increasingly relied on electoral support from poor, rural and less educated Malays by resorting to patronage resources and ethno-nationalist discourses to win votes (Rahim 2018b).

Parties in the PH coalition such as PKR have supported the implementation of needs-based affirmative action, but have not been effective in clearly explaining the intricacies of this alternative model (Lee 2019). Malay distrust of the PH government's economic justice rhetoric was exacerbated by its failure to address the country's widening rural-urban divide and economic inequality (Welsh 2020). Prime Minister Mahathir's cabinet appeared more preoccupied with resolving the country's massive debt burden and implementing economic reforms.

Coalition of Convenience

As former UMNO stalwarts and champions of Malay supremacy, senior *Bersatu* politicians such as Mahathir Mohamad were well positioned to construct a new counter-narrative to *ketuanan Melayu*. By not taking up this challenge during PH's brief tenure in Federal government, however, they left the New Malaysia agenda vulnerable to the campaign of disinformation and race-baiting unleashed by ethno-Islamists aligned to opposition parties.

Alarmed by PH's dereliction in providing leadership on racial and religious issues, public intellectuals and civil society activists such as Ambiga Sreneevasan, former Chairperson of the Bar Council and *Bersih* (organisation for clean elections), called for the establishment of a bipartisan committee. They recommended that the committee include politicians from all parties to build a national narrative on matters pertaining to religion and race. These constructive suggestions were disregarded. As a result, hate speech from opposition politicians, in the midst of surging of racial tensions, proliferated (Mohamad 2019).

PH's reluctance to construct a coherent New Malaysia multiracial narrative can be attributed to the ideological schisms within the coalition government. PH parties were ideologically at cross-purposes (Wan Saiful Wan Jan 2020) on a range of politically sensitive issues pertaining to race and religion. In particular, *Bersatu* was principally motivated to join the coalition in order to oust the BN government led by the corruption-tainted Najib Razak. But once the election was won, inter-party tensions and internecine party rivalries engulfed the governing coalition – having coalesced without an overarching ideology. Devoid of a unifying vision, PH Ministers commonly contradicted each other in public, with the Cabinet notoriously divided on a range of issues.

The PKR, DAP and *Amanah* had expediently teamed up with *Bersatu* believing that with former Prime Minister Mahathir leading the coalition, PH's prospects of defeating the incumbent BN would improve. With PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim languishing in jail, Mahathir was thought to possess the gravitas required to take on UMNO establishment heavyweights, as well as attract a sizeable portion of the Malay vote.

Despite leading PH to electoral victory, *Bersatu* did not possess the electoral clout to unite the various parties and resolve intra and inter-party tensions. Made up of UMNO defectors with unreformed *ketuanan-Melayu* worldviews, *Bersatu* won 13 Federal seats in the general election – far fewer than PKR and DAP. As *Bersatu* leader and PH Prime Minister, Mahathir's pre-eminence in the PH coalition was expected to last for only two years. But when he appeared unwilling to give up his interim Prime Ministership to Anwar Ibrahim – as agreed before the 2018 general election – intra-PH divisions spiralled out of control.

PH politicians committed to the New Malaysia agenda were deeply dissatisfied with Mahathir's stalling on many socio-political reform pledges pertaining to promoting citizenship rights for ethnic minorities and dismantling authoritarian political structures. But as noted above, the nonagenarian appeared more committed to reforms geared towards tackling corruption and promoting economic governance.

Bersatu's leaders were determined to block Anwar's ascendency to the Prime Ministership, possibly uneasy with the prospect of Anwar delivering the multiracial and democratising dimensions of the New Malaysia reform agenda. This uneasiness was exposed when Mahathir claimed, after the collapse of the PH government, that Malays could not accept Anwar as Prime Minister because he is "too liberal" – without explaining what this meant (Chin 2020, 293). This claim is ironic, as Anwar had not articulated a comprehensive multiracial New Malaysia narrative, and played a pivotal role in Islamising the state and society in the 1980s and 1990s – an initiative that severely undermined social cohesion, destabilised the secular state and fuelled the rise of electoral authoritarianism.

Steeped in their ethno-nationalist worldview, *Bersatu* MPs clashed with the DAP over *Bersatu's* insistence on the implementation of pro-Malay policies (Chin 2020, 292). The *ketuanan Melayu* proclivities of *Bersatu* politicians were exposed by Wan Ahmad Fayhsal's admission that the vast majority of *Bersatu* members harboured antagonistic attitudes towards the Chinese-dominated DAP. The former *Bersatu* youth wing leader claimed that many *Bersatu* leaders deserted the PH government because of "the painful experience we had in Harapan, especially with DAP" (Mohamad 2020). As noted above, this "painful experience" possibly relates to *Bersatu's* purported clash with the DAP over Bersatu's insistence on pro-Malay policies (Chin, 292). As the most united, ideologically coherent, programmatic and secular-oriented party in the PH coalition, the DAP had won a hefty 42 seats in the Federal parliament but held fewer Cabinet positions than *Bersatu*. Yet for *Bersatu* ethno-nationalists, the DAP's Cabinet under-representation did not placate their deep-seated sentiments against the Chinese-dominated party.

To boost their relatively weak Federal parliamentary representation of 11 seats, *Bersatu* leaders spent much time and energy encouraging defections of disgruntled ethno-nationalist UMNO MPs. The impact of these UMNO defectors on PH's policy reform program appeared not to concern the *Bersatu* leadership preoccupied with bolstering the party's Federal parliamentary representation. Guided by narrow party rather than broader coalition interests, *Bersatu* leaders eventually played a pivotal role in the collapse of PH.

Bersatu's ethno-nationalist manoeuvrings and ketuanan Melayu mindset rendered it the weakest link in the PH coalition. Muyhiddin Yassin, a former PH Home Minister in the PH government, who infamously declared that he identified first as Malay before Malaysian, conspired to facilitate PH's collapse whilst engineering his Prime Ministership of the unelected Malay-dominated and *Perikatan National* (National Alliance) government. The unelected *Bersatu*-led PN government has continued to be reliant on parliamentary support from *ketuanan Melayu* and *ketuanan Islam* parties (UMNO and PAS) in order to maintain its flimsy control of the Federal government.

PH's 'moderate' Islamist party *Amanah* held only 11 Federal seats but was disproportionately over-represented in Cabinet. *Amanah's* 'Compassionate Islam' discourse lacks theological depth and thus is unable to effectively counter PAS's conservative *salafi*-inspired Islamist agenda. This agenda includes an overhaul of the Federal Constitution in order to establish an Islamic State based on comprehensive *sharia*, including *hudud* laws (sharia criminal code) (S. Thayaparan 2019b; Rahim 2018a).

Even though PH was technically in control of powerful Islamic bureaucracies, *Amanah's* 'moderate' Islamists were reluctant to confront the conservative Islamist bureaucracy and ethno-Islamist ideologies such as *ketuanan Melayu Islam* (Malay Islamic dominance),

which demands that the sharia courts possess the same status as the civil courts in the idealised Islamic state. *Amanah's* reluctance to confront the *ketuanan Melayu* Islam doctrine can be attributed to many of its politicians and supporters possessing conservative *salafi* Islamist perspectives following more than four decades of state-led Islamisation. Not surprisingly, its commitment to constructing a counter-narrative to conservative Islamists resisting PH's reformist agenda has been, at best, lacklustre.

Morphing into a Neo-BN

The *ketuanan Melayu* ethno-nationalist worldview of *Bersatu*, PKR, UMNO and PAS politicians was clearly exposed by their joint participation in an exclusively Malay event, titled "Malay Dignity Congress," held in October 2019.

