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Recent scholarship on democratization has produced several dominant hypotheses concerning the role of institutional design in promoting stable democracy. This article tests these hypotheses by examining the outcomes of 56 transitions to democracy in the Third World between 1930 and 1995. The authors' analysis contradicts recent scholarship on institutional design by finding that the choice of constitutional type (presidential or parliamentary) is not significantly related to the likelihood of democratic survival in less developed countries. It is also found that in the context of the Third World, the combination of multipartism and presidential democracy does not appear to lessen significantly the likelihood of democratic consolidation, nor does parliamentarism evince any obvious superiority in sustaining competitive multiparty regimes. The findings are sufficiently strong to warrant a rethinking of some of the dominant hypotheses on the institutional design of democracy.

## INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN THE THIRD WORLD

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**D**o choices of political institutions matter to the survival of new democracies? This may seem a strange question in view of the recent preoccupations of comparative politics. Over the past decade, comparativists devoted renewed attention to the formal aspects of politics: rules, organizations, procedures, and constitutions. Simultaneously, the worldwide movement toward democratization inspired a large and creative literature on regime transition and consolidation. By the early years of this decade these

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two trends had cross-fertilized, producing an emerging research program on the institutional design of new democracies. The synthesis of two literatures produced a question whose real-world relevance can hardly be understated: Which institutional arrangements are best suited to promote the consolidation of the unprecedented number of young democratic regimes?

Recent scholarship on comparative institutions has produced a number of dominant hypotheses about the role of institutional choices in promoting stable democracy. The most important of these relate to the choice of the system of government (presidential versus parliamentary) and to the relationship of these constitutional systems with multipartism.<sup>1</sup> Provocative theoretical arguments have been developed about the desirability of certain arrangements—in particular, parliamentary rule—and the “perils” associated with others, most notably the combination of presidentialism with multiparty democracy. These arguments have also revived older debates about how party system structure itself affects democratic stability and performance. In view of the high stakes involved in the global consolidation of democracy, we stand in agreement with the explicitly prescriptive thrust of much of this literature. Therefore, we believe it essential that hypotheses about institutional design be submitted to rigorous empirical testing.

This article tests hypotheses about the relationship of institutional choices and democratic survival by examining the outcomes of 56 transitions to democracy in the Third World between 1930 and 1995. The article is based on an established data set of regime transitions, which we have adapted for use by innovating several simple operational indicators of consolidated democracy. These indicators are theoretically and empirically justified, thus creating a new and useful data set for the comparative study of democratic consolidation. Our findings suggest a rethinking of some of the dominant hypotheses on the institutional design of democracy, several of which have become rapidly etched into the conventional wisdom of comparative politics in recent years.

## DOMINANT HYPOTHESES ON INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

Debates over the basic institutional frameworks of democracies have a long history in comparative politics, but their intensity has ebbed and flowed

1. Much of this literature concerns the impact of institutional choice on democratic consolidation defined as regime survival. Another stream of literature that is equally relevant to new democracies examines the independent effect of different institutional arrangements on public policy and economic adjustment. See, for example, Haggard and Kaufman (1995).

(Lijphart, 1992).<sup>2</sup> In the 1980s, political democratization brought institutional debates to the fore once again. Regarding the specific variables examined in this article, the current renaissance began in 1984 with Juan Linz's (1994) influential essay entitled "Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does It Make a Difference?"<sup>3</sup> Linz's essay flowed logically from his earlier work on democratic breakdowns (Linz & Stepan, 1978). In it, Linz set forth a probabilistic argument about constitutional design and democratic survivability. For Linz, a parliamentary constitution increases the likelihood of democratic consolidation, whereas presidential systems have the opposite effect.

Shugart and Mainwaring (in press) have distilled Linz's observations into four basic criticisms of presidentialism. First, in presidential systems both the president and legislature can lay claim to a popular mandate, thus creating a "dual democratic legitimacy." Presidential systems have no clear means for resolving this tension. Second, presidentialism is less politically flexible than parliamentarism, because of the president's fixed term in office. A president remains in office even if he or she has lost the confidence of the assembly; parliamentary systems, on the other hand, have mechanisms for the immediate replacement of executives. Third, the winner-take-all logic of presidentialism excludes electoral losers from executive power for long periods of time. This may aggravate the resentment of defeated forces, lessen the president's incentive to dialogue with, and build bridges to, the opposition, or both. Finally, because in presidentialism the head of government and the head of state are one and the same, the presidential office is by nature "two-dimensional and in a sense ambiguous" (Linz, 1994, p. 24). The person purporting to represent the entire nation is, in fact, the representative of a partisan option, which is not generally true of the titular heads of state in parliamentary systems. Presidents claiming to personify the nation are prone to dismiss the political opposition and perhaps even the constitution itself.

Linz's argument is not deterministic: He concludes that the "odds seem to favor" parliamentary institutions, but that "no constitution maker can assure

2. Here we restrict ourselves mostly to the constitutional type, but the new institutionalism has revived allied literatures on comparative political parties, comparative legislatures, and electoral systems. On the resurgence of the presidentialism versus parliamentarism debate, see the introduction by Arend Lijphart (1992) to his edited volume and the introduction by Juan Linz and Arturo Valenzuela (1994) to their edited collection.

3. Linz's essay circulated widely before the publication of the definitive version in 1994, so much so that a substantial secondary literature actually preceded Linz's essay into print. Excerpts from Linz's essay were made available in two articles in the *Journal of Democracy* (Linz 1990a, 1990b) as well as in various translations. His ideas were debated vigorously during several democratic transitions, particularly in Latin America.

that the institutions he creates will survive all challenges and assure a consolidated democracy" (Linz, 1994, p. 70). Linz also believes his arguments are most relevant for periods of democratic transition and consolidation. His praise for the "flexibility" of parliamentarism grows out of a concern that young presidential democracies may break down in the face of the inevitable challenges to new, untested regimes. Linz used historical case studies and powerful logic to back up his claims, but he did not undertake rigorous testing of his hypothesized relationships between constitutional types and democratic consolidation.

Mainwaring (1993) expanded on Linz's arguments by studying the relationships among presidentialism and party system type, arguing that the coexistence of presidentialism with multipartism constitutes a "difficult combination." Multipartism exacerbates the problems of presidentialism in three ways: by increasing the probability of immobilism in executive/legislative relations, by promoting ideological polarization, and by making interparty coalition building difficult to achieve.<sup>4</sup> Observing that the most stable presidential democracies are those approximating two-party systems, Mainwaring argued that two-party systems—although not necessarily desirable in and of themselves—tend to ameliorate some of the problems with presidentialism enumerated by both Linz and himself.

Although Mainwaring is concerned with multipartism only in the special case of presidential regimes, his hypotheses return our attention to one of the earliest institutionalist debates in comparative politics: whether democracy is best served by a two-party system or a multiparty format. Prior to the 1970s, the two-party (or "majoritarian") position was dominant; since then, the literature has been more favorable to multipartism (Lijphart, 1984, pp. 106-126). Although the hypothesis of two-party superiority has receded, we consider it worth revisiting at a time when political scientists are vigorously debating the role of institutional choices in new democracies. Is a bias against multiparty systems justified in the context of Third World democracy, whether presidential *or* parliamentary?

## PREVIOUS TESTS OF THE HYPOTHESES

Although Linz did not conduct cross-national testing of his hypotheses about presidentialism, other scholars have assembled evidence supporting his

4. For a case study that foreshadowed some of these arguments, see Valenzuela's (1978) excellent study of the breakdown of Chilean democracy in 1973.

and related arguments. The most prominent studies of this type raise some questions concerning problems of selection bias or inappropriate cross-regional comparisons.

Mainwaring (1993) conducted some tests concerning constitutional frameworks and their interaction effects with multipartism.<sup>5</sup> He began by listing 31 "stable" democracies, defined as those that had survived without a breakdown from 1967 through 1992. As one would expect, this list is largely made up of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries: Only 9 of his cases belong to the Third World. Of the 31 democracies studied, 24 were parliamentary, 4 were presidential, and 3 had hybrid systems of government (Finland, France, and Switzerland). For all cases, Mainwaring reported the effective number of parliamentary parties (Laakso & Taagepera, 1979).<sup>6</sup> The paucity of stable presidential democracies is striking, and Mainwaring noted that all four (Colombia, Costa Rica, United States, and Venezuela) were effectively two-party systems. He further observed that

the correlation between two-party systems and stable presidential democracy would be irrelevant if two-party systems were the norm in presidential democracies, but this is not the case. . . . Although they are not conclusive, the data suggest that the problem may not be presidentialism or multipartism so much as the combination. (Mainwaring, 1993, p. 212)

Mainwaring then advanced a theoretical account for why a two-party system ameliorates the problems of presidentialism enumerated by Linz and himself.

