Introduction

Why do some countries become democracies and others not? Why do some countries remain more democratic whereas others slide back toward authoritarianism? Are social, economic or international forces the key determinants of these processes? Are some types of authoritarian regimes more prone to democratize than others? Do actors influence democratization, or is that a structurally determined outcome? Do the same determinants affect democratization in the short-run as in the long-run? What lessons can be learned for international efforts at promoting democracy from comparative democratization studies?

In this book I address these questions by drawing on evidence from the extraordinary improvement in the realm of democracy the world has witnessed in the past 35 years or so. Starting in the Mediterranean area in 1974, Greece, Portugal and Spain overthrew longstanding dictatorships and installed popularly elected governments. After military juntas came down in Ecuador and Peru in the late 1970s, democracy profoundly swept the Latin American continent during the 1980s with the establishment of democracy in Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Chile. In Asia, the Philippine dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos was toppled, followed by the inauguration of competitive multiparty elections in South Korea, Nepal and Bangladesh.

By this time, the disintegration of single-party rule in the former Soviet bloc was well under way. Starting in Poland, the incumbent one-party regime in February 1989 commenced round-table talks with the opposition movement, which led to elections in June where the Communists suffered a disastrous defeat. Meanwhile, in Hungary the Communist Party was formally dissolved and multiparty elections proclaimed. In the fall of that same year, massive anti-government rallies appeared all across Eastern Germany, eventually forcing the government to resign and the wall to come down. Czechoslovakia followed suit, and before the end of 1989 the Communist one-party system had been dismantled in Romania as well. Less than two years later, after a failed coup, the

Soviet Union dissolved into fifteen independent states, quite a few of which soon held competitive multiparty elections.

Meanwhile, in Africa south of the Sahara "the wind from the East" started "shaking the coconut trees," as noted by a local observer (cited in Kurzman 1998, p. 55). On the eve of the revolutionary year 1989, Frederick Chiluba, then Chairman of the Congress of Trade Unions in Zambia, proclaimed: "If the owners of socialism have withdrawn from the one-party system, who are the Africans to continue with it?" (cited in Bratton and van de Walle 1997, pp. 105–6). Only 10 months later, the one-party system in his country crumbled as Chiluba was elected president of Zambia in the first free and fair election for decades. Across the African continent, from South Africa and Namibia in the south to Benin, Mali, Guinea-Bissau in the west, including the island states Sao Tome and Principe, Cape Verde, and Madagascar, rows of dictatorships transited toward democracy in the following first years of the 1990s.

Toward the turn of the millennium, democracy made further significant inroads around the globe, such as in Croatia and Serbia in Europe, in Mexico, Ghana and Senegal in the South, and in Taiwan and Indonesia in the East. In this latest decade renewed hope for democracy arose in the wake of the 2002 elections in Kenya, the so-called "colored revolutions" in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, and with the return of seemingly competitive elections in Lebanon in 2005.

This tidal change in the establishment of democratic practices around the globe has been referred to as the "third wave" of democratization (Huntington 1991), following the first and second waves culminating after World War I and II, respectively. Depicted in quantitative terms in Figure 0.1, the average level of democracy in the world has been steadily on the rise since the late 1970s, with a significant peak in the speed of change around 1990. Beneath the general trend of democratization, however, the third wave has also been marred by serious undercurrents pulling in the opposite direction. In Latin America democratic deterioration in the 1990s significantly struck longstanding democracies such as Colombia and Venezuela. Following a short opening after the breakup of the Soviet Union, democratic politics in the former republics eroded quickly in Belarus, and – although at a slower pace – in Russia. In Africa, a coup in 1994 ended decades of multiparty competition in Gambia, and backsliding into authoritarianism infected several other polities on the continent, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In some years, as the lower part of Figure 0.1

