Abstract: This article advances three propositions addressing the two components of a theory of regime change: the etiology of regime types and the sources of their variable durability. The three outcomes explained are relatively durable democracies, relatively durable dictatorships, and relatively fragile regimes that lack sufficient resources to maintain their hegemony in the face of the manifold challenges of political and economic development and so pass regularly from democracy to dictatorship and back again. The argument rests on the empirical observation that a fundamental but not exclusive source of regime durability is rural incorporation. It then explains the presence or absence of rural incorporation with reference to the intensity of inter-elite conflict; it explains the type of regime rendered more durable by rural incorporation with reference to the relationship between structures of political authority and agrarian property regimes; finally, it provides a sketch of the causal mechanisms linking rural incorporation to regime durability.
Introduction

This article proposes a unified explanation for the origins of democracy, the origins of dictatorships, and the sources of their relative durability in the twentieth-century, post-colonial world. I present hypotheses explaining three outcomes: cases of relatively durable dictatorships; cases of relatively durable democracies; and cases of relatively fragile regimes that lack sufficient resources to maintain their hegemony in the face of the manifold challenges of political and economic development and so pass regularly from democracy to dictatorship and back again. It is not my contention that each and every instance of regime change can be neatly subsumed into this framework; arguments on behalf of causal heterogeneity and contingent events are too powerful to ignore. It is my contention, however, that we can identify causally relevant antecedent conditions that distinguish durable regimes from non-durable regimes; that we can identify a further set of causally relevant antecedent conditions that partition the former set of durable regimes into durable democracies and durable dictatorships; and that we can identify the causal mechanisms and processes linking antecedent conditions tightly to outcomes.¹

By stressing the role of antecedent conditions, I self-consciously position this argument in the “structuralist camp.” I concede the power of many critiques of structural accounts and acknowledge merit in approaches that eschew structuralist factors and thus rely on underdetermined accounts of actors’ strategies and processes.² I acknowledge as well the value of efforts to seek a middle ground combining the best of agency-based and structuralist accounts.³ I claim, however, that moving to a new object of inquiry—the simultaneous study of the origins of regime types and the sources of their durability--
creates an opportunity to construct new structuralist arguments that are inspired by but move beyond existing structuralist accounts, especially via the incorporation of causal mechanisms that are consistent with individual-level action. The penultimate section of this paper responds to recent critiques of structuralist assumptions and provides some novel defenses of macrostructural analysis.

Existing structuralist accounts have tended to stress either regime origins or regime durability. Most famously, Barrington Moore theorized the origins of democracy and dictatorship but, apart from some intriguing concluding remarks on the need to explain continuity and not just assume it, had little to say about issues of regime durability. Samuel Huntington, conversely, tackles in his earlier work questions of political order--regime durability, if you will--while famously declining to address the determination of regime type. This divide between a Moorean emphasis on regime type and a Huntingtonian emphasis on regime durability continues to mark macrohistorical scholarship. Gregory Luebbert’s work is decidedly Moorean in its emphasis on the origins of regimes in interwar Europe; his references to the stability of interwar liberal orders in England, France, and Switzerland, along with his claims about the inherent instability of all other regimes during that period, while certainly of historical importance, are secondary theoretical concerns, and Luebbert ends his account with the formation of interwar regimes. In contrast, Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier’s highly regarded study of the implications for regime dynamics of alternative modes of labor incorporation takes on a decidedly Huntingtonian cast in their emphasis on the capability of regimes and party systems to survive “the period of new opposition movements and political crisis faced by countries throughout Latin America from the late 1950s to the 1970s.” The Colliers do
provide historically specific explanations of regime types, but their major theoretical propositions explain how modes of incorporation shape party systems which in turn shape regime durability. Indeed, the mode of incorporation that produced the most sturdy regimes--radical-populist party incorporation in Mexico and Venezuela--resulted in the fortification of contrasting regime types. Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John Stephens’ seminal work linking the development of capitalism to democracy, to give one final example, occupies a slightly more ambiguous position between Moorean origins and Huntingtonian durability. The three “clusters of power configurations” they identify as being critical to the long-term development of democracy places their theoretical framework squarely in the Moorean camp; but the authors’ careful attention in the case studies to the causes of democratic breakdowns in Europe and Latin America give them empirical footing in the Huntingtonian camp as well. Still needed are discrete theoretical statements and empirical support for both halves of regime dynamics.

Despite their manifold differences in object of inquiry, theoretical propositions, and intellectual temperament, Moore and Huntington share a focus on the fate of the countryside in the construction of national political regimes. Alongside of his most pithy statement of the class origins of regime types, “no bourgeoisie, no democracy,” Moore argued that the destruction of the peasantry was critical to the formation of liberal democracies, while the retention of peasantries into the modern era typically forclosed this option and imposed either fascism or communism. Huntington too stressed the role of the countryside in explaining his favored outcome, political stability. The most fully articulated theoretical lens of his study is, of course, the ratio of institutionalization to political participation; and subsequent chapters give great weight to the question of
institution building. But by the end of the book, and with one admirably pithy formulation of a secondary thesis—“He who controls the countryside controls the country”—Huntington switched analytic tracks to ground regime stability in rural incorporation.11 Fully embracing this latter formulation of the sources of stability, he concludes the book by redescribing “the organizational imperative” from institutionalization (increasing organizational adaptability, autonomy, coherence, and complexity) to “the organization of the masses.”12 Rural incorporation, moreover, plays a significant role in explaining either regime origins or regime durability in much of the recent macrohistorical accounts discussed in the preceding paragraph: the task at hand, then, is to theorize the causes and consequences of rural incorporation to explain both regime type and regime durability.