Mainwaring constructed his sample of countries by compiling a list of democratic successes. For this he was criticized by Shugart and Carey, who noted that his method ignores failures of democratic regimes (either presidential or parliamentary) in earlier times and that it does not examine some

5. In this article, we restrict ourselves to empirical testing of Linz's arguments and are therefore unable to review qualitative criticisms and rejoinders to them. The best effort to date is Shugart and Carey's essay "Criticisms of Presidentialism and Responses" (chap. 3 of Shugart & Carey, 1992), which mounts a careful defense of presidentialism and "premier-presidentialism" (what other authors have commonly termed *semipresidentialism*). Riggs's (1988) article is an exploration of the "exceptionalism" of the United States case.

6. The Laakso-Taagepera  $N$  estimates the "effective" number of parties in a given party system by measuring their sizes relative to one another. It is produced by squaring the fractional shares of seats of each of the parties represented in the legislature, summing these squares, and dividing 1 by this number. The formula is

$$N_p = \frac{1}{\sum p_i^2},$$

in which  $N_p$  is the effective number of parliamentary parties and  $p_i$  is the proportion of seats held by the  $i$ -th party.

newer presidential democracies that are already impressive in longevity (Shugart & Carey, 1992, p. 39). Mainwaring's sample excludes *young* democracies, even though much of the choice-of-institutions literature is explicitly concerned with the survivability of nascent competitive regimes. Moreover, by selecting only those countries with 25 consecutive years of democratic experience, Mainwaring created a sample composed overwhelmingly of advanced industrial democracies. As he himself notes, his data are not conclusive. We cannot be certain if his findings are transportable to the context of the Third World, where social and economic conditions have traditionally been seen as much less favorable to political democracy.

Stepan and Skach (1993) have conducted the most exhaustive examination of the Linz and Mainwaring hypotheses to date. They begin by defining 43 "continuous" consolidated democracies in the world between 1979 and 1989.<sup>7</sup> Excluding semipresidential and hybrid constitutional types, there were 34 parliamentary democracies and only 5 presidential democracies in this sample.<sup>8</sup> Stepan and Skach found that 11 of the parliamentary democracies had more than 3.0 effective parties but that no presidential democracy had more than 2.6 parties. They concluded that

consolidated parliamentary and semipresidential democracies can be associated with a large number of parties in their legislatures, whereas consolidated presidential democracies are not associated with the type of multiparty coalitional behavior that facilitates democratic rule in contexts of numerous socioeconomic, ideological, and ethnic cleavages and of numerous parties in the legislature. (Stepan & Skach 1993, p. 6)

Stepan and Skach undertook two other tests of their hypotheses using only Third World cases. First, they examined the 53 non-OECD countries that experienced democracy for at least 1 year between 1973 and 1989, of which 28 were parliamentary and 25 were presidential. They then determined which of these had been continuously democratic for 10 consecutive years at any time during this period.<sup>9</sup> On the basis of this criterion, the "democratic

7. Stepan and Skach used two data sets to operationalize their concept of consolidated democracy. The first was the annual Freedom House ratings of political liberties around the globe (Gastil, 1990). The other source was an effort by Coppedge and Reinecke (1990) to quantify the eight institutional guarantees proposed by Robert Dahl (1971) in his definition of polyarchy. Stepan and Skach (1993) reported that we will call a country a "continuous democracy" if it received no higher than a scale score of 3 on the Coppedge-Reinecke Polyarchy Scale for 1985 and no higher than a 2.5 averaged score of the ratings for "political rights" and "civil liberties" on the Gastil Democracy scale, for the 1980-1989 period. (Footnote 5).

8. The United States, Colombia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic.

9. In this test, democracy was defined using only the Gastil (Freedom House) ratings.

survival rate" of the parliamentary regimes was 61% compared with only 20% for presidential regimes. In their second Third World test, they studied the entire set of 93 countries that became independent between 1945 and 1979 (thereby excluding Latin America) and then identified those that were continuously democratic throughout the 1980s. Here the results are striking. Of the parliamentary systems, 15 of 41 cases, or 37%, were continuously democratic between 1980 and 1989, but not a single pure presidential system achieved this feat (Stepan & Skach 1993, pp. 11-15).<sup>10</sup> The authors subjected the data to a Pearson's chi-square test, which allowed them to reject the null hypothesis that such a distribution could be random ( $p < .001$ ).

Like Mainwaring's study, the Stepan and Skach study suffers from selection bias. Stepan and Skach draw inferences from the sample of 36 Third World countries that became independent after 1945 and adopted presidentialism. This list of presidential countries, which automatically excludes Latin America, includes few if any countries with notable democratic experience (Shugart, 1995, p. 170). The exclusion of Latin America from an examination of the prospects for presidential democracy in the Third World is a serious shortcoming, because Latin America is the only part of the Third World with any significant experience with presidential democracy.

Another possible source of selection bias in the Stepan and Skach study is the inclusion of microstates. According to Stepan and Skach, of the 93 countries that became independent between 1945 and 1979, 41 adopted parliamentarism and 36 chose presidentialism. Of the parliamentary systems, 15 were continuously democratic throughout the 1980s, but none of the presidential systems could match this achievement. "Of those 15 'continuous democracies,' however, 14 are descendants of the British Empire (the other is Israel), and 10 have populations of less than a million, with 4 having fewer than 100,000 people" (Shugart, 1995, p. 170).

Small population size has been shown to facilitate democratic stability (Powell, 1982), and it is safe to assume that problems of governance are quite different in city-states or tiny island republics than they are in populous Third World democracies with multiple cross-cutting cleavages, such as ethnic, linguistic, religious, and urban-rural divisions. There are more full-time employees of the Brazilian national legislature (approximately 10,000) than there are inhabitants of Nauru or Tuvalu, both of which are cited by Stepan and Skach as consolidated parliamentary democracies. Stepan and Skach's

10. Case selection in this test excluded Latin America traditionally defined (the 18 Spanish-speaking republics plus Brazil and Haiti), because all of these countries achieved independence prior to 1945. Also, of the 15 successful parliamentary systems listed, two thirds have populations of less than 1 million.

inclusion of microstates inflates the success rates of parliamentary democracy, whereas the exclusion of Latin American countries lowers the success rates of presidential democracy.

The apparent flaws in these studies justify a retesting of their hypotheses, especially because the main arguments have quickly earned wide currency. We caution against premature acceptance of these hypotheses in the specific context of the Third World. Below, we describe our own sample and methods, which we believe permit a more valid test of the Linz hypothesis and the Mainwaring corollary as applied to developing countries. In retesting these hypotheses, we follow the example of earlier studies in using simple bivariate techniques to examine the relationship between institutional design and democratic consolidation. As we note in our conclusions, the next stage in this debate should move to cross-national, multivariate analyses incorporating institutional and other variables.

## **AN ALTERNATIVE TEST OF THE HYPOTHESES**

### **THE SAMPLE OF THIRD WORLD DEMOCRACIES**

In this study we use the Political Regime Change Dataset created by Mark Gasiorowski. This data set identifies regime transitions to and from democratic, semidemocratic, and authoritarian regimes in 97 Third World countries. The sample is restricted to countries that had a population of at least 1 million in 1980, thus excluding the microstates where social and political environments are assumed to be significantly different from most developing nations. The time-series coverage begins with the date at which each country either became independent or established a modern state and continues through December 1992. The data set is described more fully in Gasiorowski (1996).

We used the Political Regime Change Dataset to identify all democratic transitions in the Third World initiated between 1930 and 1992 and updated their regime status through the end of 1995. This yielded a total of 66 transitions to democracy, with several countries experiencing two or more transitions. A number of these transitions were still in their beginning years and therefore were censored from the analysis in accordance with criteria discussed below.<sup>11</sup> This left us with a sample of 56 democratic regimes that

11. If not enough time has elapsed for us to know whether a case will meet a criterion for regime survival, it must be counted as a missing case and is therefore "censored" from the analysis by the decision rules of the research design. For example, when using our Twelve Year Duration criterion of democratic consolidation (discussed below), we had to exclude from the

we could classify as having either consolidated or broken down by the end of 1995.