Capitalising on intra-coalitional divisions, Congress organisers invited Mahathir Mohamad to deliver the keynote address. Instructively, Anwar Ibrahim was not invited, but other Malay PH politicians from *Bersatu* and PKR attended. The presence of Mahathir and other PH leaders celebrating Malay supremacy sent a powerful message to Malaysians that the *ketuanan Melayu* doctrine remained intact. To the delight of ethno-nationalists, Mahathir referred to non-Malay and non-*bumiputera* Malaysians as foreigners (*pendatang*), whose presence in post-colonial Malaysia was made possible by colonial connivance (Thayaparan 2019b). Mahathir's *ketuanan Melayu* rhetoric may have been aimed at courting the UMNO and PAS leadership to support his leadership tussle with Anwar Ibrahim and at attracting more UMNO MPs to join *Bersatu*. But for New Malaysia supporters, the Prime Minister's participation at the Congress was tantamount to a betrayal of PH's New Malaysia reformist agenda and a glaring capitulation to *ketuanan Melayu*.

The aggressive posturing by Congress speakers reinforced perceptions that PH was "morphing into a neo-BN" (Thayaparan 2019a). Congress speakers demanded that senior positions in government be reserved for Malays. This demand was a clear rebuke to the PH government for appointing non-Malays to the pivotal positions of Attorney General, Finance Minister and Chief Justice. Calls were also made to preserve Malay privileges in the educational, economic, cultural and religious spheres (Mokhtar 2019).

Concluding Remarks

PH's capitulation to ethno-nationalist pressure emboldened ethno-nationalists but alienated New Malaysia supporters who had voted overwhelmingly for regime change and political and policy reform. Instead of ushering in a multiracial and democratic New Malaysia based on citizenship rights, the deeply divided PH government was plagued by instability and intrigue.

After less than two years in government, PH collapsed following concerted ethno-nationalist resistance and desertion of *Bersatu* and PKR MPs who colluded with opposition parties to form the *Bersatu*-led *Perikatan Nasional* (PN) government. The unelected PN government lacks legitimacy and represents another 'coalition of convenience' dictated by political expediency rather than principles. Nearly a year after its 'soft coup,' the PN coalition government remains deeply divided and on the verge of collapse – due in large part to intra-PN divisions and UMNO discontent with 'playing second-fiddle' to PN's *Bersatu* leadership despite having more seats than *Bersatu* in the Federal parliament.

The ongoing shifting alliances and weak Malay-led 'coalitions of convenience' contradict *ketuanan Melayu's* ethno-nationalist rhetoric of Malay unity. These shifting alliances highlight the reality of deepening Malay disunity. Malay political elites from the expanding number of Malay-based parties continue to prioritise narrow economic and political interests above the interests of the Malay masses, as well as the broader national interest.

The electoral defeat of Malaysia's BN government in 2018 has not resulted in sustained democratic deepening but rather has ignited anti-democratic backlashes, political instability and careening. PH's internal bickering and failure to construct an alternative political and ideological paradigm beyond *ketuanan Melayu* contributed to its collapse, and subsequently, to the return to power of ethno-nationalist authoritarian forces associated with the former BN regime. Malaysia is at a political crossroads, and its short-term future does not look particularly hopeful in terms of recalibrating the ideals of a democratic New Malaysia.

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Democratic Backsliding in a Second-Wave Democracy: The Strange Case of Turkey

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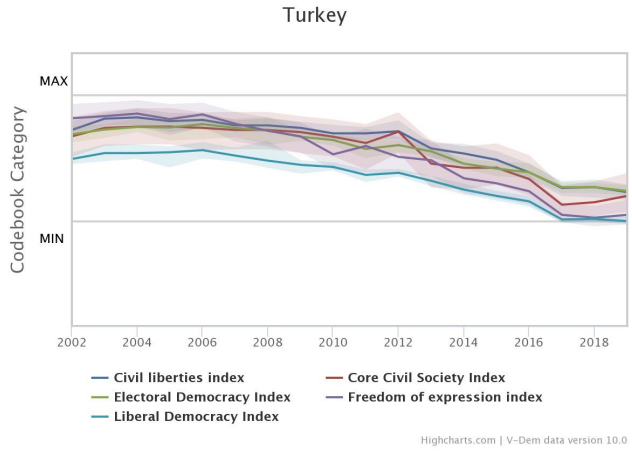
When discussing democratic survival in the Muslim world, it is almost imperative to refer to the case of Turkey, as the country today is "a paradigmatic case of democratic decline" (Luhrmann, *et al.* 2018). Since 2010, as Figure 1 shows, Turkey has experienced a sharp decline in all democracy indices, including electoral democracy, civil liberties, and freedom of expression. No longer counted as an institutionalized democracy since 2016 according to the V-Dem scores, democratic backsliding in Turkey has culminated in a democratic breakdown. Accordingly, several scholars currently define Turkey as a competitive authoritarian regime in which elections occur but the playing field is uneven while political rights and civil liberties are suspended (Castaldo 2018; Esen and Gumuscu 2016; Ozbudun 2015; Somer 2016). While the decline of democracy in Turkey is part of a larger global trend, it has been even more dramatic than in other well-known examples such as Hungary, the Philippines, India, or Poland.

Figure 1. V-Dem scores on several democracy indices



Source: V-Dem Dataset Version 10

Turkey, historically speaking, was part of the second wave of democratization immediately following World War II. This makes its democratic breakdown an especially interesting comparative case, as its counterparts are mostly stable democracies (Ozbudun 2000). Although the country has never been a fully consolidated democracy, it was until recently an institutionalized electoral democracy with limited civil rights and political liberties (1996).

In this brief analysis, I will first define the characteristics of Turkey's current political regime. In doing so, I point to several critical moments when the political regime was twisted in the executive's favor by the incumbent party, which has damaged democracy. Secondly, I will account for the rise of competitive authoritarianism from a party politics perspective. My contention is that the lack of party system institutionalization in the country is the missing link that explains how cleavage structuration, state shaping from above, and exclusionary constitution-making have hindered democratic consolidation and ultimately have led to democratic breakdown. The process has been triggered by the rise to power of a formerly excluded political group – Islamists – and this group's success in consolidating power by increasing its popular support. Finally, in the light of recent developments, I will discuss the prospects for competitive authoritarianism to persist in the country. Here, I will identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the current political regime.

Turkey Today

The story of democratic breakdown in Turkey is also that of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The party's relations with the old regime were tense from its very founding, and its rise disrupted the balance of power within the political system. Emerging from the ranks of Turkey's Islamist movement, the new party founded by the reformist strand of the National Outlook Movement – the major religious movement in the country – made the state establishment uneasy.

With two of its predecessors closed down by the Constitutional Court, the AKP defined itself as a conservative-democratic party to survive in a hostile political environment. Promising political transformation, the party aspired to the role of democratizing Turkey to create a political space for itself. Initially, after winning the 2002 general elections, it kept its pledges and developed better relations with the EU, seeking an early date to initiate accession negotiations. Committed to undertaking the economic and political reforms necessary to conform

to EU standards, the AKP government passed several harmonization packages, which included constitutional and legislative changes in four main areas: fundamental civil rights and liberties, political rights, rule of law, and civil-military relations (Ozbudun 2007).

However, these reforms mostly remained on paper while the government began to focus more on capturing the state as it steadily increased its power through successive election victories (2007, 2011, June and November 2015, 2018). Although it is difficult to pin down when exactly the AKP's goal shifted to state control, the party's dislike of any veto players, such as the military, the presidency, and the Constitutional Court became clearer in its third term as it started to concentrate on dominating each.