This essay thus builds on the existing literature, adding to it three new hypotheses. I begin with a brief review of Huntington’s propositions about the regime-stabilizing effects of rural incorporation. While respect for causal heterogeneity might preclude the claim that rural incorporation constitutes either a necessary or a sufficient condition for regime durability, the case studies below establish at minimum that rural incorporation can fortify different types of regimes under widely varying conditions.13 Huntington, and those who have built on his work, however, have neglected three key analytic tasks necessary to convert an empirical generalization into a causal theory: (1) analysis of the conditions resulting in rural incorporation in some but not all cases; (2) analysis of the regime outcomes of rural incorporation; (3) and identification of the causal mechanisms linking rural incorporation to regime durability. This essay tackles (somewhat disproportionately, due to space constraints) these analytic tasks.
The first section argues that rural incorporation is the most fundamental source of regime durability and sketches out the mechanisms linking these two variables. In the second section, I consider the conditions motivating political elites to undertake or to avoid rural incorporation, tracing this decision to the intensity of elite conflict: high levels of elite conflict, I argue, provide the incentives for contending elites to seek rural support, while low levels of conflict induce elites to collaborate in the exclusion of rural lower classes. The intensity of conflict and the form its resolution takes, expressed as the class composition of underlying social coalitions, thus explains the durability of resulting regimes. These two sections represent the Huntingtonian half of my argument. In the third section, I present the Moorean half of my argument by considering the conditions under which rural incorporation will render more durable democratic versus authoritarian regimes. The source of these different outcomes, I argue, stems from relations between structures of political authority and agrarian property regimes. These antecedent structural conditions substantially shape the strategic choices of contending elites, producing predictable preferences for negotiating a transition to democracy or imposing a dictatorship. The fourth section presents case studies of rural incorporation in Syria, Mexico, Venezuela, and Turkey. These case studies support the proposition linking rural incorporation to high-intensity elite conflict as well as the proposition linking regime types to antecedent structural conditions. The fifth section reviews contrasting cases of non-incorporation, attributing them either to low-intensity elite conflict or to conditions making rural incorporation infeasible. In the sixth section, I return to the vexing issue of structure versus agency and its implications for theorizing about democratic transitions. I provide two arguments defending structuralist approaches, one pertaining to the
compatibility of macrolevel determinism and microlevel indeterminism, and one pertaining to “elective affinities” between different objects of explanation and explanations based on macrolevel factors. The concluding section then considers the contributions to regime theorizing of a framework that simultaneously explains regime origins and regime durability. I argue that regardless of its substantive contributions, a unified theoretical framework resolves long-standing problems in the study of regime dynamics.

Green Uprisings Revisited

The argument begins with Huntington’s basic claim that the issue of rural mobilization lies at the center of the analysis of relative political stability. Huntington famously attributed political instability to rapid social and economic change that outpaced and even impeded the development of political institutions. Consequently, political forces participated in political life in direct conflict with one another, not through established and valued conflict-limiting mechanisms. But political instability could be averted. While urban centers were constant sources of opposition, the countryside could, depending on who mobilized it, act as either a revolutionary or conservative influence. “The stability of a government,” he concluded, “depends upon the support which it can mobilize in the countryside.”

In part due to deficiencies in Huntington’s analysis, most regime change theorists subsequently concentrated on cities as they turned their attention to either class conflict or elite negotiations. While applauding his focus on political power and institutions and endorsing his notion that political protest stemmed from real grievances and not the psychological strains induced by modernization, scholars criticized Huntington for
theoretical formulations that bordered on tautology, for unsystematic provision of evidence, for underspecifying the linkages between rapid structural change and instability, and for ignoring the ways in which political order masked existing patterns of economic exploitation and political exclusion which themselves motivated oppositional activity more than modernization itself. Moreover, for all its focus on institutions, Huntington implicitly supplied a “balance-of-power model” of political stability, in which rural support provided governments with the political resources needed to subdue urban insurrectionaries. Predicated as it was on treating cities as constant sources of opposition, this claim became difficult to sustain in light of subsequent research into the pacifying effects of populist economic policies and corporatist political institutions. To the extent that these innovations permitted routinized politics, the stabilizing role of the countryside was easily ignored.

We can, however, reject Huntington’s theoretical edifice while retaining its core empirical foundation: alliances between urban political and economic elites and rural middle classes have stabilized democracies and dictatorships across the post-colonial world. In their study of eight countries in Latin America, David Collier and Ruth Berins Collier conclude that the most durable regimes (Mexico and Venezuela) were products of incorporation strategies that embraced both urban labor and non-elite rural producers. This finding has been replicated, by studies linking the stability of the Mexican regime to rural incorporation and by studies making the converse point that the absence of rural incorporation contributed significantly to regime breakdowns in Brazil and Chile. Within the Middle East, a number of stable authoritarian regimes rest on rural support, while peasant votes have underpinned the persistence of Turkish democracy since 1950 and have
helped avoid prolonged military rule. In South Asia, scholars have long argued that Indian democracy rests on the backs of “bullock capitalists” who were early supporters of the Congress Party, while scholars of Pakistan have noted that both democracies and dictatorships have been debilitated by the need to accommodate the repressive and exclusionary demands of the feudal landlord class.