The data set defines as democracies those countries that meet the basic procedural minima outlined by Dahl (1971) and Diamond, Linz, and Lipset (1990). These include meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, without proscriptions of major (adult) social groups; and the existence of civil and political liberties that ensure the integrity of both participation and contestation.<sup>12</sup>

The Political Regime Change Dataset includes transitions to democracy that occurred at the time of national independence. Earlier studies (Shugart & Carey, 1992) have often excluded such cases, using the argument that founding elections monitored by a departing colonial power do not constitute truly indigenous democratic institutions. Even if it were true that no liberated colony would ever have held elections without metropolitan pressure (an assumption we find dubious), we see no compelling theoretical reason to exclude nascent Third World regimes from our sample of democracies. When studying democratic *consolidation* as opposed to democratic *transition*, the central issue is not under what circumstances polyarchy was inaugurated but whether democratic practices are subsequently iterated and institutionalized. We therefore include *all* experiments in democracy in our analysis, regardless of whether the first election was indigenous or externally induced. We included 20 "decolonizing" transitions to democracy, which is approximately one third of the sample.

## MEASURES OF DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

To test for the impact of institutional design on stable democracy, we devised three simple measures of democratic consolidation. These measures were created for operational purposes only and should not be interpreted as definitive yardsticks for what is a notoriously slippery concept. The emerging

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analysis any transition beginning after 1983, because we could not yet code the dependent variable by the end of 1995. The censorship problem thus disproportionately affects the transitions occurring in more recent times.

12. The operational definition of democracy used in the Political Regime Change Dataset is described in the text above. Countries that met this definition at a given time were judged by Gasiorowski to be democratic; those that did not were coded as semidemocratic or authoritarian. In this study we focus on transitions to democratic rule from either semidemocratic or authoritarian regimes. For more background on the data set, see Gasiorowski (1996); for an alternative application, see Gasiorowski (1995).

literature on democratic consolidation is highly exploratory and tentative in nature. Its tendency toward qualitative ideal typification of consolidated democracy has largely deflected the question of how to generate thresholds, indicators, and operational measures of consolidation. Although often of value, at its currently high level of abstraction the extant literature provides little guidance for *cross-national* operationalization and measurement of the central concept.<sup>13</sup> The insufficiency of consolidation theory notwithstanding, we have tried to ground our operational tools as firmly as possible within the literature on democracy and democratization.

Our first measure of democratic consolidation is whether a new regime survives through the holding of a *second election for the national executive* (subsequent to the "founding election" that inaugurated polyarchy). The rules of the democratic game require that free elections be the only legitimate method of constituting governments (Valenzuela, 1992), and the successful realization of a postfounding election can be taken as an initial but important sign of commitment to these rules. Our second measure of democratic consolidation derives from a similar theoretical justification, yet is significantly more stringent: We include only those regimes that survived to effect an *alternation in executive power*.<sup>14</sup> We define alternation in power as an unambiguous change in the partisan composition of the executive branch.<sup>15</sup> As Huntington (1991) stated, this achievement is a crucial turning point for young democracies, as it is the most direct test of elites' willingness to surrender power in accord with the rules of the new democratic game.<sup>16</sup> Or as Przeworski (1991) pointed out succinctly: "Democracy is a system in

13. Much of the literature has heretofore focused on case studies or intraregional comparisons. For prominent efforts to develop the concept of democratic *consolidation* (as distinct from democratic *transition* or political democratization more broadly defined), see O'Donnell (1992); Burton, Gunther, and Higley (1992); Schmitter (1992); Valenzuela (1992); and Gunther, Puhle, and Diamandouros (1995). For useful critical essays on these and other such efforts see Mainwaring (1992), Munck (1994), Schmitter (1995), and Schneider (1995).

14. In almost every case, the alternation in power was achieved via electoral means. However, some parliamentary systems afford the possibility of an alternation in government without an intervening election. In three of our cases an alternation in power occurred even before the regime held its first postfounding election: in Indonesia in 1950, and in Thailand and Turkey in 1975 (see appendix for a listing of cases).

15. In presidential systems, our criterion for an alternation in power was a change in the political party controlling the presidency. In parliamentary systems, the criterion was whether the premiership passed into the control of a party not represented in the preceding government.

16. Huntington suggested that one criterion of democratic consolidation be the "two-turnover test." He argued that

a democracy may be viewed as consolidated if the party or group that takes power in the initial election at the time of transition loses a subsequent election and turns over power

which parties lose elections” (p. 10). We note that approximately half of Third World democracies have broken down before effecting an alternation in power. Our first two operational definitions of consolidation, then, are clearly related to theoretical expectations about polyarchy: Political democracy must permit contestation and the potential for alternation in government.

Our third operational measure of democratic consolidation was created via inspection of the data itself. Figure 1 permits visual analysis of the survival rates of Third World experiments in democracy. The horizontal axis represents the number of years elapsed since the transition to a democratic regime, and the vertical axis gives the percentage of democracies surviving to a given point in time. As a simple example, note that by Year 5 approximately one third of the democracies had already broken down. The horizontal axis extends to a full 30 years after transition, so the number of valid (noncensored) cases diminishes as one moves rightward along the axis (see Note 11 above). The percentage of censored cases at any given year is represented by the dotted line. Despite this minor limitation, we were able to use this graphic analysis to generate a durational measure of democratic consolidation.<sup>17</sup> Visual inspection of Figure 1 shows that the point that best divides the steep slope evident in the early posttransition years from the flatter slope in the later years is located at 12 years after transition. After *12 years of democratic experience*, the odds of democratic survival—although never outstanding in the developing world—at least appear to stabilize.

These three measures are necessarily imperfect, as are all operational definitions of democratic consolidation or stability. Even if a large number of analysts could agree on a single yardstick for democratic consolidation, more still would protest—justifiably—that *no* regime is immune to subsequent breakdown.<sup>18</sup> Here we need only to agree on some of the main

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to those election winners, and if those election winners then peacefully turn over power to the winners of a later election. (pp. 266-267)

However, he noted that “two turnovers is a tough test of democracy”: The United States did not meet this test until 1840, and Japan never has (Huntington, 1991, pp. 266-267). We agree with Huntington that the first alternation in power has major symbolic significance and that it demonstrates growing commitment to the rules of the game. But in light of the historical travails of democracy in the Third World, the two-turnover test would be excessively confining for both contextual and methodological reasons. Thus we adapted Huntington’s criterion to a single alternation in power, while retaining several of the theoretical justifications that he cited for his two-turnover test.

17. Some of the drop-off in the solid line in Figure 1 is due to censoring, because only surviving democracies are censored (see Note 11 above). The percentage in the solid line is calculated by dividing the number of surviving democracies by the total number of valid cases.

18. This point was widely discussed in the breakdown literature of the 1970s but is often overlooked today. Linz and Stepan (1978) and their collaborators were inspired to study the