Through multiple referendums, the AKP has not only centralized power in the hands of a popularly elected president but has also guaranteed its control over independent institutions. Concurrently, "frequent harassment of independent media, restrictions on freedom of political association and speech, and suppression of opposition figures or other government critics have become ordinary features of politics in Turkey" (Esen and Gumuscu 2016, 1590). The fairness of elections has increasingly been questioned since the AKP controls all state resources and media outlets. Consequently, the opposition cannot compete with the incumbent on equal footing. The clearest institutional expression of this decline was the change of the political regime from parliamentarism to a presidential system *a la Turca* in April 2017 through a referendum. Turkish presidentialism is differentiated from other similar regimes by its weak checks and balances and the dominance of the executive over the legislature, with power centralized in the presidency.

What Explains the Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism in Turkey?

While most scholarship focuses on defining the new regime and describing the shift from electoral democracy to competitive authoritarianism (see Esen and Gumuscu 2016; Ozbudun 2015), few studies have explored why. Some refer to the AKP's increasing power in the political system as its opponents have lost their relevance (Kubicek 2016); others highlight the ineffectiveness of social opposition, lack of strong international linkages, and the AKP's high popular support (Onis 2015). For some (Akkoyunlu and Oktem 2016), it is the Kemalist establishment's lingering oversight of politics that created existential insecurity for the AKP, forcing the party to conquer the regime to survive. Others underline clientelistic ties to businessmen (Esen and Gumuscu 2018a; Ocaklı 2018) and the urban poor (Yıldırım 2020; Yoruk 2012) as the major factors maintaining the regime. However, they never really explain how these links led to eventual democratic breakdown (Esen and Gumuscu 2020). Most recently, Esen and Gumuscu (2020, 1) provided a political economy account, arguing that "the coalitional ties that the AKP forged with businesses and the urban poor through the distribution of public resources have altered the cost of toleration for the party leadership and their dependent clients, while reducing the cost of suppression for incumbents."

Although there are many different mechanisms at work that run parallel while accounting for the observed outcome, I find a party politics account particularly plausible. Acknowledging that it is not a single mechanism of party politics that causes the regime outcomes, I single out a factor that is necessary, but not necessarily sufficient, for the democratic breakdown in Turkey. I contend that Turkey's unstable party system is the missing link that explains how state shaping from above, exclusionary constitution-making processes, and deep-seated socio-cultural divides have led to democratic breakdown, and ultimately culminated in a competitive authoritarian regime.

While party institutionalization refers to the capability of individual parties to develop organizational strength and roots in society, party system institutionalization refers more to system-level interactions, such as parties' relations with the regime and one another. However, as Randall and Svasand (2002, 6) argue, "individual party institutionalization and the institutionalization of the party *system* are neither the same thing nor necessarily and always mutually compatible." In the case of Turkey, for instance, institutional rules and regulations designed under military rule created institutionalized parties. However, they also hampered interparty relations by favoring big movements and parties over smaller ones (see Yardimci-Geyikci 2015).

I argue that in order for a party system to be institutionalized, two conditions must be met: (1) the principles and norms of the political regime should be established and accepted by all political parties (political entrenchment); and (2) political parties should consider each other as legitimate actors rather than threats to the political regime (interparty trust) (see Yardimci-Geyikci 2018). While the first condition pertains to the party-regime relationship (or party-state), the latter looks at the interparty relationship, and both are party system-level dimensions. The institutionalization of party systems depends on three

variables: institutional design, the cleavage structure, and the leverage of non-accountable forces over the political system.

Turkey's constitutional design was mainly constructed by military leaders following limited or no consultation with other political elites (McLaren 2008). Since elected officials had no say over the rules of the game, they had little or no incentive to support the regime (Ozbudun 1998). Therefore, several groups whose priorities were overlooked during institutional design were ready to undermine support for the regime, which curbed party-regime encounters. This is not to suggest that parties in any system can never accept a regime if they did not participate in the process of constitution-making. But in contexts where social and political divides are based on ethnicity and religiosity and when these divisions are politicised, the lack of participation in creating the initial rules of the game tends to create major resentments among excluded groups.

Turkey has adopted three constitutions, those of 1924, 1961, and 1982, together with several constitutional amendments. In each constitutional design, there was a clear lack of consensual decision-making among key political and social factions. The 1924 Constitution was mainly designed by the Assembly dominated by Kemalists. The process excluded both traditionalist groups that would have supported including religious values in the constitution and other ethnic groups that might have asked for more inclusive rights (McLaren 2008). The 1961 Constitution, on the other hand, was produced in the aftermath of the 1960 military coup. This time, the process involved wider segments of society, since some members of the Constituent Assembly were elected while CHP was the major actor behind the constitutional design, albeit working under military supervision (Ozbudun 1998). The process to draft the 1982 Constitution was the most problematic and exclusionary, as the Constitutional Assembly was composed of National Security Council and Consultative Assembly members appointed by the National Security Council. Here, the military opposed the involvement of any member of the Consultative Assembly, which had previously included party members.

Notwithstanding several radical amendments, especially since 2001, the 1982 Constitution is still in force (Ozbudun 2011). The way constitutions have been designed in Turkey has prevented agreement on the rules of the game among different political and social groups, damaging party-regime relations when parties began to emerge along these group lines.

Scholars argue that deep-seated socio-cultural divides tend to impair party-regime and interparty relationships unless mitigated by institutional structures. In the Turkish case, the exclusion of different socio-cultural groups from institutional design has increased tensions due to religious and ethnic divides (Kalaycioglu 1999). Therefore, not only the type and strength of cleavages but also whether those cleavages are cross-cutting affects party system institutionalization. First, religious and ethnic cleavages in Turkey have obstructed party-regime relations by making it difficult to reach agreement on the rules of the game. Secondly, these cleavages have prevented interparty cooperation by polarizing elites and masses alike. Regarding whether cleavages are cross-cutting, the Turkish case supports Bértoa's (2012) claims about party system institutionalization in Eastern Central Europe. He suggests that cross-cutting cleavages make it difficult for parties to find appropriate partners to cooperate with since proximity in one dimension is offset by irreconcilable differences in another.

Finally, reserved domains of power curb party system institutionalization, especially when these domains play critical roles in constitutional design. Since the establishment of the republic, the Turkish military has considered itself the regime's guardian. As such, it has played a central role in constitution-building, guaranteeing its above-politics role with constitutional prerogatives. The presence of such an omnipotent agent in the political system has disrupted the balance of power among political factions. Whenever political groups whose interests are not represented have challenged the regime's principles, the Turkish military has not hesitated to intervene in political activity, whether directly (military interventions in 1960, 1971, and 1980) or indirectly (the post-modern coup of 1997).

Although some might argue that these interventions kept Turkey's democracy alive, the existence of a reserved domain of power outside the political system impaired the party-regime relationship by stigmatizing certain political groups, particularly Islamists and the Kurdish movement, as anti-system. This, in turn, has made these forces anti-system actors in the eyes of other political factions, thereby disrupting interparty trust. Overall, the interplay between three factors – constitutional design, cleavage structure, and the power of non-accountable forces – has hampered political entrenchment and interparty trust, resulting in an erratic party system.