This substantial degree of empirical confirmation gives us good reason to address central theoretical problems in Huntington’s analysis, both by rejecting his developmental argument and by focusing on two topics to which he paid little attention: the causes of rural incorporation and the determinants of the type of regime supported by rural incorporation. But prior to framing answers to these questions, a trio of inter-related analytic challenges must be addressed. The empirical record in support of the rural incorporation framework leaves unanswered several questions. Why, after all, focus on rural producers rather than the urban working classes that have been the subject of so many other works? Why, moreover, insist on rural incorporation, a process initiated and controlled by urban political elites, rather than autonomous mobilization from below? And why confine the analysis to the post-colonial world?

Elizabeth Wood, to consider just one contemporary analysis, argues that in El Salvador and South Africa, popular insurgency from below virtually imposed democracy on economic and political elites long unified in their opposition to democracy. While insurgent forces in El Salvador included peasants, the South African insurgency was based on an alliance between labor unions and the urban poor. Autonomous mobilization by urban popular classes has played a central role in other instances of transition to democracy in both the industrial and the post-colonial world, from the Iberian peninsula to
the Korean peninsula. My emphasis on elite conflict and the subsequent incorporation (or mobilization from above) of rural middle classes as important determinants of regime dynamics in the post-colonial world would seem to clash with these important insights into regime change.

Yet on closer inspection, there is no clash of conceptual frameworks, for the two approaches have distinct objects of explanation and are thus complementary, not competitive. Wood focuses on what she calls the “insurgent path to democracy” not in order to formulate general hypotheses about democratization, but rather because, in the author’s words, “the transition to democracy would not have taken place in either country when it did, as it did, and with the same consequences in the absence of sustained popular mobilization.” Note how this object of explanation makes no reference to regime durability. The hypotheses presented here are relevant to a different object of explanation, the construction of relatively durable dictatorships and democracies. One area of overlap is that the hypotheses presented here yield the prediction that had elites in El Salvador and South Africa engaged in rural incorporation in an earlier period, successful popular insurgency would not have been possible. In other words, the observation that autonomous mobilization by urban classes has played an important role in many instances of democratization is not incompatible with my claim that the combined study of regime type and regime dynamics must take as its point of departure the causal significance of controlled incorporation of rural classes by urban elites as a strategy of resolving elite-level conflict. By the same reasoning, the observation that some democracies and some dictatorships were established by actors who openly espoused these regime types for reasons of justice, social efficiency, or other goals does not necessarily clash propositions
predicated on conflict-driven, strategic actors, for the regimes installed by such value-oriented actors may in fact be short-lived regimes lacking the support generated by rural incorporation. It is not the desire for democracy that matters for my argument, but the constrained capacity to forge conditions facilitating the reproduction of democracy.

Why, however, should we expect rural incorporation/non-incorporation to be so central to the causal analysis of long-term regime dynamics? We can answer this by working backward from regime dynamics, a specific category of institutional stasis or change. I follow rational-choice orthodoxy by understanding institutions as key determinants of outcomes of distributive conflicts and understanding institutional change as the project of rational actors preferring alternative arrangements and enjoying the capacity to impose their preferences. If there were no conflicts, there would be no incentive for institutional change. The capacity to initiate institutional change and control its outcome, on the other hand, is profoundly shaped by success at winning allies and thus denying political resources to opponents. Regime change, in brutally short summary, is thus a function of conflicts and coalitions.

Specific types of conflict motivate the demand for regime change; specific types of coalitions permit it to happen (or, for privileged incumbents, prevent its occurrence). Generic distributive conflicts are pervasive to all societies; their specific forms define historical epochs. The category of post-colonial states situates countries within world-historical time: states and societies in this category confront similar challenges that provoke broadly similar conflicts, albeit in unique contexts that shape the form and intensity of those challenges, responses to them, and their long-term consequences. Consequently, although treating states as fully independent units involves some level of
fiction, as Theda Skocpol long ago warned us, transnational structures and processes that impinge on unit independence are mediated by local structures, processes, and understandings, and thus to do not fully preclude the formulation of hypotheses about how particular contexts shape outcomes. Indeed, even at the regional level we find localized transnational influences such as the Cuban revolution or the rise of Arab nationalist movements that contributed to very different outcomes contingent on specific contextual factors.

Two types of developmental enterprises composed the world-historical context of post-colonial regime dynamics: state building, or political development, and economic development which, for most of the twentieth century, meant industrialization. Both of these projects, loosely termed modernization, involve struggles for control over the transformation of the agrarian political economy. State building involves transferring the authority and control over politically relevant resources from local elites to national centers of power while economic development involves shifts in relative prices that transfer wealth produced by the primary sector to the nascent urban industrial sector. Both of these projects, therefore, had the frequently realized potential to produce escalating elite conflict that destabilized political regimes.

Long-term regime stability can be achieved in two ways: either no conflicts emerge, in which case all relevant players will be satisfied with the status quo; or conflicts can be decisively resolved through a new elite consensus, backed by lower-class support and control over institutions so that challengers face tremendous obstacles in the future. Rural incorporation is a strategy designed to achieve this outcome. An alliance with urban working classes can give an elite significant advantage over its rivals, but that alliance does
not necessarily imply decisive resolution of conflicts over the status of the agrarian political economy; and as those conflicts continue, and continue to destabilize politics, defenders of and challengers to the agrarian political economy can still call on rural allies to attain political hegemony. Rural lower class mobilization against agrarian upper classes and the state may contingently precede or accompany elite projects of rural incorporation; such autonomous mobilization from below is absent in many cases of rural incorporation, however, and when present, cannot produce regime stability without an alliance with urban political and economic elites that leaves the latter unified, committed to the existing regime, and in control of future lower-class political activity.30

The argument linking regime durability to rural incorporation is thus spatially and temporally circumscribed: if rural incorporation produces stable resolution to certain types of conflict, it can only function in times and places where those conflicts are prevalent. The argument is of limited relevance for the advanced capitalist countries: for some of these countries, conflict over state building and industrialization preceded the age of mass politics; in others, rural incorporation was an effective strategy for ending stalemates over conflicts in the urban industrial, not agrarian, sector.31 Rural incorporation in Europe, then, followed a different logic than that which I outline here for post-colonial states.