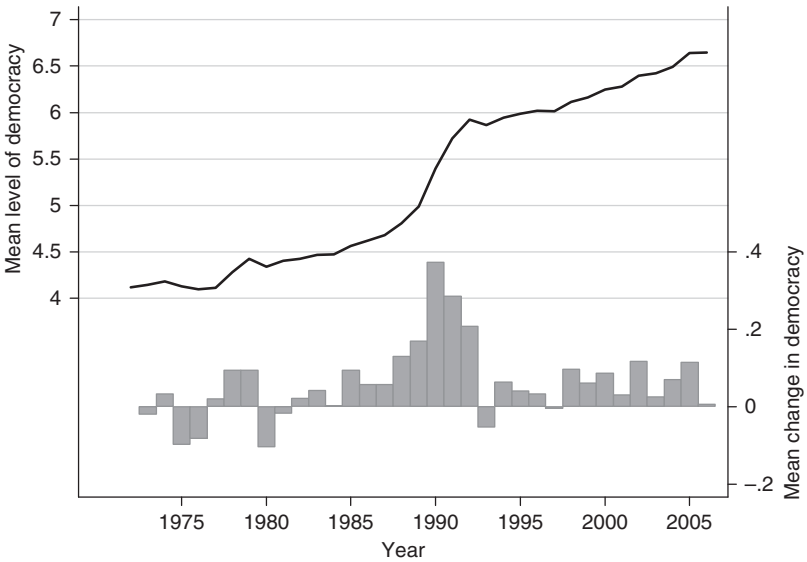

Figure 0.1 The Third Wave of Democratization
Note: The graph is based on the combined Freedom House and Polity measures of democracy (to be introduced in Chapter 1) on a global sample of 196 countries.

makes clear, this authoritarian undercurrent even outweighed the generally democratizing trend of the third wave. Within certain countries over time, such as in Haiti, Turkey, Thailand, Pakistan and Niger, swift changes toward and away from democracy have occurred repeatedly. Yet in other countries, most notably in the Middle East and in Northern Africa, authoritarian regimes have been left more or less untarnished by the global wave of democratization.

What forces drove these patterns of regime change and stability within countries across the globe? Were the same factors that drove democratization also responsible for hindering de-democratization? To what extent are the causes of democratization and de-democratization even intelligible?

Turning to the most prominent theories of democratization in the field, four distinct answers to these questions suggest themselves. Modernization theory (Lipset 1959) alleges that democratization in the last three decades is the upshot of a general trend toward furthered

economic development, deepened industrialization and educational expansion. With knowledge on these structural parameters, movements toward and away from democracy should be fairly easy to predict. By the account of the so-called "transition paradigm" (Carothers 2002), in contrast, democracy has been brought about from above through the strategic skills, and at times sheer luck, of elite actors maneuvering under profound uncertainty (Rustow 1970; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). With idiosyncratic factors playing such a decisive role, our understanding of the general factors driving democratization is severely limited. If instead the "social forces" tradition (Bellin 2000) were to prove correct, democratization during the third wave has been triggered by mass mobilization from below, most notably by the working class (Rueschemeyer *et al.* 1992; Collier 1999). In accordance with the new economic approach to explaining democratization, however, democratic institutions have been granted by the rich as a concession to the poor. This should have been made possible through weakened fear of redistribution resulting from eroding economic inequality (Boix 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006).

In this book I shall argue that while each of these approaches to explaining democratization during the third wave contains a grain of truth, they are nonetheless incomplete and in many respects simply at fault. These novel findings have been reached by a combination of an improved large-*n* study design and a more systematic employment of in-depth case studies. Starting with the former, using a combination of two predominant democracy indices I intend to explain variations in democracy over time across 165 countries over the period 1972–2006. These analyses break new ground on several accounts. First, in terms of the range of explanatory variables entered, I outperform most, if not all, earlier studies in the field. Second, I present some novel findings pertaining to factors hitherto untested on a global scale. These particularly concern the democratizing effects of mass protest, a posited determinant which has so far attracted limited attention in large-*n* studies. Third, I will test whether there is variation in how determinants affect movements in different directions along the graded democracy scale. In other words, I endeavor to separate the effects on movements toward as well as reversals away from democracy. Fourth, I systematically explore the effects as well as the overall predictive performance of these determinants in both the short-run and long-run perspective. To the best of my knowledge, the third and fourth endeavors have never before been

thoroughly undertaken. Fifth, and finally, I systematically assess intermediary links in the hypothesized chain of causation connecting each determinant to democratization.