The lack of institutionalization has further implications for democratic survival. First, under these circumstances, conflictual encounters at the

elite level in the form of harsh confrontations between party leaders impair mutual trust between the main political parties. Several studies also assert that severe polarization at the elite level may intensify conflicts among political parties, which in turn may further radicalize leaders and supporters (Morlino 1995). Secondly, combative party relations provoke parties to prioritize defeating the opposition above everything else, including democratic practice. This in turn encourages party elites to seek alliances outside the accountable domain, which creates an unstable democracy (Norden 1998). Consequently, the existence of reserved domains of power presents persistent challenges for democratic survival. Finally, as Burton et al. (1992) argue, a country with disunified elites, as indicated by severe distrust and the perception of politics as a zero-sum game, threatens the democratic credentials of its regime. The stability and long-term survival of democratic regimes is thus highly dependent on broad elite consensual unity.

Nevertheless, one may ask why Turkey's democratic backsliding intensified into democratic breakdown after the 2010s but not before. In short, the 2001 economic crisis created a perfect storm. Since the 2002 elections, party fragmentation has declined significantly, with each political and social group increasingly represented by one political party. Specifically, the Islamists have managed to represent the center right singlehandedly. The emergence of a dominant party system within a regime that already suffers from a lack of agreement on the rules of the game and interparty trust further disrupted the balance of power between Turkey's social and political groups.

When politics is framed as a zero-sum game with dominance of one group over others, there is always the risk of centralizing power. In the case of Turkey, those previously excluded from the political system have become the dominant force, thereby strongly incentivizing the AKP to capture the state. Without ruling out the role of the AKP as the major agent of democratic breakdown, I argue that institutional factors allowed the party to follow the path of autocratization. Erdogan and a faction within the party close to him are the ones who opted for autocratizing the country. There could have been other paths to follow, but Turkey had already long suffered from the lack of party system institutionalization and the institutional reliance on the guardianship of the military, which made political conflict a zero-sum game and encouraged the centralization of power. As such, in charting the path to eventual democratic breakdown, the rise of populism and a strong leader – Erdogan – should be underscored, but the institutional incentives and the erratic party system, I argue, are the major factors that have enabled Erdogan and the party to capture the state and autocratize the country.

Prospects for the Current Regime

Considering the strengths and weaknesses of Turkey's present political regime allows us to predict its future trajectory. Its first major strength is Erdogan himself. He still enjoys high popular support and, although some alternative names have started to emerge, he still seems to stand above all his opponents. Even now, Erdogan remains the most popular leader in the country. Secondly, after 18 years of rule, Erdogan and his close circle control all institutions, including the military. Thirdly, the new presidential regime has only deepened the regime's personalism and majoritarian traits (Esen and Gumuscu 2018). Although recent political and economic problems indicate that the current regime has been unable to govern effectively, thereby softening its public support, strong control over all state institutions prevents democratic forces from fulfilling their promise of returning Turkey to a parliamentary system with stronger checks and balances. Finally, as Esen and Gumuscu (2020) argue, clientelistic links to business owners and the urban poor create a vicious circle. As long as these groups tie their survival to the political regime's fate, they will continue to support Erdogan's rule.

On the other hand, the current regime has several weaknesses. Firstly, the AKP's party machine is suffering organizational decay (Yardimci-Geyikci and Yavuzyilmaz 2020). Higher personalism, strong centralization, and weaker party identification (but with more leader loyalty) are deinstitutionalizing the AKP. Research on the longevity of authoritarian regimes (Handlin 2016; Magaloni 2008) suggests that the survival of such regimes is jeopardized if it lacks an institutionalized party.

Secondly, by introducing one-man rule, presidentialism has made the dominance of Erdogan much more visible. The regime's political and economic failures are now therefore directly linked to Erdogan and his close circle. Although he has quite skillfully averted this so far by forcing ministers or mayors to resign to pass on responsibility for any unwanted outcomes, it is becoming more and more difficult to put the blame on others, thereby producing a fragile regime.

Thirdly, after several decades of the AKP's domination, the opposition is much more capable of coordinating. As research shows, opposition unity and coordination are critical to undermining competitive authoritarianism

(Levitsky and Way 2010; Magaloni 2006) and threatening the regime's survival. Under the CHP leadership, Turkey's opposition parties have put aside programmatic differences on the Kurdish question and the role of Islam to cooperate in all elections since 2014. Since the AKP's predominance has been facilitated by the fragmentation of the opposition across religious and ethnic cleavages, overcoming this disunity is a crucial step for Turkey's democratic forces. Some scholars contend that this is related to the emergence of a new democracy-authoritarianism cleavage, which has made it easier for the opposition to coordinate (Selcuk and Hekimci 2020).

Opposition forces have also discovered innovative ways to cooperate by exploiting flaws in the system. For instance, presidentialism has made election alliances easier, thereby enabling the opposition to unite to pass the electoral threshold. Consequently, Turkey's opposition has become much more effective in its fight for democracy, as seen in recent local elections, when the AKP lost control of most major cities, including Istanbul, Ankara, Adana, and Antalya. Given that financial resources mainly come from the municipalities, these election defeats were a major blow against the AKP's domination (Esen and Gumuscu 2018a).

Finally, several prominent AKP figures have recently established their own political parties. Former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu founded the Future Party, while former Finance Minister Ali Babacan formed the Democracy and Progress Party. Though the fortune of these parties is still unknown, many have argued (e.g. Reuter and Gandhi 2011) that elite defections are a major threat to the longevity of authoritarian regimes. Turkey currently suffers from both political and economic crises, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the AKP's ability to overcome these crises is much less than before. Accordingly, by relying on one-man rule with lower institutional capacity, the current political regime's survival prospects are significantly lower with the opposition's stronger and more effective coordination.

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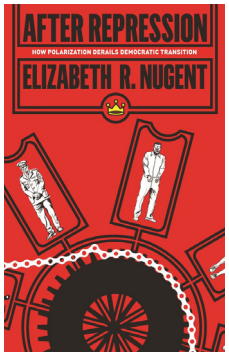
Author Exchange



After Repression: How Polarization Derails Democratic Transition. By Elizabeth R. Nugent. Princeton University Press, 2020. 256p. $95 hardback, $29.95 paperback.

Review by Avital Livny, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

In *After Repression*, Prof. Elizabeth Nugent offers a compelling explanation for the varied consequences of the Arab Spring in the Middle East. To understand why democracy consolidated successfully in Tunisia, but not in Egypt, she crafts an elegant theory about democratization more broadly, focusing on the role of repression under authoritarianism. Specifically, she distinguishes between repression that is more widespread – applied to all opposition groups – and that which is more targeted. She argues that the former, but not the latter, is more likely to support democratic consolidation because it generates a common identity among opposition leaders.

In her treatment of autocratic repression, Nugent compels her readers to look beyond how states constrain the behavior of their citizens, to consider the visceral and psychological consequences of these policies. By shining a spotlight on the traumatic experience of repression, she encourages us to evaluate repression not only in terms of whether it "works" to keep the autocrat in power, but also in how it shapes the lived experiences and worldviews of those who suffer from it. This emphasis on the personal mirrors her call to reopen important debates about the role of individuals in the process of democratic consolidation. Although contingency theories largely fell out of fashion after democracy's third wave, Nugent invites us to reconsider how individual experiences and decisions, in addition to structural constraints and opportunities, can impact the course of history.

Nugent builds her argument, first, by developing a rich theory and, then, by offering substantial empirical evidence to support each of her expectations. Her starting point is to recognize the different forms of repression applied by the Tunisian and Egyptian states, suggesting that factors preceding independence produced more widespread policies in the former, and a more targeted approach in the latter. She offers a compelling argument for how the form of repression impacts the identity of opposition leaders through a tight cluster of psychological processes, with widespread repression producing an overarching, shared identity and targeted repression strengthening the boundaries between different opposition groups. These identities then affect democratic consolidation by changing how polarized the opposition becomes. The Tunisian experience of widespread repression and shared identity served to produce a pro-democracy movement that wanted similar things and, perhaps more importantly, saw themselves as a unified group.