Temporal considerations bound the argument within the post-colonial world. The argument is silent about sources of regime durability prior to the onset of modern political and economic development and mass politics. Under some circumstances, for example, 19th-century military rulers such as Porfirio Díaz in Mexico and Juan Vicente Gómez in Venezuela established stable autocracies in regions previously plagued by violent instability, but those regimes never survived the death of their founder. Indeed, in an age
of mass politics, such neopatrimonial regimes are now considered to be especially vulnerable to social revolutions. The argument has a temporal terminus as well: rural incorporation ceased to be a viable strategy after roughly 1980. Under the burdens of high debt, new forms of economic globalization, and increasing external intervention by international financial institutions and other agencies calling for fiscal and political transparency and accountability, but also with the promise of funding economic growth through renewed international lending and foreign direct investment, struggles for political and economic development in the post-1980 period have assumed new forms in which the value of control over the rural political economy has been substantially attenuated.

Scholarly analysis of the politics of economic reform thus properly focuses on urban politics; in these coalitional analyses, rural actors play only a minor role. But note, finally, that the argument continues to have relevance to post-1980 politics: dictatorships built on pre-1980 rural incorporation have either survived to the present (Syria and Malaysia are two examples) or delayed their transition to democracy for a decade or more after their regional neighbors had democratized, well beyond the date when scholars began to worry that the “third wave” of democratization had exhausted itself (Indonesia and Mexico are two examples). In other words, the argument may not tell us about the fate of contemporary new democracies, but it does tell us about the spatial and temporal characteristics—which countries democratize when—of contemporary transitions to democracy.

My argument should thus not be viewed as clashing with other analyses that nominate capitalists or urban workers as the central class actors in regime change. Some of those analyses refer to cases that are outside of the spatial and temporal scope of my
framework; others make no distinction between the etiology of regime types and the sources of regime durability. Note, finally, that my focus on rural incorporation is not intended to slight the analysis of capitalists and workers: rather, my claim is that inter-class and state-class relations will differ systematically contingent on the presence or absence of rural incorporation. To see why, let us turn here to a brief sketch of the mechanisms linking rural incorporation to regime durability.

Most obviously, rural incorporation anchors the existing regime in the regime preferences of a large mass of rural inhabitants who can provide electoral support in democracies and more diffuse but no less important direct political support in authoritarian regimes, as recruits for the state apparatus, as numbers for mass demonstrations that cow opponents, and even as informal militias in times of unrest. But as has long been observed, demographic trends work against this mechanism of regime stabilization. Rural incorporation, however, gives the regime valuable political resources at a time when other key mechanisms of regime durability are established: due to rural support, the regime is better able to organize its relations to other major classes and social institutions. The path-dependent effects of rural incorporation, in other words, may persist long after the countryside has declined in overall significance and often times even after rural incorporation has been reversed. Albert Hirschman has argued that the state must fulfill two functions: an accumulation or entrepreneurial function to promote economic growth, and a reform function to improve the material conditions of groups providing needed political support. Hirschman attributed the political instability of Latin America to the incapacity of regime incumbents to fulfill both functions, as “reform-minded social groups that capture the state on occasion are totally out of sympathy with the traditional elites,
domestic and foreign, who are manning the entrepreneurial function and are in turn
determined not to yield anything if they can help it.” Tensions between these two groups
fueled political instability and regime disintegration.

Rural incorporation unites these two functions--accumulation and legitimation-- in
one political regime and same state-capital alliance. In all the cases surveyed here, regime
founders use the political leverage generated by rural support to establish corporatist
controls over urban labor movements which are attached to regime-supporting political
parties, creating what Ruth Berins and David Collier call an “integrative party system” that
can successfully contain social conflict. Second, support from middle-sector farmers in
the countryside permits the victory of more pragmatic factions within the ruling elite
who champion an alliance with private capital predicated on the protection of private
property in exchange for which capitalists contribute to accumulation and redistribution.
The resulting convergence of political and economic elites solidifies the marriage of the
existing political system to the accumulation model and thus reduces the likelihood of the
elite defections seen by many as the point of origination of regime transitions. The tight
alliance of regime incumbents and capitalists, moreover, not only enjoys mass support in
the countryside, but can also purchase the allegiance of urban middle classes. As a result
of these coalitional strategies, most sectors of the politically relevant population either
genuinely prefer the existing regime to its alternative or lack the coalitional capacity and
political space needed to replace it. If and when extra-coalitional opponents of these
political-economic arrangements emerge, they will have great difficulty soliciting mass
support and they will thus be more easily isolated and defeated without regime change.
The result of these coalitional and institutional arrangements, all of which are predicated on prior rural incorporation, is relative regime durability.