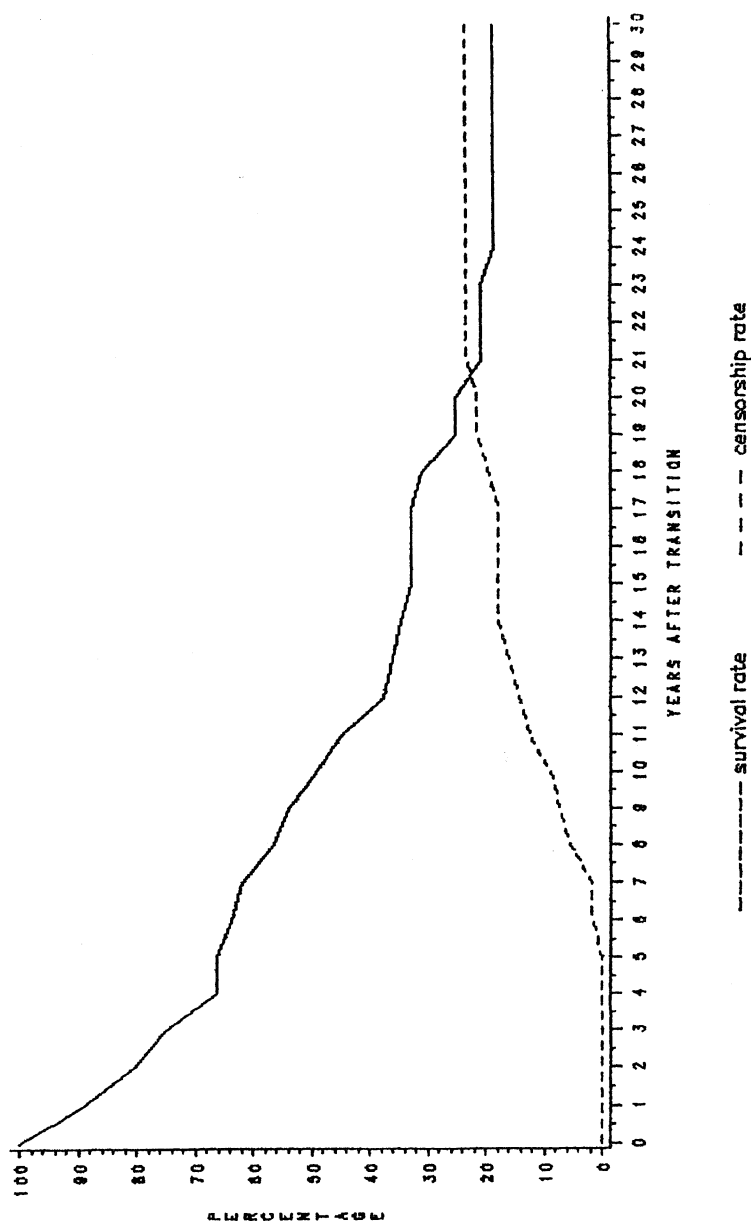


Figure 1. Survival and censorship rates after democratic transitions.

"hurdles" interposed between transition and ideal-type consolidation, and the hurdles we chose turn out to be relatively strong predictors of the medium-term survival of political democracy.

The predictive power of our measures of democratic consolidation is presented in Figure 2. Similar in structure to Figure 1, this graphic illustrates the postconsolidation survival rates of democracies meeting each of our three operational measures (Year 0 on the horizontal axis now represents the year of consolidation rather than of transition). The Twelve Year Duration measure of consolidation is clearly the best predictor of subsequent democratic survival, followed by the Alternation in Power measure. The Post-Founding Election measure is not as powerful, although its success at predicting democratic survival is still at nearly 50% even 15 years after the holding of the election.

Some may object that these indicators of consolidated democracy are overly permissive, but there are solid reasons why our measures are appropriate to the study of Third World democratization. To adopt a criterion of consolidated democracy that requires 25 years or more of regime survival—as did Lijphart (1984) and Mainwaring (1993)—would reduce the sample of Third World consolidations to a mere handful and would discourage analysts from tackling theoretical issues brought to light by the foundational struggles of new regimes. Far too many cases of *attempted* democratization would be unwisely overlooked. Moreover, inspection of Figure 1 shows that in the Third World, a 25-year criterion of democratic consolidation would not be much better than the 12-year criterion that we use in this article.

We believe it is legitimate to analyze the development of relatively young polyarchies—to study the infant mortality rates of Third World democracy, if you will. Just as pediatrics is far more essential to Third World medicine than is geriatrics, so must students of democratization sometimes adapt their analytic tools to an environment where the odds for successful democracy have frankly not been very favorable.

## INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

We classified all democracies in the sample according to the effective executive in their constitution: Those in which this role was exercised by an elected president were coded as presidential regimes, and those in which

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collapse of democracies of either considerable (Weimar Germany 1933, Brazil 1964) or long (Chile 1973, Uruguay 1973) duration. Latin America provides solid evidence of the ongoing threats to long-standing democracies: The successful military coup of 1973 in Chile and the unsuccessful one in 1992 in Venezuela were launched against two of the most vigorous competitive regimes that have ever existed in the Third World.

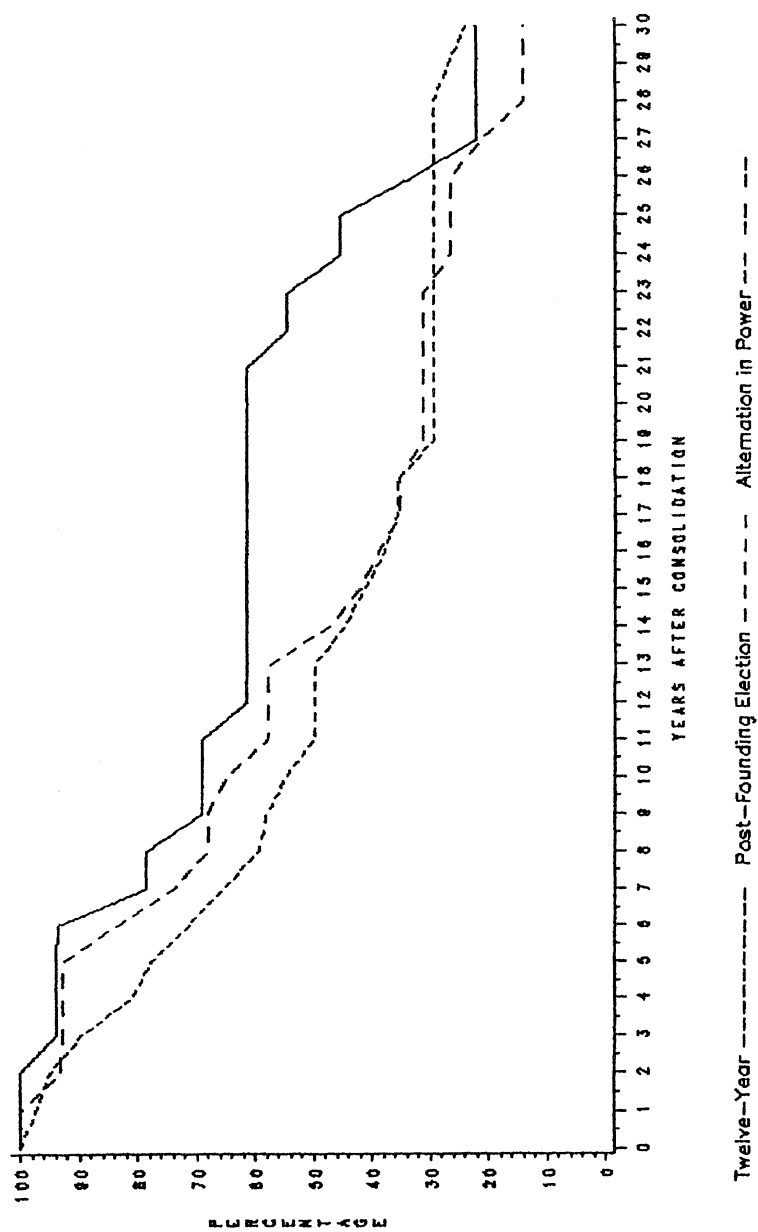


Figure 2 Survival rates for consolidation measures.

power was exercised by a prime minister dependent on assembly confidence were classified as parliamentary. In measuring multipartism, we followed both Mainwaring (1993) and Stepan and Skach (1993) in using the Laakso-Taagepera index of the effective number of parties (Laakso & Taagepera, 1979). The Laakso-Taagepera  $N$  can be calculated using either vote shares or seat shares: Here we use seats, that is, the effective number of parliamentary parties. The value of  $N$  was calculated as of January 1 of the year of democratic breakdown or democratic consolidation in each of our cases.<sup>19</sup>

## RESULTS: SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

The first hypothesis we will examine is the original Linz hypothesis, which states that presidential systems are more prone to democratic breakdown than are parliamentary systems. The outcomes of the 56 transitions to democracy in our sample are reported in tabular form, including country names and the years of consolidations and breakdowns, in Tables 1 through 3. Following Stepan and Skach (1993), we used Pearson's chi-square tests to detect any significant relationships in the data.

Table 1 tests the Linz thesis using the Post-Founding Election criterion of consolidation. Some 31.3% of the presidential democracies broke down before reaching this milestone, compared with 25% of the parliamentary democracies. Results of a Pearson's chi-square test show no statistically significant relationship between these breakdown rates ( $p = .608$ ). In Table 2, the data are reported using the Alternation in Power measure, which is more stringent: Since 1930 approximately half of all Third World democracies have broken down before effecting one alternation in executive power. Here again, the results do not confirm the Linz thesis. The breakdown rates of presidential and parliamentary democracies are nearly identical, 46.7% and 45.8%, respectively; and again, there is no statistically significant difference between them ( $p = .951$ ).