Each step of this complex argument is supported by rich empirics. Nugent relies heavily on qualitative evidence, drawn from primary and secondary sources, as well as a large set of semi-structured interviews conducted between 2012 and 2018 with political actors, based in Tunis and Cairo, and with leaders-in-exile, living in Istanbul, London, and New York. Unable to observe the lived experiences of her subjects under the Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes, Nugent recreates these by reconstructing their life histories, tracing their experiences under authoritarianism and through the democratic transition. She supplements this qualitative evidence with a series of lab-based experiments, designed to test the mechanism through which repression impacts identities. Results from Tunis confirm the role of widespread repression in generating and strengthening shared identities among disparate actors.

Although the book is centered around the cases of Egypt and Tunisia, Nugent makes a compelling case for the generalizability of her argument, finding support in two additional cases – Algeria and Indonesia – discussed in the concluding chapter. Still, she is careful to note the scope conditions for the validity of her theory, which is focused on repression under electoral authoritarianism and its effects on polarization within the opposition, who she defines as "non-regime elites who contest elections." After reading *After Repression*, I wondered whether Nugent could make a bolder claim. As I find in my work, the use of repression extends well beyond authoritarian regimes, with heavier use of these tactics in a number of democracies, including in Turkey. It may therefore be useful to assess the impact of repression – whether widespread or targeted – on democratic consolidation in semi-democratic regimes, as well as its role in democratic backsliding in once-consolidated ones.

Whether or not the universe of cases is broadened, there are some additional scope conditions that Nugent might consider. The first is about duration. For repression

to have these effects on opposition identity, does it have to be long-lasting? And, if so, how long must the opposition endure, together or separately? As Nugent illustrates, these repressive policies have historical origins in both Tunisia and Egypt and were more-or-less consistently employed for many decades. And yet the psychological mechanisms she posits seem to indicate that even shorter-term traumas can make a lasting imprint on individual psyches and social identities. Second, as a scholar of ethnic and religious diversity, I wondered whether the Tunisian experience would have been different if members of the opposition did not share a single (Muslim) faith and/or did not speak a single (Arabic) language. Or, in a counter-factual world, would widespread repression in Egypt have been able to create a common identity among the Muslim Brothers and Coptic opposition leaders.

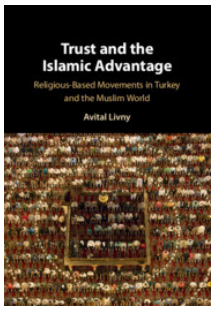
Two additional suggestions for future work on these pressing topics. As Nugent herself argues, the type of repression used by the autocrat reflects the state's capacity to surveil and sanction. If you add to this the plausible argument that widespread repression may be less effective than targeted repression – for the reasons that Nugent identifies, and also because it employs a machete in place of a scalpel – then instances of widespread repression reflect a weaker, less effective state. And these are the types of regimes that we expect are more likely to fail and be (more successfully) replaced. Finally, I was interested to hear more about what happens to the identity of the opposition after the new democratic regime is in place, when they must start competing against one another for votes. Do they continue to feel an attachment to a supraordinate identity? Or do they draw stark divisions between them? Neither of these possibilities challenge the theory that Nugent puts forward, but they raise important questions about the important role of opposition identity in the next phase of democratic consolidation.

Response from Elizabeth Nugent

I am thankful to Professor Livny for a close and careful read of *After Repression*. She raises an excellent question about whether the duration of a traumatic experience matters for its effect. I am unable to address this in my study; in both cases, repression was a constant over decades. But as Livny notes, psychological studies find that short and singular traumatic events, particularly those that occur early in life, have lasting impact on the individuals who experience them as well as their subsequent identities. The case of Egypt does demonstrate that repeated rounds of targeted repression appear to have a cumulative, additive effect; an initial instance of repression creates divisive identities, and over time continued repression exacerbates and increases the distance between these identities.

Livny is right to point out that both of the cases under scrutiny in my book are relatively homogenous, and ethnic and linguistic differences were not particularly salient in national politics during the transitions. Future scholars might consider whether repression has the same impact when the basis of political identities are more immutable characteristics rather than different policy preferences, which are arguably more malleable. However, I suspect that a similar process might occur; in the counterfactual Egypt, where all groups were repressed, Coptic opposition would perceive less distance and difference from members of the Muslim Brotherhood than that demonstrated in Mubarak's targeted repressive environment. In fact, the anomalous 1981 round up I reference in chapter 4 demonstrates that this did, in fact, happen among various Egyptian opposition groups when they were jointly repressed for a brief moment at the conclusion of Sadat's reign.

Livny concludes her review with two very interesting considerations that I hope other researchers will investigate. First, I think there is something to her observation that those regimes which utilize widespread repression are more likely to fail and be more successfully replaced because they are weaker. Sidney Tarrow observed that widespread repression is much rarer than targeted repression, which may account for the fact that it is a less effective means of control and survival. Nourredine Jebnoun's excellent work demonstrates that while Ben Ali's regime was extremely repressive and felt pervasive, its strength was actually a façade. A future study might increase the number of observations to determine whether this pattern holds – and thus whether the success of democratization is actually endogenous to inherited repressive institutions rather than levels of polarization among opposition. Second, Livny raises another question about duration and the extent to which these identities continue to structure politics during democratic periods. This is beyond the temporal scope of my work, but my hunch is that they continue to matter, though this depends on political developments after the transition. In the case of Tunisia, Nidaa Tounes, a party affiliated with the old regime, emerged as a major political player in the 2014 elections. Nidaa's entrance into post-revolutionary politics meant that questions of identity – specifically, who constituted the old regime and the old opposition, and evaluations of the credentials of newcomers who were uninvolved in politics prior to 2011 – mattered beyond the interim period.



Trust and the Islamic Advantage: Religious-Based Movements in Turkey and the Muslim World. By Avital Livny. Cambridge University Press, 2020. 271 p. $99.99 hardback, $80.00 ebook.

Review by Elizabeth R. Nugent, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Yale University.

Professor Avital Livny's *Trust and the Islamic Advantage* starts with two interesting puzzles. First, while Turkey has witnessed a considerable rise in support for Islamic-based parties and economic institutions in recent years, the country has not simultaneously witnessed the related rise in religiosity predicted by many existing theories. Second, the Muslim world exhibits very low levels of interpersonal trust in a manner that should preclude various modes of political and economic engagement. Combining these two curious observations, Livny argues that Islamic-based parties and economic institutions provide the interpersonal trust necessary for individuals to undertake costly behaviors, and that Islamic group identity explains Islamic political and economic institutions' popularity relative to competing ones. Her answer centers on Islam as a group identity that creates nonparticularized interpersonal trust among group members and facilitates coordination between voters and investors who are and will remain strangers to each other.

Scholars of religion and politics, particularly those who focus on the effects of religion on political behavior, will benefit from this text immensely. In making her argument, the author challenges how scholars conceptualize, operationalize, and measure the politically relevant aspects of religion; she focuses on Islam and religion as an *identity*, one related to but distinct from religion as an individual or communal practice. The data Livny analyzes is comprehensive and convincing. She combines insights and evidence gathered through 15 months of field research in Istanbul with original nationally representative survey data to thoroughly investigate the relationship between trust and voting behavior in Turkey. The author also combines tens of thousands of observations from various cross-national survey data capturing political and economic activity across 47 Muslim-plurality countries to demonstrate that her argument holds beyond the Turkish case.