The second methodological innovation of this book is the way it combines statistical with case study evidence. From Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay and Peru in Latin America, the Philippines and Nepal in Asia, Hungary in the post-communist region, Turkey in the Middle East, and South Africa on the African mainland, I draw on first-hand scholarly knowledge on processes of democratization from all corners of the globe. These cases are carefully selected for being instances where particular determinants impacted on democratization, which makes them especially suitable for explorations of the causal mechanisms at work.

Factors driving and not driving the third wave

Drawing on this comprehensive research design, I make several new findings in this study. The predominant approach to testing modernization theory has become the use of simple proxies such as energy consumption or national income. I instead revive the tradition initiated by Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) according to which socioeconomic modernization is a broad, coherent syndrome underlying several societal processes, such as industrialization, education, urbanization and the spread of communications technology. Applying this broader measure, I evidence a robust effect which, contrary to recent claims (Acemoglu *et al.* 2005; 2007; 2008), even applies within countries over time. However, modernization affects regime outcomes by hindering authoritarian reversals rather than promoting transitions toward democracy. If democracy is a ladder, modernization does not help countries scale upwards; it helps them avoid falling downwards. By and large, I thus confirm the argument by Adam Przeworski *et al.* (2000), although I base my finding on a graded measure of democracy and use a larger set of controls.

Moreover, I find that the most effective component of the syndrome of modernization is not education, as some would have it (Glaeser *et al.* 2007), nor is it industrialization, as others would claim (Boix 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). Somewhat surprisingly, the strongest bite in modernization's assemblage is exerted by media proliferation. As radios, TVs and newspapers spread in the population, anti-democratic

coups are either deferred or aborted. This is probably one of the most undertheorized facets of the modernization syndrome. On my interpretation, however, media proliferation as the most prominent mechanism behind the modernization effect helps explain its asymmetric nature. As opposed to increased national income, industrialization or educational expansion, the democracy-promoting effects of the media cannot materialize under authoritarian conditions. More specifically, for the media to work as a safeguard of democracy, some freedom of the press has to be established. What this implies is that the effect of media proliferation on democratization increases with the level of democracy already achieved. For this reason, widespread access to media outlets defers backsliding from these achieved levels rather than triggering movement toward more democracy.

Whereas societal modernization accompanying long-term economic development thus helps sustain democracy, the effect of short-term growth on the prospects for democratization is exactly the opposite. Economic upturns help sustain autocracies, whereas economic crises trigger transitions toward democracy. As evidenced from case studies in Latin America and the Philippines (Haggard and Kaufman 1995), deteriorating economic performance, and the austere policy measures it provokes, undercut the power bases of authoritarian regimes. It drives a wedge between the regime and economic elites, encouraging the latter to withdraw from the authoritarian bargain, and between hardliners and softliners within the regime elite itself, eventually subverting its hold on power.

Deteriorating economic conditions also help fuel the mobilization of mass protest against the regime. Despite numerous assertions from area specialists of the import of popular mobilization for understanding transitions to democracy (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; McFaul 2002; Bunce 2003), no systematic study has hitherto tested its impact on a global scale. I document a significant influence – but, critically, not from all forms of mass protest. Only peaceful demonstrations are effective in promoting democratization, whereas the use of violent means such as rioting or even armed rebellion proves largely ineffectual. Inquiring more closely into the unarmed resistance movements toppling authoritarian regimes in the Philippines, South Africa and Nepal reveals why this is the case (Schock 2005). Violent opposition is usually a strategy reserved for marginalized groups that helps autocracies close the lines and legitimize its use of repression, making it more successful in quelling the resistance. Peaceful protest, by contrast, may arouse larger

segments of the population. When the regime chooses to confront protest through the barrel of a gun, moreover, moral outrage spurs further counter-regime mobilization, both domestically and internationally. A successful popular challenge eventually disrupts the material and other support bases of the regime. Intra-elite divisions are thereby exacerbated, preparing the scene for a democratic takeover.