Table 3 reports our results using the third and most demanding measure of democratic consolidation, which we have shown to be the most powerful in predicting subsequent democratic survival. The Twelve Year Duration measure turns up virtually identical breakdown rates for presidential democracies (61.5%) and parliamentary democracies (63.6%), with no statistically

19. The principal sources consulted in assembling the data on constitutional type and parliamentary seats were *Political Handbook of the World*, *Keesing's Record of World Events*, *Facts on File*, and the various yearbooks issued by Europa Publications. These were supplemented whenever necessary by country studies and secondary sources.

Table 1

Constitutional Type, Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties, and Democratic Consolidation (Post-Founding Election Measure of Consolidation)

Outcome of Transition	< 1.8 Parties		≥ 1.8 - < 2.4		≥ 2.4 - < 3.0		≥ 3.0 Parties		Totals	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Parliamentary systems Consolidated	60.0	(3)	62.5	(5)	100.0	(3)	87.5	(7)	75.0	(18)
	Turkey 54	(1.52)	Sierra Leone 62	(1.80)	India 80	(2.56)	Turkey 65	(3.06)	Mean effective number	
	Myanmar 52	(1.65)	Malaysia 59	(1.93)	Trinidad 66	(2.65)	Turkey 77	(3.19)	of parties for parliamentary	
	India 57	(1.74)	Jamaica 67	(1.95)	Sri Lanka 52	(2.79)	Pakistan 90	(3.22)	consolidation cases: 3.20	
			Somalia 64	(1.96)			Papua New Guinea 77	(3.62)		
			Turkey 91	(2.06)			Israel 51	(4.73)		
							Thailand 76	(7.41)		
							Indonesia 55	(9.69)		
Broke down	40.0	(2)	37.5	(3)	0.0	(0)	12.5	(1)	25.0	(6)
	Tanzania 62	(1.03)	Sierra Leone 68	(1.96)			Laos 59	(4.23)	Mean effective number	
	South Korea 61	(1.63)	Ghana 60	(1.99)					of parties for parliamentary	
			Kenya 66	(2.05)					breakdown cases: 2.15	
Parliamentary totals	100.0	(5)	100.0	(8)	100.0	(3)	100.0	(8)	100.0	(24)
Presidential systems Consolidated	50.0	(4)	57.1	(4)	80.0	(4)	81.8	(9)	68.8	(22) <sup>a</sup>
	Madagascar 65	(1.19)	Dominican Republic 82	(1.99)	Venezuela 63	(2.41)	Philippines 92	(3.38)	Mean effective number	
	Congo 61	(1.38)	Colombia 62	(2.00)	Peru 85	(2.47)	South Korea 92	(3.53)	of parties for presidential	
	Philippines 57	(1.60)	Uruguay 38	(2.15)	Brazil 50	(2.82)	Guatemala 50	(3.87)	consolidation cases: 3.30	
	Costa Rica 53	(1.77)	Argentina 89	(2.27)	Uruguay 89	(2.92)	Bolivia 85	(3.97)		
							Brazil 89	(4.05)	a. Includes Benin 60,	
							Chile 93	(4.49)	presidential consolidation	
							Chile 58	(6.77)	missing party data	
							Cuba 44	(7.09)		
							Ecuador 88	(7.26)		

Broke down	50.0	(4)	42.9	(3)	20.0	(1)	18.2	(2)	31.3	(10)
	Chad 62	(1.38)	Togo 61	(1.83)	Ghana 82	(2.77)	Burkina Faso 80	(3.04)	Mean effective number	
	Rwanda 63	(1.52)	South Korea 48	(1.93)			Togo 67	(4.00)	of parties for presidential	
	Ghana 72	(1.56)	Dominican						breakdown cases: 2.17	
	Venezuela 48	(1.69)	Republic 63	(1.94)						
Presidential totals	100.0	(8)	100.0	(7)	100.0	(5)	100.0	(11)	100.0	(32)
Totals (all)	23.2	(13)	26.8	(15)	14.3	(8)	33.9	(19)	100.0	(56)

*Source.* See Note 19 in text.

*Note.* The year of democratic consolidation or breakdown appears as two digits following the country name. The figures in parentheses represent the effective number of parties in the lower or sole chamber of the national legislature as of January 1 of the year of consolidation or breakdown.

Table 2

*Constitutional Type, Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties, and Democratic Consolidation (Alternation in Power Measure of Consolidation)*

Outcome of Transition	< 1.8 Parties		≥ 1.8 - < 2.4		≥ 2.4 - < 3.0		≥ 3.0 Parties		Totals	
	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Parliamentary systems Consolidated	16.7	(1) (1.57)	37.5	(3) (1.83) (1.89) (2.06)	100.0	(2) (2.56) (2.99)	85.7	(6) (3.06) (3.19) (3.22) (3.35)	54.2	(13) <sup>a</sup> Mean effective number parties for parliamentary consolidation cases: 3.06
	Myanmar 60		Trinidad 86 Jamaica 72 Turkey 91		India 80 Sri Lanka 56		Turkey 65 Turkey 75 Pakistan 90 Israel 77			
Broke down	83.3	(5) (1.03) (1.38) (1.45) (1.62) (1.63)	62.5	(5) (1.81) (1.96) (1.99) (2.05)	0.0	(0)	14.3	(1) (4.23)	47.8	(11) Mean effective number of parties for parliamentary breakdown cases: 1.92
	Tanzania 62 Somalia 69 Turkey 57 India 75 South Korea 61		Malaysia 69 Sierra Leone 67 Sierra Leone 68 Ghana 60 Kenya 66				Papua New Guinea 80 Thailand 75 Laos 59			
Parliamentary totals	100.0	(6)	100.0	(8)	100.0	(2)	100.0	(7)	100.0	(24)
Presidential systems Consolidated	25.0	(2) (1.47) (1.77)	50.0	(3) (2.00) (2.25) (2.27)	75.0	(3) (2.47) (2.53)	72.7	(8) (3.33) (3.87) (3.97) (4.29)	53.3	(16) Mean effective number of parties for presidential consolidation cases: 3.72
	Philippines 61 Costa Rica 53		Colombia 62 Dominican Republic 86 Argentina 89		Peru 85 Uruguay 59 South Korea 93		Uruguay 90 Venezuela 69 Bolivia 85 Brazil 51 Brazil 90 Chile 58 Cuba 44 Ecuador 88			

a. Includes Indonesia 50, parliamentary consolidation missing party data

Broke down	75.0	(6)	50.0	(3)	25.0	(1)	27.3	(3)	46.7	(14) <sup>a</sup>
	Madagascar 71	(1.06)	Togo 61	(1.83)	Ghana 82	(2.77)	Burkina Faso 80	(3.04)	Mean effective number of parties for presidential breakdown cases: 2.14	
	Congo 63	(1.38)	South Korea 48	(1.93)			Guatemala 54	(3.77)		
	Chad 62	(1.38)	Dominican				Togo 67	(4.00)	a. Includes Benin 63, presidential breakdown missing party data	
	Rwanda 63	(1.52)	Republic 63	(1.94)						
	Ghana 72	(1.56)							100.0	
	Venezuela 48	(1.69)								
									100.0	
									(30)	
Presidential totals	100.0	(8)	100.0	(6)	100.0	(4)	100.0	(11)		
Totals (all)	25.9	(14)	25.9	(14)	11.1	(6)	33.3	(18)	100.0	(54)

Table 3

*Constitutional Type, Effective Number of Parties, and Democratic Consolidation (Twelve Year Duration Measure of Consolidation)*