*Capturing the Countryside.*

Rural incorporation refers to the construction of national political alliances between urban political and economic elites and non-elite rural classes, primarily but not exclusively family peasants, i.e., those who own sufficient land to engage in commercial agriculture using primarily family labor. Rural incorporation is expressed institutionally through efforts by national political elites to mobilize rural lower classes and recruit them into national political parties, peasant unions, and other political organizations. Rural incorporation is also expressed in public policies, such as land reform and favorable rural pricing policies. These expressions of rural incorporation vary from case to case, but in all instances, peasant dependence on agrarian elites is significantly reduced through the intervention of national political institutions and public policies, and the political power of agrarian elites is correspondingly attenuated, if not completely eradicated. The absence of rural incorporation is thus indicated by efforts to demobilize the countryside, destroy any organizations linking peasants to the national political arena or allowing them to press their grievances against large landowners, and exclude rural lower classes from participation in national politics. In these cases, policy benefits to rural producers will be restricted to a small minority of prosperous commercial farmers.

Analysis of the origins of rural incorporation can be decomposed into incentives to mobilize rural lower-class allies and the capacity to seal that alliance and convert it into national political power. Consider first incentives. Insofar as rural incorporation fosters
regime stabilization, it provides clear benefits to the political and economic elites who initiate it. But only in retrospect do the extent and durability of those benefits become clear. In the calculations of elites who might consider rural incorporation, the benefits are tempered by the potential costs that should be readily apparent. First, although in retrospect scholars have pointed to the capacity of corporatist and other institutions to control mass participation, elites considering incorporation must surely be aware of the possibility that once granted access to regularized and hence relatively low-cost access to national political institutions, newly incorporated lower classes will evade control and either make intolerable demands or destabilize the regime. Second, in most instances, institutional controls over mass political participation must be--and have been--accompanied by material inducements. Mass incorporation, in other words, requires the redirection of political and economic resources that have previously been monopolized by political and economic elites and whose disposition has been decided in a political arena populated almost solely by those same elites. Mass rural incorporation, then, promises certain costs but only uncertain benefits. Finally, rural incorporation only provides benefits if successfully prosecuted: leaders of movements seeking rural support face repression from elites against whom rural lower classes are to be used as a political weapon, elites who might otherwise compromise with dissident leaders making more modest claims for change. Although calculations surely vary from case to case, some combination of these disincentives to ally with non-elite rural classes explains why, in Robert Bates’ phrase, it is “political marginalism,” not rural incorporation, that is the typical outcome.
Given these potential costs, what factors yield powerful incentives to embark on rural incorporation? A number of empirical and theoretical analyses argue that inter-elite divisions are a necessary condition for fundamental transformations of the political system of the type represented by mass incorporation. Theda Skocpol, for example, identified state crisis, or a deadlock between governing elites intent on state modernization and local elites determined to prevent modernization which impinged on their power and privileges, as a necessary condition for social revolutions. Similarly, the literature on social movements has repeatedly demonstrated the role of changes in the political opportunity structures as an element triggering social movements: divisions within the elite are one such change in the opportunity structure. Finally, the recent literature on transitions has converged on the position that splits within the leadership of the authoritarian regime mark the beginning of the democratization process. Consistent with this approach, Deborah Yashar argues that central to the construction of new, potentially democratizing multi-class coalitions is the public expression of elite divisions; elite divisions not expressed in public forums, on the other hand, comprise a sturdy obstacle to regime change. While these arguments all have much merit, elite divisions, even public ones, are far more frequent than instances of rural incorporation: further specification is required to distinguish the conditions triggering rural incorporation.

Martin Shefter has argued that episodes of mass mobilization and party building are products of serious and unbridgeable conflicts dividing the political elite. I build on his example to argue that the strength of incentives to mobilize the countryside is a function of the nature of the conflict between and among political elites (managers of state agencies, military officers, governing officials, and heads of political parties and
organizations), on the one hand, and economic elites (large landlords and heads of commercial and industrial firms), on the other hand. Elites are those persons whose control over resources or organizational position allow them to compete to extract resources from non-elites. For much of the twentieth century, post-colonial world, this has meant the extraction of agrarian surplus. Elites who strive to appropriate surplus from non-elites, however, must also struggle amongst themselves over the distribution of that surplus. Robert Brenner, for example, describes the early modern French state as a “class-like phenomenon--that is, as an independent extractor of surplus” which acted as a “competitor with the lords, largely to the extent to which it could establish rights to extract the surplus of peasant production. It therefore had an interest in limiting the landlords’ rents so as to enable the peasants to pay more in taxes--and thus in intervening against the landlords to end peasant unfreedom and to establish and secure peasant property.49 Elites have contending preferences for the employment of surplus extracted from lower classes. They may wish to finance their own personal power, privileges, and perquisites, as we have come to expect from feudal aristocracies and landowning oligarchies; but rival elites might also wish to redeploy that surplus on behalf of building more powerful states and military machines, a goal that by the twentieth century always included economic transformation via industrialization. Conflict over the distribution of surplus is thus endemic.

It is not conflict itself but rather the intensity of conflict that varies across time and space, providing correspondingly more or less powerful incentives for rural incorporation. Low-intensity conflict is normal politics over the relative share of resources; loss in this conflict threatens incremental reduction of claims over surplus or a marginal redeployment
of surplus to new ends. Just as in a democracy losing parties are permitted to run in the
next election, losers of low-intensity elite conflict retain their elite status and continue to
compete over relative shares of surplus. Intense conflict, on the other hand, is about the
capacity to appropriate resources; losing intense conflict threatens the loss of elite status
itself. Economic elites fear losing control over the economic resources that constitutes
them as members of the elite. Political elites fear losing control over their strategically
valuable, organizational position; and, given the imperatives of defensive modernization in
the twentieth century, state elites, especially within the military, may fear that losing elite
conflict would result in the perpetuation of a weak state that is highly vulnerable to
external intervention, if not conquest.