I find that democratization is rooted in economic and social conditions not only within the boundaries of the nation state, but also within the international system. As the "wave" metaphor itself would suggest, there is evidence of democratic diffusion effects. Authoritarian regimes during the third wave behaved like falling dominoes (Starr 1991), in that the fall of one affected the likelihood that among neighboring countries others would fall. This pattern holds despite the fact that I control for a significantly greater number of possible common background factors than do the latest contributions to this field of inquiry (Brinks and Coppedge 2006; Gleditsch and Ward 2006). In other words, it appears that authoritarian dominoes influenced each other's fall, not simply because some simultaneous process "shook the table" on which they were standing.

Disentangling the mechanisms responsible for neighbor diffusion is, however, a thornier issue, and more case study work on its operation on the ground is called for. The same applies for Jon Pevehouse's (2005) claim that regional organizations may promote democratization among their member states. I find support for this in my large-*n* study, and by tracking the influence of, primarily, the Council of Europe in Turkey, and the Organization of American States in Peru, I find that regional organizations may encourage democratization by pressurizing authoritarian regimes. But the evidence in other cases is weaker, again drawing attention to the fact that international explanations for democratization seem to rest on less robust foundations.

I also challenge several predominant theoretical perspectives on democratization by showing that their pet explanatory factors do not work as expected. Despite widely held beliefs to the contrary (e.g., Bernard *et al.* 2004), I find colonialism to have no systematic effects, either as a phenomenon in its own right, or in the form of distinct experiences depending on colonial origin. My argument is thus supportive of the alternative claim that the importance of colonialism in the history of the developing world may have been exaggerated (Herbst 2000). Moreover, despite having access to the largest dataset on income disparities hitherto assembled, my findings do not substantiate the

core assumption of recent economic theories of democratization (Boix 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). That is, democratization during the third wave did not ensue from increased economic equality. My data also belies cherished assumptions about the nature and consequences of identity politics (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1985). Heterogeneous populations did not hurt democracy during the third wave.

Having a predominantly Muslim population, or being dependent on foreign trade, are both factors that appear to impede democratization. However, neither can be easily explained. Although I find that the Muslim gap in democracy is mostly an "Arab" gap (Stepan and Robertson 2003; 2004), separating the Middle East and North Africa from the rest of the world, this gap cannot be explained in terms of superior economic performance in this region, nor is it due to oil wealth or, as Fish (2002) suggests, to female subordination. Even more importantly, since individual Muslims in various parts of the world express democratic sentiments no weaker than those of people belonging to other religious denominations, the cultural interpretation of the Muslim gap rests on shaky micro-foundations. Finally, the fact that countries relatively independent of trade have been more likely to democratize would at first sight seem to support classical "dependency theory" (Bollen 1983). I show, however, that a core assumption in this theory is faulty. Countries whose trading patterns are heavily geared toward the capitalist core of the world system, such as toward the US and Europe, were *not* less likely to democratize during the third wave.

Institutions under authoritarianism

For a long time a dubious assumption haunted most prevalent theories of democratization: the notion that all authoritarian regimes face similar constraints on and opportunities for democratization. Much as democracies vary among themselves in terms of the institutions that structure their mode of operation, different dictatorships have different institutional setups. Some dictators are crowned; others wear a uniform. Some organize a ruling party and stage single-party elections; others maintain a façade of controlled multiparty competition. While a new literature has recently emerged on how to classify autocracies, as well as the "hybrid" regimes located in the gray zone between democracy and autocracy (Geddes 1999; 2003; Diamond 2002; Levitsky and

Way 2002; Schedler 2002b; 2006), no systematic attempts have been made to assess whether distinguishing among types of authoritarian regimes really pays any dividends for the understanding of democratization.