Outcome of Transition	< 1.8 Parties			≥ 1.8 - < 2.4			≥ 2.4 - < 3.0			≥ 3.0 Parties			Totals	
	%	(N)		%	(N)		%	(N)		%	(N)		%	(N)
Parliamentary systems Consolidated	50.0	(4)		14.3	(1)		50.0	(1)		40.0	(2)		36.7	(8)
	Trinidad 74	(1.00)		Myanmar 60	(1.57)		Sri Lanka 60	(2.61)		Papua New Guinea 87	(4.33)		Mean effective number of parties for parliamentary consolidation cases: 2.44	
	India 64	(1.46)								Israel 61	(4.93)			
	India 89	(1.60)												
	Jamaica 74	(1.70)												
Broke down	50.0	(4)		85.7	(6)		50.0	(1)		60.0	(3)		63.6	(14)
	Tanzania 62	(1.03)		Malaysia 69	(1.81)		Turkey 80	(2.46)		Laos 59	(4.23)		Mean effective number of parties for parliamentary breakdown cases: 2.60	
	Somalia 69	(1.38)		Sierra Leone 67	(1.96)					Indonesia 57	(5.41)			
	Turkey 57	(1.45)		Sierra Leone 68	(1.96)					Thailand 76	(7.41)			
	South Korea 61	(1.63)		Ghana 60	(1.99)									
				Kenya 66	(2.05)									
				Turkey 71	(2.25)									
Parliamentary totals	100.0	(8)		100.0	(7)		100.0	(2)		100.0	(5)		100.0	(22)
Presidential systems Consolidated	0.0	(0)		40.0	(2)		80.0	(4)		44.4	(4)		38.5	(10)
				Philippines 65	(1.98)		Uruguay 46	(2.43)		Costa Rica 61	(3.04)		Mean effective number of parties for presidential consolidation cases: 3.29	
				Colombia 70	(2.00)		Dominican Republic 90	(2.53)		Brazil 58	(4.29)			
							Argentina 95	(2.99)		Venezuela 71	(4.79)			
							Bolivia 94	(2.99)		Chile 64	(5.89)			

Broke down	100.0	(6)	60.0	(3)	20.0	(1)	55.6	(5)	61.5	(16) <sup>a</sup>
Madagascar 71		(1.06)	Togo 61	(1.83)	Ghana 82	(2.77)	Burkina Faso 80	(3.04)	Mean effective number of	
Congo 63		(1.38)	South Korea 48	(1.93)			Peru 92	(3.57)	parties for presidential	
Chad 62		(1.38)	Dominican				Guatemala 54	(3.77)	breakdown cases: 2.38	
Rwanda 63		(1.52)	Republic 63	(1.94)			Togo 67	(4.00)		
Ghana 72		(1.56)					Cuba 52	(4.31)	a. Includes Benin 63,	
Venezuela 48		(1.69)							presidential breakdown	
									missing party data	
Presidential totals	100.0	(6)	100.0	(5)	100.0	(5)	100.0	(9)	100.0	(26)
Totals (all)	29.2	(14)	25.0	(12)	14.6	(7)	29.2	(14)	100.0	(48)

significant difference between them ( $p = .881$ ). On the basis of samples ranging from 48 to 56 countries depending on the test involved, we can find no evidence that constitutional type has had any significant bearing on the success of Third World experiments in democracy between 1930 and 1995.

## RESULTS: PRESIDENTIALISM, PARLIAMENTARISM, AND MULTIPARTISM

We now examine the thesis proposed by Mainwaring (1993) concerning the effective number of parties in presidential and parliamentary democracies. According to Mainwaring (1993), "Multipartyism and presidentialism make a difficult combination," "a two-party system ameliorates the problems of presidentialism," and "parliamentarism mitigates the difficulties of multipartyism" (p. 212). If these hypotheses are correct, then presidential breakdowns should be associated with higher values of the effective number of parties, and presidential consolidations should exhibit significantly lower values of  $N$  (presumably in the vicinity of 2.0). Multiparty parliamentary democracy should perform better than multiparty presidential democracy.

To test the hypothesis that presidentialism and multipartyism constitute a "difficult combination" we need examine only the cases of unambiguous multipartyism—those in which the value of  $N$  exceeded 3.0. In Tables 1 through 3 there are 19, 18, and 14 cases, respectively, of multiparty democracy. These numbers are small, but we find that by all three measures of consolidation the performance of multiparty presidentialism was roughly comparable with that of multiparty parliamentarism.<sup>20</sup> We suspect that the alleged defects of multiparty presidential democracy may have been exaggerated in the literature.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, we observe that the model of multiparty parliamentary democracy—dominant in the OECD and therefore in most academic debate on democratic institutions—is fairly rare in the Third World. Using our Twelve Year Duration measure, we found only 2 multiparty parliamentary democracies that consolidated (Israel and Papua New Guinea), compared with 4 presidential democracies. If current trends continue and new multiparty presidential democracies increase their longevity, this gap will clearly widen in favor of presidentialism.

20. The consolidation rates of multiparty presidentialism and multiparty parliamentarism are not significantly different. Chi-square tests gave significance levels ( $p$ ) of .735 for Post-Founding Election, .509 for Alternation in Power, and .872 for Twelve Year Duration.

21. Although Stepan and Skach (1993) correctly reported that no presidential system with more than 3.0 effective parties was continuously democratic between 1979 and 1989, their choice of dates obscured some interesting findings. We identified a number of analogous cases in our research for this article: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, and Ecuador have all experienced 10-year stretches of presidential democracy with more than three effective parties.

To test the hypothesis that "a two-party system ameliorates the problems of presidentialism," we must first define which democracies approach two-party systems. This is by no means an easy task, as it ultimately comes down to a judgment call on how to employ the Laakso-Taagepera  $N$ -values. Mainwaring and Scully (1995) have suggested that "most party systems with an  $N$  of between 1.8 and 2.4 approximate the logic of two-party systems" (p. 31). If we adopt this criterion, in Tables 1 through 3 there are 7, 6, and 5 cases of presidential two-party democracy, respectively. These subpopulations are very small; nevertheless, examination of the data is instructive. Using the Post-Founding Election measure of consolidation, 4 of the 7 presidential two-party systems consolidated; using Alternation in Power, 3 of 6 consolidated; and using Twelve Year Duration, 2 of 5 consolidated. When we examine the success rates for *multiparty* presidential democracy (which we define as party systems with an  $N$  of 3.0 or greater), the corresponding figures are 9 of 11 consolidations for Post-Founding Election, 8 of 11 for Alternation in Power, and 4 of 9 for Twelve Year Duration (refer to Tables 1-3 for identification of specific cases).<sup>22</sup> The experience of developing countries does not generate support for the proposition that a two-party system is superior to multipartism for the survival of presidential democracy.

If Mainwaring's arguments are correct for the Third World, we should find presidential breakdowns to be associated with fragmented party systems and presidential successes associated with systems approaching the two-party model. To test this idea, we calculated the mean effective number of parties for democratic successes and failures by system of government (Tables 1-3, rightmost columns). Contrary to expectation, breakdowns of presidential democracy are associated with *lower* values for the effective number of parties: The three means fall in the range of 2.14 to 2.38. Presidential consolidations are associated with *higher* values of  $N$ , in the range of 3.29 to 3.72 parties. We subjected these values to difference-of-means tests. For the Twelve Year Duration measure of democratic consolidation, the difference between presidential and parliamentary means is weakly significant ( $p = .069$ ); for the Post-Founding Election measure, the difference is significant ( $p = .023$ ); and for the Alternation in Power measure of consolidation, the difference is more strongly significant ( $p = .009$ ).<sup>23</sup> In the Third World and

22. We conducted chi-square tests comparing the breakdown rates of presidential two-party democracies (1.8-2.4 parties) with presidential multiparty democracies (greater than 3.0 parties). No significant relationships emerged for Post-Founding Election ( $p = .258$ ), Alternation in Power ( $p = .352$ ), or Twelve Year Duration ( $p = .872$ ).

23. It is to be expected that the relationship between multipartism and consolidation would be strongest using the Alternation in Power measure. Alternations are more likely to occur in

using our indicators of consolidated democracy, multipartism poses no apparent obstacles to the success of presidential rule.

## TWO-PARTY AND MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY REVISITED

By arguing that multipartism is problematic only in the special case of presidential democracy, Mainwaring gave a novel twist to the old debate over the relative merits of two-party versus multiparty systems. The debate often ignored differences between presidential and parliamentary systems. Mainwaring argued that instead of focusing on either party system type or constitutional framework, analysts should focus on the different combinations of these institutional variables (Mainwaring, 1993, p. 223). In researching these ideas, we found ourselves returning full circle to the older debate focusing on the number of parties alone.