In this book, Livny teaches a master class in how to use and present observational data in the empirical evaluation of hypotheses. As she evaluates each component of her argument, she carefully starts by revisiting the relevant implications of her theory for the analyses at hand. Next, she clearly states what the reader should expect to see in the data if her theory and/or competing theories were correct. In presenting her results, she then explicitly states whether the analyses are confirmatory, disconfirmatory, or inconclusive. Livny pays close attention to the importance of survey design, researcher motivations, and what different questions might represent for both researchers and respondents for the inferences scholars can make from these data.

One measurement issue in chapter 5 illustrates a tradeoff of using cross-national survey data, a point that might have been made more clearly in the text. Livny proxies for strength of Islamic group identity through self-reported frequency of attendance at religious communal worship. She draws on findings made by scholars of religion and politics, myself and coauthors included, that frequency of communal worship attendance is strongly correlated with the strength of religious group identification. However, it appears that existing cross-national surveys do not consistently ask respondents to answer questions such as "on a scale from 0 to 10, to what extent do you identify as [religious identity group]?" or rank in importance the various components of their identities ("Muslim," "Turkish," family of a family, gender, etc.). As a result, the author trades measurement accuracy for vast coverage of a – likely accurate and appropriate – proxy measurement.

Reading Livny's manuscript raised in my mind a number of questions related to trust, Islamic identity, and support for Islamic politics and economics that might serve as an agenda for how other scholars can advance the excellent work done here. I organize these under three questions.

First, why are levels of trust low in the Muslim world to begin with? Livny begins to address this question in a section of the conclusion titled "Understanding the Source of the Trust Problem," in which she outlines that Islamic groups are most popular in areas where people tend to distrust others and under conditions that exacerbate interdependence or uncertainty (demonstrated visually in figure 9.3). While Livny focuses on regulation of political and economic entry to facilitate the flow of information about trustworthiness among citizens, I wonder if regime type might be incorporated into the analysis. The Muslim world tends to be more authoritarian than the rest of the world, and more regularly and staunchly so outside of Turkey.

Work by Amaney Jamal and Irfan Nooruddin found that the degree of democracy determines the extent to which generalized trust is meaningfully related to support for democracy. If authoritarian governments limit the flow of information and foster mistrust among citizens for self-preservation, perhaps regime reforms are also a necessary component of improving trust in the Muslim world.

Second, what makes Islamic group identity a salient and politically relevant identity? More specifically, how does history factor into the contemporary Islamic advantage? Livny refers to this history early in the book, writing (4-5):

> The socio-economic reforms led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s effectively severed Turkey's ties with its more religious, Ottoman past. They removed key Islamic symbols and practices from everyday life and established a clear division between mosque and state, with the former strictly relegated to the private spheres. More recently, an official commitment to maintaining these secularist policies led Turkey's Constitutional Court and its military to shut down a string of Islamic-based political groups in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, making the subsequent success of the AKP even more unexpected.

Scholars often assume that state secularization projects succeed in changing the minds and orientations of citizens. But what if, instead, this project actually created a well of potential support for Islamic political and economic practices? Perhaps unsurprisingly, I am interested in whether these policies were experienced as a form of repression against religion, which crystallized an Islamic group based identity and related in-group trust with the potential for mobilization decades later.

Finally, do political and economic elites know they can mobilize this identity, and if so do they do so, and how? Admittedly, the book sets as its scope conditions mass behavior, which is a very needed and welcomed intervention. Scholars, particularly those who conduct experimental research, of how individuals react when political and economic entrepreneurs tap into and mobilize Islamic identity, should incorporate the importance of group trust, as outlined here by Livny, as an important mechanism through which religious appeals influences political and economic behavior.

Response from Avital Livny

I thank Elizabeth Nugent for her thoughtful discussion of my book and appreciate the questions she brings to the fore. Given my general interest in observational measurement, I take great pride in her remark that *Trust and the Islamic Advantage* represents "a master class in how to use and present observational data," but I also appreciate her calling attention to those areas where more could have been said about the use (and misuse) of these data. Where explicit measures were lacking – of identity, of trust – I made the case for using reasonable proxies – mosque attendance, bank savings. But I could certainly have paid even more attention to the generalizability of these stand-ins, beyond the Turkish case, where I had built datasets that allowed for explicit validity checks.

As Nugent points out, I think there are important questions about the nature of trust and Islamic group-identity that my book raises but does not fully address. The puzzle of why trust is so low in the Muslim world likely deserves its own book, although I hope to have at least ruled out some obvious answers: generalized distrust does not reflect low levels of trustworthiness, given the high levels of honesty observed in Muslim countries; neither is it some sort of cultural vestige, since migrants from the Muslim world quickly update their expectations and become trusting upon settling elsewhere. And given that trust is low among both Muslims and non-Muslims living in Muslim-majority countries, I have posited that domestic institutions likely play a key role in informing the expectation that "most people" cannot be trusted. While my emphasis was on those institutions that can help signal who can and cannot be trusted, Nugent is right that I can widen my scope to consider how political institutions impact the flow of information between average citizens.

Another big question that I raise, rhetorically, but explicitly leave for another day (and another project) is "why Islam?" and, relatedly, "why now?" The hypothesis that Nugent puts forward is a compelling one: state-sponsored secularization, led by Atatürk at the start of the Republican period, may well have created a nascent Islamic-based movement in Turkey. If we define the start of the current Islamic movement as the founding of Erbakan's *Millî Görüş* in the 1970s, then the question of timing resurfaces and pushes back slightly on Nugent's theory. Alternatively, if we trace its origins back further, as many do, and connect it to the center-right Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*) of the 1940-60s and the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*) of the 1960-70s, then we may be able to draw a single line, stretching from state secularization through the events of today.

An excellent feature of this roundtable has been the opportunity to engage with Elizabeth Nugent's book, to see the ways that her work overlaps with mine, and the ways in which we converge. Although the questions we ask are quite different – understanding democratic consolidation, on the one hand, and the success of Islamic-based movements, on the other – we both focused on the important role of identity, among opposition leaders, in Nugent's case, and among everyday citizens, in mine. Her focus on elites has encouraged me to think more carefully about what my theory implies for Islamic-based groups, beyond the grassroots. There are important questions yet to be addressed about the role of identity and trust, among the elite, and between leaders and their followers. I look forward to having the opportunity to consider these in future work.

Joint Response

We thank the editors of the newsletter for the opportunity to engage with one another's work. We both have learned a lot from the experience and recognize that our books, when put into conversation, raise a number of important questions about the role of identity in the study of democracy and autocracy. Both books end with a broad-based group identity bringing a rough coalition of forces to power, whether a joint opposition movement in Tunisia or an uneasy alliance of Islamic-based actors under the AKP umbrella in Turkey. A critical question is what happens to these coalitions once they enter the democratic fray and have to start competing, with other groups and, ultimately, with each other. In Tunisia, we are entering a new era when the old alliances do not have the same hold; and in Turkey, Erdoğan and the AKP have turned against their former allies – the Gülenists, but also the Kurds – in a push for power.

In the Turkish case, we have witnessed the heavy use of repression by an ostensibly democratic government, targeting the party's former allies. With the broad Islamic banner now fractured, what has emerged is a new, more narrow identity, centered around the party and its leader, Erdoğan. It is no coincidence that the rise of this populist loyalty to party has coincided with a period of democratic backsliding in Turkey. Arguably, a similarly strong loyalty to party, borne of decades of targeted repression, made the Brotherhood particularly threatening to its competitors and derailed democratic politics following the Egyptian uprising. Taken together, these two observations suggest a tension between party identity and democratic consolidation.