Relying on the improved classification of authoritarian regime types in Hadenius and Teorell (2007), I undertake such an assessment. I find that military dictatorships, according to expectations (Geddes 1999; 2003), are more prone to democratize than single-party regimes. Most importantly, however, I develop and test a theory of when and why non-democratic regimes that still allow multiparty elections – termed multiparty autocracies – are more prone to democratize than other species of the authoritarian brand. This theory moves beyond established deductive models of authoritarian regime types (Wintrobe 1998; Geddes 1999; 2003; Bueno de Mesquita *et al*. 2003), which do not even make the distinction between single- and multiparty autocracies.

My theory starts from the assumption that competition in multiparty autocracies is a dual battle, where the incumbent elites and the opposition simultaneously compete for votes in the electoral arena and struggle over the very rules that shape this arena (Schedler 2002a). Either through efforts to reform the electoral system, which is often rigged in the incumbent party's favor, or by struggling to establish independent institutions for impartial electoral governance and resolution of post-election disputes, the opposition attempts to pull the electoral contest toward greater uncertainty. The incumbent party, which loathes uncertainty, struggles to resist such reforms. The end result could be change in either the opposition's or the regime's favored direction, making autocratic multiparty competition an inherently unstable equilibrium.

The logic of these unstable dynamics, however, tends to push multiparty autocracies in the direction of democratization. To begin with, the incidence of elections in which not only the ruling party participates creates an arena unavailable under other institutional conditions in which rival party factions can voice grievances. Multiparty elections, however controlled, rigged and unfair they may be, thus fuel intra-regime divisions, a condition favorable to democratization. Moreover, these divisions may improve the incentives for what may be divided opposition parties to join forces and challenge the ruling party under a unified banner – an additional condition favorable to democratization. These two processes – divisions within the incumbent regime and unification of the opposition forces – reinforce one another.

These dynamics are of course not set in motion by sheer necessity. They are more likely to be triggered when the multiparty autocracy faces exogenous shocks, be they domestic or international. An economic downturn, for example, drains the resources available to the regime to secure electoral support. As the chances of winning electoral contests on the opposition's ticket thus increases, intra-elite divisions are exacerbated. The challenge of popular mobilization triggers similar dynamics, again by driving the wedge deeper between the softer and sturdier elements of incumbent elites, and also by questioning the viability of the regime in the eyes of potential supporters of the opposition. My theory thus not only furnishes an account of how electoral authoritarianism differs from other ways of institutionalizing autocracy. It also specifies the circumstances under which multiparty autocracies are more likely to democratize.

In an unprecedented test of these expectations, I show on the basis of a global sample of countries that multiparty autocracies are by themselves more prone to democratize than other authoritarian regime types, even when all other putative determinants of democratization are held constant. Moreover, multiparty autocracies are significantly more likely to democratize as a response to exogenous shocks such as economic downturns, popular mobilization and even foreign interventions.

Theoretical implications

How far, then, can these determinants take us in terms of explaining democratization? When the entire range of putative determinants is taken into account, my statistical models at best explain some 10 percent of the yearly change in democracy during the third wave. This means, for example, that by knowing the geographical size, the religious denominations and diversity of a country in a given year, by knowing its economic performance, its level of popular mobilization, trading patterns and international environment in terms of neighbor diffusion and membership in regional organizations, the incidence of democratization in this country over the coming year would still be a more or less unpredictable event. In other words, structural theories are not very successful at explaining short-term democratization.

With a longer time horizon applied, however, this situation radically changes. If we think of these same structural conditions as determining a long-run equilibrium level of democracy, to which countries would