When we disregarded constitutional type and focused exclusively on the number of parties, we found that by two of our measures democratic consolidation was associated with more fractionalized party systems and that breakdown was associated with more concentrated party systems. Using the Post-Founding Election measure of consolidation, the mean  $N$  was 3.25 parties for all consolidations and 2.16 parties for all breakdowns. When using the Alternation in Power measure, on the other hand, the figures were 3.44 for consolidations and 2.04 for breakdowns (calculated from Tables 1-3). Difference-of-means tests gave significance levels of .006 and .001, respectively. Using Twelve Year Duration, the means were 2.91 for consolidations and 2.49 for breakdowns, and the difference is not statistically significant ( $p = .329$ ). From these results it is not immediately clear what is driving these differing means: whether concentrated party systems (low  $N$ ) are prone to breakdown, whether fractionalized party systems (high  $N$ ) are conducive to consolidation, or both.

Either explanation is theoretically plausible in the Third World context. First, let us consider the hypothesis that dominant-party systems are prone to democratic breakdown. In systems of this type, the dominant party tends to

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situations of higher party fragmentation, so this particular yardstick of democratic consolidation rewards pluralistic party systems and punishes more dominant ones. Detractors of the Alternation in Power concept of democratic consolidation note that it disqualifies dominant party democracies such as Japan and India; some (Gunther et al., 1995, p. 12) argue that this problem constitutes grounds for rejecting the Alternation in Power concept altogether. We disagree, both because we find the measure theoretically justifiable and because the number of single-party dominant systems is too small to undermine its practical usefulness. Problems inherent in this measure of consolidation are really problems of democratic theory itself, which has never dealt very well with dominant-party regimes that nonetheless function as polyarchies (Pempel, 1990).

create a single institutional locus of power. This concentration of mobilizational, clientelistic, and coercive resources means that if antidemocratic actors seize control of the party, then the regime itself will likely undergo change in an authoritarian direction.<sup>24</sup> This was the pattern followed in many countries where national liberation movements transformed themselves into hegemonic parties that later suspended political competition. Approximately half of our democracies that could be classified as having dominant-party or quasi-dominant systems (defined as an  $N$  of less than 1.8) are located in sub-Saharan Africa. These broke down frequently (Tables 1-3).

Conversely, there are strong theoretical grounds for suspecting that multiparty systems are conducive to democratic consolidation. At one time this would have been a controversial assertion. For decades, traditional comparativists believed that multiparty systems were inherently unstable, partly ascribable to Anglo-American biases and partly because of a tendency to confuse governmental instability (as in postwar Italy) with regime instability. These arguments have been effectively rebutted elsewhere (Lijphart, 1984, pp. 111-114). More recently, defenders of multipartism have dominated the literature, advocating an "expressive, mobilizing system of parties that will pull all major factions in the society into its representative, democratic decision-making institutions, co-opting dissent and accommodating demands that might otherwise turn to violence" (Powell, 1982, p. 74). Numerous empirical studies have bolstered the claim that multipartism contributes to democratic stability. Powell's comparative study of 29 (mostly wealthy) democracies showed that in the absence of extremist or antisystem parties, multipartism was associated with greater political participation, less violence, and with only slightly increased executive instability (pp. 109-110).

To test these hypotheses about party systems and democratic survival, we compared the consolidation rates of fractionalized and defractionalized party systems. We established intuitive cutoff points defining multiparty systems as those with an  $N$  of greater than 3.0 and dominant-party or near-dominant systems as those with an  $N$  of below 1.8. We had 52 valid cases with party data for Alternation in Power consolidation. Using this measure of consolidation, 11 of 14 dominant-party systems broke down, but only 13 of the 38 cases with  $N > 1.8$  broke down. The difference in breakdown rates was statistically significant ( $p = .004$ ). Using the multiparty threshold of 3.0 effective parties, 14 of the 18 cases above this threshold consolidated, but

24. This reasoning is consistent with Tatu Vanhanen's argument that democratization is a function of the concentration of power resources in a given society. Although his Index of Power Resources is based on socioeconomic factors alone, a similar argument could be made about the concentration of politico-institutional resources. See Vanhanen (1990).

only 14 of the 34 under it consolidated, and the difference in consolidation rates was significant ( $p = .010$ ). When we used cutoff points of 1.5 parties and 4.0 parties, we obtained similar and statistically significant results for the Alternation in Power measure of consolidation. However, these findings should be interpreted with great caution, because they are likely contaminated by this particular operational measure of democratic consolidation (see Note 23 above).

Using the Post-Founding Election measure of consolidation (55 valid observations with party data), we developed only very weak support for the hypothesis that fractionalization promotes consolidation. No significant results emerged when used  $N = 3.0$  as our definition of multipartism, so we searched for a better cutoff point. If we used 2.8 parties instead of 3.0 for our definition, we did find that countries above the 2.8 threshold were statistically more likely to consolidate ( $p = .049$ ). We found no support for the hypothesis that dominant-party systems are more prone to breakdown. For the Twelve Year Duration measure of consolidation, for which we had only 47 valid observations, no statistically significant patterns emerged either for fractionalized or defractionalized party systems.

Therefore, we have only weak and fragmentary support for our hypotheses that multipartism facilitates consolidation and that concentrated party systems promote breakdown. We note that in our sample there is a great deal of variation in the intermediate range between 1.8 and 3.0 effective parties (these cases would commonly be viewed as two-party, two-and-a-half party, or moderately fragmented systems). We are unable to derive any propositions concerning a "threshold" of effective parties that would affect the likelihood of democratic consolidation in either direction. Nonetheless, we reiterate the noteworthy finding that for two of our measures of consolidation, higher means of effective parties are associated with democratic consolidation, whereas lower means are associated with democratic breakdowns.

In advancing an explanation for these associations, one plausible hypothesis can be drawn from Lijphart's critique of the traditional two-party bias in comparative politics. Lijphart (1984) argued that "the case for two-party systems relies heavily on the majoritarian assumption that there is only one significant issue dimension in the political system, the left-right spectrum" (p. 114). This majoritarian assumption clearly does not apply to many of the Third World's plural societies, where numerous ethnic, linguistic, and regional divisions combine to make political conflict multidimensional. Multipartism may increase the probability that these conflicts will be processed within a democratic context, as has occurred in several of the First World's

plural societies.<sup>25</sup> This proposition awaits comparative research. In the absence of more sophisticated, multivariate, cross-national analyses, we are unable to say definitively whether multipartism is conducive to democratic survival in the Third World.

### **INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS: COMPARISONS WITH OTHER EMPIRICAL TESTS**

Our analysis of 56 transitions to democracy in the Third World between 1930 and 1995 contradicts much recent scholarship concerning the relationship between democratization and the choice of political institutions. Unlike Mainwaring (1993) and Stepan and Skach (1993), we fail to find support for the "perils of presidentialism" thesis and the "difficult combination" thesis. Why are our results so different? In attempting to answer this question we return to methodological differences, particularly as they relate to the crucial issue of case selection.

Some contrasts between our approach and that of Mainwaring (1993) have already been suggested. First, Mainwaring worked from a list of stable democracies, defined as those countries that had uninterrupted democratic rule between 1967 and 1992. His method ignores failures of competitive regimes (either presidential or parliamentary) in earlier times, and it does not consider some newer presidential democracies that are already impressive in longevity (Shugart & Carey, 1992, p. 39). Mainwaring therefore excludes *young* democracies, even though much of the choice-of-institutions literature is explicitly concerned with the survivability of nascent competitive regimes. Second, Mainwaring's criterion of stable democracy generates a sample of mostly advanced industrial democracies, whereas we examine exclusively the Third World. In developing nations the socioeconomic environment for democracy is vastly different. Although we could not address the issue in this article, it is plausible that institutional variables perform differently at varying levels of development.

Although our findings are confined to the Third World, we believe that our sample is superior to Mainwaring's in permitting a fair test of the Linz hypothesis and the "difficult combination" thesis, because our sample in-

25. In his classic analysis of Third World politics, Huntington (1968) wrote favorably of aggregative, mobilizing, dominant-party systems. However, his dependent variable was political stability, not political democracy.

cludes far more presidential regimes. Presidentialism is largely a Third World phenomenon: The only advanced industrial democracy using pure presidentialism is the United States. An intra-OECD comparison of the success of presidential regimes and parliamentary regimes is ill-advised, because the latter outnumber the former among wealthy democracies by more than 20 to 1. An intra-LDC (less developed country) comparison such as ours is more feasible, because of the greater diversity of the Third World's regimes. Although it seems inappropriate to compare First World parliamentarism with Third World presidentialism and then declare the former superior, much of the existing literature verges on exactly that.<sup>26</sup> A more valid comparison would require some controls on the level of economic development. Our method of using only Third World democracies incorporates at least a rudimentary control, generating a sample of more comparable cases.