Our books suggest that supraordinate identities, such as nationalism or cosmopolitanism, which unite multiple groups through shared traits at higher levels of abstraction, help actors to overcome collective action problems and ultimately increase the quality of representation and democracy within political institutions. However, once these identities serve this purpose, they may be discarded as the realities of democratic competition set in. Competition fosters identities in which narrow group membership is emphasized. Strong partisan identity, like any strong, divisive, in-group identity, is powerful; it can color the way in which members see the world, interpret facts, and value democratic norms. A question for scholars of democracy and autocracy is how we maintain an identity that binds us together while permitting healthy political competition.

Meet the Authors

Jaimie Bleck is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. She specializes in African politics with a focus on democratization, education, participation, and citizenship. Her first book, *Education and Empowered Citizenship in Mali*, was published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2015. She and Nicolas van de Walle published *Continuity in Change: Electoral Politics in Africa 1990-2015* with Cambridge University Press in 2018. Her work appears in the *Journal of Politics*, the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *African Affairs*, and *Democratization*.

Marc-André Boisvert is a researcher on Sahel security, governance, civil-military relations, and armed forces. He successfully defended his Ph.D. from University of East Anglia in 2020 on the Malian armed forces and civil-military relations. He has been part of the UN Panel of Expert on Mali in 2018, and has conducted field research in the region. Prior to that, he has covered West Africa as a freelance journalist for several news organizations: Montreal-based daily *La Presse*, *Associated Press*, *The Economist*, and many others.

Avital Livny is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She holds a Ph.D. from Stanford University, an M.Phil. in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Oxford, and a B.A. from Washington University in St. Louis. Her research focuses on the politics of religion and ethnicity, particularly the micro-foundations of identity-based mobilization and the measurement of identity as a variable, as well as the variation in political engagement in the developing world. Her most recent work, on the measurement of diversity worldwide, is supported by an award from the National Science Foundation.

Elizabeth R. Nugent is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Yale University. Her research focuses on the psychology of religion, repression, and political behavior in the Middle East. She is the author of *After Repression* (2020, Princeton University Press). Her work has appeared in academic journals such as *American Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, and *World Politics*. She holds a PhD in Politics from Princeton University as well as an MA in Arab Studies and a BA in Arabic, both from Georgetown University.

Boukary Sangaré worked for the Institute for Security Studies- (ISS) from March 2019 to February 2020 as a Research Consultant based in Bamako, Mali. Before joining ISS, he was Programme Officer for the Peaceful Coexistence, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Program at the Danish Embassy in Bamako. Boukary has worked in the Sahel for the past decade on conflict, violent extremism, radicalization, governance, social mobility and social media. He also teaches at the University of Letters, Languages and Human Sciences of Bamako. Boukary is finishing his PhD at Leiden University (Netherlands), on radicalization and intercommunal conflicts in Central Mali.

Lily Zubaidah Rahim is Professor of Global Studies at Monash University's Malaysia campus and an Honorary Fellow for the Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. She specializes in authoritarian governance, Southeast Asian Politics, political Islam and ethnic and religious nationalism. Her most recent book is *The Limits of Authoritarian Governance in Singapore's Developmental State* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). Dr. Rahim has published in international journals such as *Democratization*, *Contemporary Politics*, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, *Critical Asian Studies* and the *Australian Journal of International Affairs*.

Şebnem Yardımcı-Geyikçi is an Assistant Professor of Politics at Hacettepe University. She was a Visiting Fulbright Scholar and WCED Visiting Associate at the University of Michigan in spring 2020. She was also a Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS) in fall 2019. Her research focuses on party and party system development in new democracies with a special emphasis on Turkey and Southern Europe. She completed her Ph.D. in government at the University of Essex in 2013. Her articles have appeared in a number of prestigious journals including *Party Politics*, *Democratization*, and *PS: Politics and Political Science*.

Editorial Team

Executive Editors

Dan Slater specializes in the politics and history of enduring dictatorships and emerging democracies, with a regional focus on Southeast Asia. At the University of Michigan, he serves as the Ronald and Eileen Weiser Professor of Emerging Democracies, the Director of the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies, and Professor of Political Science. Previously, he served for 12 years on the faculty at the University of Chicago, where he was the Director of the Center for International Social Science Research, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, and associate member in the Department of Sociology.

Rob Mickey is Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Michigan. His research focuses on U.S. politics in historical perspective. He is interested in American political development, political parties, racial politics, and policy responses to inequality.

Managing Editor

Derek Groom is an Academic Program Specialist with the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies. In this role, he manages the programming, administration, and research/outreach activities of WCED. Before coming to U-M, Derek worked in Washington, DC at American Councils for International Education, administering the Overseas Flagship Programs and Flagship Language Initiatives in Eurasia and Africa. In 2013, Derek completed the Russian Overseas Flagship Program in St. Petersburg, Russia as a Boren Scholar.

Guest Editors

Pauline Jones is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Digital Islamic Studies Curriculum at the University of Michigan (UM). Previously, she served as Director of UM's Islamic Studies Program (2011–14) and International Institute (2014–20). Her work has contributed broadly to the study of institutional origin, change, and impact in with an empirical focus on the former Soviet Union, primarily the five Central Asia states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Currently, she is exploring the influence of religion on political attitudes and behavior in Muslim majority states with an emphasis on the relationship between religious regulation, religiosity, and political mobilization.

Hanisah Binte Abdullah Sani is a National University of Singapore Overseas Postdoctoral Fellow and WCED Visiting Associate. She is a comparative-historical and political sociologist of empire and state formation, modernization and development. She examines how law and religion organize elites and build states in Southeast Asia, and is currently working on her book project, *Sacred States and Subjects: Law, Religion, and State-Building in Colonial Malaya*. She earned her doctorate in sociology from the University of Chicago in 2019.

About *Democracy and Autocracy*

Democracy and Autocracy is the official newsletter of the American Political Science Association's Democracy and Autocracy section (formerly known as the Comparative Democratization section). First known as *CompDem*, it has been published three times a year since 2003. In October 2010, the newsletter was renamed *APSA-CD* and expanded to include substantive articles on democracy, as well as news and notes on the latest developments in the field. In September 2018, it was renamed the *Annals of Comparative Democratization* to reflect the increasingly high academic content and recognition of the symposia.

About WCED

Housed in the International Institute at the University of Michigan, the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies (WCED) began operation in September 2008. Named in honor of Ronald and Eileen Weiser and inspired by their time in Slovakia during Ambassador Weiser's service as U.S. Ambassador from 2001-04, WCED promotes scholarship to better understand the conditions and policies that foster the transition from autocratic rule to democratic governance, past and present.

LSA WEISER CENTER FOR EMERGING DEMOCRACIES UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Section News

Section leadership greatly appreciates that so many people participated in Democracy and Autocracy sessions during the virtual APSA annual meeting, including our business meeting and a "quarantinis"-type reception. Next year's meeting will be in Seattle if things are in-person by then. The call for proposals is already open - our section is Division 44, chaired by Henry Thomson, Arizona State University.

At the virtual meeting, we held the section's third Emerging Scholars Workshop. This workshop brought together early-career scholars based in lower-to middle-income countries who are interested in getting feedback on their research, meeting peers from around the world, and attending the APSA Annual Meeting. It was the first time the workshop was held digitally, and seven scholars presented their research, hailing from universities in Benin, Brazil, Estonia, Hungary, Iraq, Malaysia, and Singapore.

We now have two new officers for the section: **Benjamin Smith** (Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Florida) will be our new Vice Chair, and **Terence Teo** (Assistant Professor of Political Science, Seton Hall University) will be our new Secretary.