The possible permutations of low- and high-intensity conflict are too numerous to
summarize comprehensively: each country has its own distinct political history. It is thus
surprising that, given the tremendous variation in initial conditions across the cases, it is
possible to delineate a few patterns. In cases of low-intensity elite conflict, we typically
find that middle-sector groups challenging the traditional elite (agrarian oligarchs and their
political allies) seek some combination of political inclusion and modernization of state
institutions, especially the military. Neither of these two politico-institutional projects
necessarily implies a major redeployment of economic surplus or a major reconstruction
of the circuits of resource extraction. In this scenario, therefore, although dominant elites
might be compelled to share political or economic power with challengers, their status as
important, even hegemonic members of the political and economic elite remains secure.
Moreover, because these projects of political modernization are consistent with continued
oligarchic domination of the agro-export sector, challengers to the established order have
little incentive to garner rural support, and often considerable reason to fear it. Middle-sector groups, from among which challengers seeking political inclusion emerge, may even prefer to deny inclusion to subordinate classes which would otherwise be in a position to press demands for redistribution of property or protection from market-imposed outcomes. Reformist groups motivated by projects of institutional reform, particularly centralization of the state and modernization of the army, may also fear that attacking the oligarchy risks unleashing social unrest threatening the success of their institutional projects. For all of these reasons (or some combination of them), when the main axis of political conflict is constituted by moderate reformist projects, the incentive structure that results pushes most or all participants towards accommodation with the incumbent political and economic elite and a united elite front that is opposed to lower-class mobilization.

Not all issues, however, permit these elite accommodations: when the issues separating contending elites impinge upon the most fundamental arrangements of the political-economic order, so that defeat threatens major redversion of economic resources or virtual displacement from elite status, the heightened stakes attending victory or defeat constitute decisive incentives (but not necessarily the capacity) to build new coalitions with the countryside. These conflicts typically but not exclusively erupt in oligarchic states, by which I refer to political systems in which agrarian elites also dominate major political organizations and are thus able to pin heavy costs on rival elite groups such as ambitious state builders who are denied the resources needed to cultivate national economic and military power, as well as non-elite classes who are deprived of low-cost, regularized access to major policy-making institutions. The most intense conflict is
produced by the convergence of anti-oligarchic, class-based insurgencies from below and anti-oligarchic, state-building projects from above: the former seek social revolution, the latter seek what Richard Sklar has called “organizational revolutions,” a revolution from above whose goal is to reorganize authority to “facilitate the effective exercise of social control.”

Faced with an entrenched and an intransigent oligarchic elite, reformist groups have strong incentives to mobilize rural support and to use that support as a political weapon to displace governing elites posing powerful obstacles to the success of new political and economic projects. Under these conditions, rural mobilization may be a small price to pay for capturing the power necessary to alter dramatically the basic structures of the political economy; indeed, rural incorporation may become positively valued in this scenario. Thus, while moderate conflict revolves around political position and institutional formats, issues that certainly have implications for the appropriation of surplus, intense elite conflict focuses more directly on the identity of elite actors and the mechanisms for extracting and distributing resources: this conflict determines who will be in the elite and which social functions will be financed by agrarian-based surplus.

To be sure, actors embroiled in intense inter-elite conflict may have incentives to attract rural lower-class support as a means to vanquish their opponents, yet lack the capacity to fashion an urban-rural coalition at acceptable costs. Most obviously, actors intent on rural incorporation require high levels of infrastructural power defined by Michael Mann as “the capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm.”

As Ronald Herring summarizes, the implementation of projects of rural social transformation is dependent not only on political tactics but also on “the relative strength and vector sum of forces of
resistance and support, including the executive, legislative, judicial, and administrative organs of the state.” 53 With reference to the forces of resistance and support, Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier argue that rural incorporation is possible only when oligarchic control over the countryside is relatively weak, thus making lower-class rural allies available.54 But note that in some instances, powerful oligarchies deeply entrenched in the countryside have been eliminated by insurgents who first capture state power and then strip oligarchs of their control over national political institutions, as the case of Syria, where an anti-oligarchic movement captured state power and used rural incorporation as a political weapon to eliminate what was by all accounts a dauntingly powerful oligarchy, demonstrates. Relative class power, in other words, shapes outcomes only in tandem with infrastructural power. Finally, rural constituencies must be structurally available. As we shall see, in some instances, geographic or inter-ethnic lines of cleavage overlap class or sectoral lines of cleavage, precluding the low-cost incorporation of the countryside; rural incorporation, in other words, must promise net benefits, an outcome which may be structurally precluded.

In summary, the intensity of elite conflict distinguishes cases of rural incorporation from cases of non-incorporation. Whether conflict arose from basically political issues alone or spread to include the economic edifice built on political foundations set the parameters of coalition strategies. This proposition finds significant support in the case studies presented later in this essay.

Explaining (Durable) Regime Types
Given the presence of regime-strengthening rural incorporation, which type of regime is rendered more durable? Unlike Huntington, neither leaders of rural-incorporating movements nor the elites they seek to displace are indifferent to regime type. I argue that their preferences and thus the type of regime produced by the strategic interaction of challengers and incumbents are a function of the relationship between structures of political authority and property structures, particularly those in the agrarian economy. I treat this variable dichotomously: authority and property structures can be either fused or autonomous. To be sure, this conceptualization overlooks considerable diversity in political-economic structures evident across historical cases. But as the case studies below demonstrate, this dichotomy yields considerable analytic leverage. I consider authority and property structures to be fused when state administrative penetration of the countryside is limited and landed elites correspondingly monopolize political power at the local level while occupying prominent positions within the state apparatus, either in provincial administrative structures or in central executive and legislative bodies. As a result of these positions, landed elites exercise considerable political power, dominating state agents on behalf of pursuing policies furthering their interests and vetoing policies threatening their power and privilege. For reasons outlined below, rural-incorporating movements confronting agrarian elites entrenched within the state apparatus--that is to say, rural-incorporating movements confronting fused authority and property structures--establish authoritarian regimes, as in Syria and Mexico.