By occasionally excluding Latin America, by counting microstates, by including presidential countries that were never democratic, and by focusing exclusively on the 1973-1989 period in their various tests, Stepan and Skach (1993) achieved results that overwhelmingly supported the Linz thesis that parliamentarism is superior to presidentialism. These issues of selection bias (Shugart, 1995) seem to explain most of the key differences between their study and the present effort.

Equally important is that our criteria for democratic consolidation differ from those of the studies mentioned above. One implication of this is that our research design tends toward a greater number of very young polyarchies. This may be legitimately criticized, but we see the inclusion of nascent democracies as an advantage rather than a handicap. Our method addresses the choice-of-institutions literature, which purports to be relevant to newly democratizing regimes, on its own terms. Our sample of 56 democratic transitions in developing countries between 1930 and 1995 has its demonstrable advantages: It is larger and more historically sensitive than other samples, and it compares the Third World with the Third World.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between institutional design and political democratization is a major contemporary debate within comparative politics. Two dominant hypotheses emerging from this debate—Linz's "perils of presidentialism" thesis and Mainwaring's corollary argument about presidentialism and

26. For a similar argument, see the review by Shugart (1995) of the important book by Linz and Valenzuela (1994).

multipartism—have moved quickly to establish themselves as the conventional wisdom.<sup>27</sup> This study cautions against premature acceptance of these arguments.

Our inability to find Third World support for these hypotheses does not mean that institutional design is irrelevant to new democracies. Constitutional frameworks and party systems undoubtedly have important implications for public policy, economic performance, civil unrest and “governability” issues, and the overall “quality” of democratic life. But our research suggests that institutional variables may have a weaker impact on democratic *survival* than is commonly imagined. If this is true, then the advocates of different institutional options should redirect their attention away from the regime survival debate and toward more nuanced issues of political process, policy outputs, and economic performance. The impact of different institutional formats on these variables may well be clearer—in terms of direction, significance, and magnitude—than they appear to be on a highly aggregated dependent variable such as democratic survival.

We note that the present study, like the previous studies it calls into question, is based on relatively simple bivariate analyses. Few if any controls have so far been applied to address the numerous economic, social, and cultural variables that presumably mediate the relationship between institutions and successful democratization. Without introducing such control variables into a multivariate research design, we cannot say to what degree institutions are crucial to the survival of Third World democracy. It is noteworthy, however, that even when operating on the same bivariate terrain as earlier studies and simply substituting a different set of cases, we cannot confirm their often-cited findings. At first cut, the analyses presented here—although not conclusive—do suggest that institutional variables are not as important as commonly believed. This *may* indicate that when considered alongside the overwhelming historical and socioeconomic obstacles to democratization in the Third World, the architecture of political institutions is simply not a very important determinant of the odds for democratic survival. In the meantime, the present study is evidence enough that further research is necessary on the relationship between institutional design and democratic consolidation in developing countries.

27. For example, in their review of recent research on democratic institutions, Przeworski et al. wrote that “one finding that appears to be clear is that democracies do not survive when they combine presidentialism with a fractionalized party system” (p. 45). The authors of *Sustainable Democracy* are more cautious, however, in discussing whether presidential or parliamentary regimes are more vulnerable to breakdown.

# APPENDIX

## The Sample of 56 Transitions to Democracy

Country Name	Transition to Democracy	Post- Founding Election	Alternation in Power	Twelve Year Duration	Breakdown of Democracy	Constitutional Type
Argentina	12/83	5/89	7/89	12/95	—	Presidential
Benin <sup>a</sup>	8/60	12/60	—	—	10/63	Presidential
Bolivia	10/82	7/85	8/85	10/94	—	Presidential
Brazil	1/46	10/50	1/51	1/58	3/64	Presidential
Brazil	3/85	12/89	3/90	—	—	Presidential
Burkina Faso	5/78	—	—	—	11/80	Presidential
Chad <sup>a</sup>	8/60	—	—	—	1/62	Presidential
Chile	11/52	9/58	11/58	11/64	9/73	Presidential
Chile	3/90	12/93	—	—	—	Presidential
Colombia	8/58	5/62	8/62	8/70	—	Presidential
Congo <sup>a</sup>	8/60	3/61	—	—	8/63	Presidential
Costa Rica	11/49	7/53	11/53	11/61	—	Presidential
Cuba	7/40	6/44	10/44	—	3/52	Presidential
Dominican Republic	2/63	—	—	—	9/63	Presidential
Dominican Republic	8/78	5/82	8/86	8/90	—	Presidential
Ecuador	8/84	1/88	8/88	—	—	Presidential
Ghana <sup>a</sup>	3/57	—	—	—	4/60	Parliamentary
Ghana	10/69	—	—	—	1/72	Presidential
Ghana	9/79	—	—	—	12/82	Presidential
Guatemala	3/45	11/50	—	—	9/54	Presidential
India	1/52	5/57	—	1/64	6/75	Parliamentary
India	3/77	1/80	1/80	3/89	—	Parliamentary
Indonesia <sup>a</sup>	12/49	9/55	9/50	—	3/57	Parliamentary
Israel <sup>a</sup>	1/49	1/51	6/77	1/61	—	Parliamentary
Jamaica <sup>a</sup>	8/62	2/67	3/72	8/74	—	Parliamentary
Kenya <sup>a</sup>	12/63	—	—	—	6/66	Parliamentary
Laos	11/57	—	—	—	5/59	Parliamentary
Madagascar <sup>a</sup>	6/60	3/65	—	—	4/71	Presidential
Malaysia <sup>a</sup>	8/57	8/59	—	—	5/69	Parliamentary
Myanmar <sup>a</sup>	1/48	1/52	4/60	1/60	3/62	Parliamentary
Pakistan	12/88	10/90	8/90	—	—	Parliamentary
Papua New Guinea <sup>a</sup>	9/75	6/77	3/80	9/87	—	Parliamentary
Peru	7/80	4/85	7/85	—	4/92	Presidential
Philippines	12/53	11/57	11/61	12/65	9/72	Presidential
Philippines	2/86	5/92	—	—	—	Presidential
Rwanda <sup>a</sup>	7/62	—	—	—	12/63	Presidential
Sierra Leone <sup>a</sup>	4/61	3/62	—	—	3/67	Parliamentary
Sierra Leone	4/68	—	—	—	11/68	Parliamentary
Somalia <sup>a</sup>	7/60	3/64	—	—	3/69	Parliamentary
South Korea <sup>a</sup>	8/48	—	—	—	10/48	Presidential

## APPENDIX (continued)

Country Name	Transition to Democracy	Post- Founding Election	Alternation in Power	Twelve Year Duration	Breakdown of Democracy	Constitutional Type
South Korea	8/60	—	—	—	5/61	Parliamentary
South Korea	2/88	12/92	2/93	—	—	Presidential
Sri Lanka <sup>a</sup>	2/48	5/52	4/56	2/60	7/83	Parliamentary
Tanzania <sup>a</sup>	12/61	—	—	—	7/62	Parliamentary
Thailand	2/75	4/76	3/75	—	10/76	Parliamentary
Togo <sup>a</sup>	4/60	—	—	—	4/61	Presidential
Togo	5/63	—	—	—	1/67	Presidential
Trinidad & Tobago <sup>a</sup>	8/62	11/66	12/86	8/74	—	Parliamentary
Turkey	5/50	5/54	—	—	10/57	Parliamentary
Turkey	10/61	10/65	10/65	—	3/71	Parliamentary
Turkey	1/74	6/77	3/75	—	12/80	Parliamentary
Turkey	11/87	10/91	11/91	—	—	Parliamentary
Uruguay	4/34	4/38	3/59	4/46	2/73	Presidential
Uruguay	3/85	11/89	3/90	—	—	Presidential
Venezuela	12/47	—	—	—	11/48	Presidential
Venezuela	1/59	12/63	3/69	1/71	—	Presidential

*Source.* For transitions and breakdowns, Political Regime Change Dataset (Gasiorowski, 1996). For consolidations and constitutional classifications, see Note 19 in text.

a. Denotes cases in which the transition to democracy coincided with national independence.

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