The following annual Section awards were announced at the virtual meeting. You can find complete details on the section website:

Juan Linz Prize for Best Dissertation in the Comparative Study of Democracy

Recipient: **Donghyun Danny Choi** (University of Pittsburgh), for his dissertation, *Severed Connections: Political Parties and Democratic Responsiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

Best Article Award

Recipient: **Francisco Garfias** (University of California, San Diego), for his 2018 article, "Elite Coalitions, Limited Government, and Fiscal Capacity Development: Evidence from Bourbon Mexico" (*Journal of Politics* 81(1): 94-111).

Honorable mention: **Guillermo Trejo** (University of Notre Dame) and **Sandra Ley** (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas), for their 2019 article, "High-Profile Criminal Violence: Why Drug Cartels Murder Government Officials and Party Candidates in Mexico" (*British Journal of Political Science* 1-27).

Best Book Award

Recipient: **Sheri Berman** (Barnard College), for *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe: From the Ancien Régime to the Present Day* (Oxford UP, 2019).

Best Field Work Award

Co-recipients: **Sana Jaffrey** (University of Chicago, PhD) and **Chris Carter** (University of California, Berkeley, PhD)

Best Paper Award

Recipients: **Matthew Graham** (Yale University) and **Milan Svolik** (Yale University), for "Democracy in America? Partisanship, Polarization, and the Robustness of Support for Democracy in the United States."

Michael Bernhard *(Raymond and Miriam Ehrlich Eminent Scholar Chair in Political Science, University of Florida)* published the following:

Hegre, Håvard, Michael Bernhard, and Jan Teorell. 2020. "Civil Society and the Democratic Peace." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64: 32-62. DOI:10.1177/0022002719850620.

Bernhard, Michael. 2020. "What do We Know about Civil Society and Regime Change Thirty Years after 1989?" *East European Politics* 36(3): 341-362. https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2020.1787160.

Bernhard, Michael, Venelin I. Ganev, Anna Grzymała-Busse, Stephen E. Hanson, Yoshiko Herrera, Dmitry Korfanov, and Anton Shirakov. 2020. "Weasel Words and the Analysis of Postcommunist Politics: A Symposium." *East European Politics, Societies and Cultures* 34: 263-325. https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325419900244.

Bernhard, Michael, Amanda Edgell, and Staffan Lindberg. 2020. "Institutionalizing Electoral Uncertainty and Authoritarian Regime Survival." *European Journal of Political Research* 59: 465-487. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12355.

Bernhard, Michael, Allen Hicken, Christopher Reenock, and Staffan I. Lindberg. 2020. "Parties, Civil Society, and the Deterrence of Democratic Defection." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 55(1): 1-21. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12116-019-09295-0.

J. Ray Kennedy was selected to serve as one of the 14 members of California's Citizens Redistricting Commission for the 2020-2030 term.

Carl LeVan was promoted to full professor in the School of International Service at American University in Washington, DC. He is the author, most recently, of *Contemporary Nigerian Politics: Competition in a Time of Transition and Terror* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Anne Meng *(Assistant Professor of Politics, University of Virginia)* published the following book and article:

Constraining Dictatorship: From Personalized Rule to Institutionalized Regimes (2020) Cambridge University Press: Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions series.

The Law and Politics of Presidential Term Limit Evasion (2020) *Columbia Law Review* 120(1): 1-77. (with Mila Versteeg, Tim Horley, Mauricio Guim, and Marilyn Guirguis).

Yonatan Morse *(Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Connecticut)* joined the 2020 class of Andrew Carnegie Fellows. His fellowship started on September 1st, and he is developing a project titled *Discovering Welfare: Legacies, Democracy and the Politics of Social Protection in Africa*. He also published the following article:

Morse, Yonatan L. 2020. "Rebuilding, Rebranding, and Competitive Landscapes: A Set-Theoretic Analysis of Authoritarian Successor Parties." *Democratization* 27(8): 1477-1495. DOI: 10.1080/13510347.2020.1803283.

Güneş Murat Tezcür (*Jalal Talabani Chair and Professor, University of Central Florida*) has edited *The Oxford Handbook of Turkish Politics* being published by Oxford University Press. The Handbook has 35 chapters offering state-of-the-art reviews of the scholarship on many different aspects of Turkish politics.

Bryn Rosenfeld *(Assistant Professor of Government, Cornell University)* published her book *The Autocratic Middle Class: How State Dependency Reduces the Demand for Democracy* in the Princeton Studies in Political Behavior series. It is available for pre-order from Princeton University Press here.

Andreas Schedler *(Professor of Political Science at the Center for Economic Teaching and Research (CIDE) in Mexico City)* published the following article:

Schedler, Andreas, "Democratic Reciprocity," *Journal of Political Philosophy* (August 2020) (online first, open access), DOI 10.1111/JOPP.12232.

Rachel Vanderhill *(Associate Professor and Department Chair, Wofford College)* published the following:

Rachel Vanderhill. 2020. *Autocracy and Resistance in the Internet Age*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Vanderhill, Rachel. 2020. "Iran and Its Neighbors: Military Assistance as Support for Authoritarianism." In *Authoritarian Gravity Centers: A Cross-Regional Study of Authoritarian Promotion and Diffusion*, eds. Marianne Kneuer and Thomas Demmelhuber. London: Routledge.

Meredith L. Weiss *(Professor and Chair of Political Science, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy, University at Albany, SUNY)* published the following book (co-published by NUS Press for the Asian market)

The Roots of Resilience: Party Machines and Grassroots Politics in Southeast Asia (2020) Cornell University Press.

Sarah Wessel *(Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO Bonn) and Berlin Center for Global Engagement at the Berlin University Alliance)* recently received the 2019 Dissertation Award from the German Middle East Studies Association for her thesis, "The Making of Political Representation – Processes of Claim-Making and Receiving during the Egyptian Transformations (2011- 2014)," written at the University of Hamburg.

Kurt Weyland *(Mike Hogg Professor in Liberal Arts, Department of Government, University of Texas at Austin)* published the following article:

> Weyland, Kurt. 2020. Populism's Threat to Democracy: Comparative Lessons for the US. *Perspectives on Politics* 18:2 (June): 389-406.

Matthew S. Winters *(Department of Political Science, University of Illinois)* was recently promoted to the rank of professor. He also co-edited with Robert A. Blair (Brown University) a special issue of *Studies in Comparative International Development* (vol. 55, issue 2) on the topic of *Foreign Aid, Service Delivery, and State-Society Relations in the Developing World*. In addition to an introductory essay by the two editors, the issue includes contributions from Linsday R. Dolan (Wesleyan University); Kate Baldwin (Yale University) and Winters; Naazneen H. Barma (Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver), Naomi Levy (Santa Clara University), and Jessica Piombo (Naval Postgraduate School); Gabriella R. Montinola (University of California, Davis), Timothy W. Taylor (Wheaton College), and Gerardo L. Largoza (De La Salle University); and Josiah Marineau (Campbellsville University). The contributions to the special issue make use of original data from Cambodia, Kenya, Laos, the Phillippines, and Uganda, as well as cross-country data, to understand how foreign aid affects citizens' views of the state and patterns of institutional development.

Winters also published together with Luke Plutowski (University of Illinois) and Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro (Brown University) "Voter Beliefs and Strategic Voting in Two-Round Elections" in *Political Research Quarterly*. The paper finds that levels of "weak-to-strong" strategic voting in Brazil's 2018 presidential election paralleled the amount of strategic voting typically observed in single-round elections and finds little evidence of "strong-to-weak" strategic voting.