In contrast, I consider authority and property structures to be autonomous when state managers or powerful politicians (who may ally with landed elites but are not reducible to them) enjoy substantial control over power resources independent of the
agrarian property system. Their power, in other words, stems from organizational position within the state or the polity and not from their control of economic resources. This separation of political from economic power has been conceptualized as the core moment in the development of the modern state. Max Weber described the process of state building in Europe as one in which the prince “paves the way for the expropriation of the autonomous and ‘private’ bearers of executive power who stand beside him, of those who in their own right possess the means of administration, warfare, and financial organization...” When authority and property structures are autonomous, state elites correspond to what Linz and Stepan call “situational elites,” or those prominent political actors “who derive their power and status from the existence of a functioning state apparatus.” Rural incorporation underpins democracy only when inherited political and property structures are autonomous from one another prior to the outbreak of intense elite conflict. Like fused structures, autonomous authority and property structures can be instantiated in a wide variety of ways, two of which are represented below by Venezuela and Turkey.

Structural antecedent conditions are linked to regime outcomes by way of their affect on actors’ preferences and strategies. The most basic element of the causal logic is this: incumbent ruling elites facing opposition movements made powerful by their potential to mobilize a mass rural base will prefer a democratic outcome if and only if ceding some of their political power through negotiations with challengers allows them to preserve--indeed, is the only way to preserve--some other source of elite status. Challengers have an incentive to mirror that preference and negotiate a transition to democracy for two reasons. First, such a negotiated settlement will typically be less costly than protracted
struggles to establish authoritarian regimes; and second, the challengers’ rural base should give them confidence that they will succeed in electoral competition. The result is a democratic regime. In many circumstances, however, incumbent elites cannot cede some of their sources of power while retaining other sources. This is because the sources of their power are so thoroughly intertwined that losing one means losing them all. In this case, incumbent elites will prefer continued dictatorship and repression of insurgent movements. Challengers, for their part, will now have no choice but to mirror that preference. The result is dictatorship.  

Whether incumbent elites prefer democracy or dictatorship—and hence which regime outcome is preferred by rural-incorporating challengers—is a function of fused or autonomous structures of authority and property. Consider first fused authority and property structures. Movements challenging these oligarchic states afford priority to capturing state power and reconstructing the political economy to advance their ideal and material interests. In principle, such movements may not be antithetical to democracy; indeed, in both Syria and Mexico, founding members of these movements called for democratic reforms. Embattled incumbent elites seeking to preserve the maximum amount of their power and prerogatives, however, are composed of actors whose superior political position rests on—and simultaneously preserves—their dominance within the agrarian political economy. The fusion of political authority and agrarian property structures means that rural incorporation threatens both their political power and their economic interests: loss of political power threatens loss of property, and so they cannot trade the right to rule for the right to make money. Defeat in inter-elite conflict would mean ceasing to be core or even marginal members of the political and economic elite.
Consequently, the core membership of the elite will not, as Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens dryly observe, “be eager to dilute its political power by democratization.”

Even members of the status quo-oriented political and economic elite whose status does not stem from membership in the oligarchy risk being swept away by the rising tide of anti-oligarchic movements. Because the incumbent elite straddles these fused political and economic structures, there are no cooperative outcomes to be negotiated by elites and insurgents, and hence there is no basis for elites of oligarchic states to cooperate with rural-incorporating movements. Hence, the incumbent elite will have no choice but to rely on its entrenched position in national political institutions to deter challenges.

This strategy of the incumbent elite induces analogous intransigence among challengers. Challengers can, of course, seek to mobilize rural constituencies through democratic means, but this strategy risks triggering a conservative reaction and the collapse of democracy, as in Brazil in 1964 and Chile in 1973. Whenever possible, therefore, challengers will seek to ally with the military or mobilize their own coercive forces to capture the state through non-democratic means and use its power to displace oligarchs. When this strategy is successful, erstwhile challengers who now dominate the state apparatus have no incentives to establish democratic institutions that would dilute their power and provide opportunities for the displaced elite to return to political and economic supremacy. Thus, even a reformist movement that begins its political career seeking broader political inclusion among its many objectives may achieve these goals by inaugurating a new, mass-based authoritarian regime. The regime preferences of reformist movements are induced by the preferences of the incumbent elite; these latter preferences
are in turn induced by the structural position the incumbent elite occupies in the political-economic order.

In contrast, a negotiated transition to democracy is possible when authority structures are autonomous from property structures so that the incumbent political elite derives status primarily or exclusively from occupying strategic positions in formal structures of political authority. Faced with a pressing challenge from reformist groups who have already mobilized rural support or who have the potential to do so, the incumbent elite has strong incentives to negotiate a transition to democracy. A negotiated transition to democracy allows the incumbent elite to retain its political resources, which are not based on control of the agrarian property structure and are therefore not threatened by rural incorporation, and thus to compete in elections and preserve many of its most valued interests and goals. To be sure, an incumbent political elite can choose to repress its challengers: but there are powerful disincentives to using repression. Even if successful, repression is costly. Failed repression, on the other hand, would likely induce challengers to decisively displace their opponents and install an authoritarian regime, depriving the incumbent elite of the entirety of its sources of power and privilege.

Repression is most likely if incumbents believe that challengers are uncompromisingly intent on depriving them of their political resources. But there are correspondingly strong though not irresistible incentives for challengers to refrain from adopting this maximalist posture. A reformist movement facing a situational elite should be willing to play the democratic game, in part because its peasant base should give it a dominant position in electoral politics, and in part because negotiating with an accommodating incumbent elite is less costly than struggling for an authoritarian system. In short, when structures of
political authority do not overlap structures of domination in civil society, we should expect to find pacts or other forms of negotiating a transition to democracy. These pacts, however, are expressions of the underlying incentive structure biasing outcomes toward democracy and are not themselves the cause of democracy.

Note finally that I employ a fairly minimal definition of democracy and dictatorship in this analysis: democracies exist when free and fair elections open to the vast majority of the population (thus excluding restricted democracies such as Chile from the 1930s to the 1970s where virtually the entire rural sector was prevented from voting) result in regular turnover of parties in power; and when elected officials have sufficient autonomy from non-elected state agents, especially military officers, so that they in fact “rule” and do not just reign. There are a great many reasons why analysts have chosen to modify this minimalist definition of democracy with a host of adjectives: I reject that impulse here. My point is not to deny that, for example, a thorough description of the Turkish regime characteristics justifies labeling it a “delegative democracy.” My point, rather, is that a generalizable theoretical framework will be able to explain only those features that are shared across cases. Auxiliary hypotheses would be necessary to explain deviations from this conceptual core. Readers who would deny that such modified democracies are not “real” democracies are invited to read this value of the dependent variable of this essay as “a necessary but not sufficient element of democracy.”

Note finally that the definition includes the condition that opposition parties must win elections and assume office (without then prohibiting former incumbents from participating in subsequent rounds of competitive elections). Alternation of parties in office definitively establishes a regime as open to contestation and thus democratic. This
strict rule, however, runs into the problem of countries where a party is so electorally dominant that it remains in office for an extended period of time, leaving open the counterfactual that had, say, the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party lost an election in the 1970s, it might not have permitted the opposition to assume office. Some analysts take a strict line and code these countries as authoritarian.\textsuperscript{66} Strict adherence to the alternation rule is needed for statistical analysis when each regime-year must be coded democratic or authoritarian. Qualitative research, on the other hand, has the luxury of retrospective knowledge: we now know that the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party, like other electorally dominant parties such as the Swedish Social Democratic Party, did eventually cede office. This knowledge, combined with detailed case studies of the parties in power, allows us to make corrigible but still warranted claims about the nature of the regime.

\textit{Intense Elite Conflict and Rural Incorporation in Syria, Mexico, Venezuela, and Turkey}

Rural incorporation and the attendant processes discussed above produces regimes that are relatively durable: not only will regimes resting on rural incorporation exhibit relative longevity, but they will also survive political, military, and economic crises that seem to easily topple regimes that are not built on rural incorporation. Rural incorporation is a consistently chosen strategy of groups entangled in intense inter-elite conflict; when conflict is less intense, on the other hand, elites eschew rural incorporation. Whether rural incorporation underpins democratic or authoritarian regimes is a function of the relationship of structures of political authority to structures of domination in the agrarian economy. These are the three propositions advanced above and defended below.
No single research design can tackle the degree of freedom problem posed by exploring three propositions. Yet the primary and secondary cases discussed in this section and the next serve more than an illustrative function. First, I selected Mexico, Syria, Turkey, and Venezuela as the primary cases because the relatively durability of their regimes has been regularly remarked upon as anomalous. Students of bureaucratic-authoritarianism in Latin America, for example, were forced to explain not only the resilience of a competitive regime in Venezuela, but also the maintenance of a civilian-led authoritarian regime in Mexico; Mexico also receives special attention in many works because of the pronounced longevity of its authoritarian regime. While nobody would confuse the Turkish regime with a consolidated democracy, it has long been noted that Turkey is one of the developing world’s earliest democracies, and, in contrast to the experience of other countries with prolonged authoritarian rule, periods of direct or indirect military rule in Turkey have been mercifully brief and quickly followed by the resumption of electoral politics. Only Costa Rica, India, and Venezuela have enjoyed longer periods of sustained and unrestricted democratic politics. As mixed as the Turkish experience with democracy has been, compared to other experiences it stands out as relatively successful and in need of explanation. Syria, in contrast, has survived an incredible number of crises, any one of which has felled a less durable dictatorship: these include three major military defeats, one major urban insurrection, more than twenty years of persistent economic crisis, and the recent death of the supreme leader, Hafiz al-Asad. The relative durability of all four regimes thus demands explanation.

A second reason for studying these four cases is the secondary literature on all four countries is virtually unanimous in recognizing them as cases of rural incorporation,
minimizing problems of inter-coder reliability. That literature, however, has rarely proposed theoretical arguments explaining the presence or absence of rural incorporation.\textsuperscript{70}

Third, the cases allow some rough checks on alternative explanations for regime type. Revenue from petroleum exports, Terry Lynn Karl argues with reference to Venezuela, is the “single most important factor explaining the creation of the structural conditions for the breakdown of military authoritarianism and the subsequent persistence of a democratic system.”\textsuperscript{71} Yet Syria has long been considered a member of the set of rentier states whose oil revenues have virtually doomed them to dictatorship.\textsuperscript{72} The elimination of anti-democratic landed elites in Mexico and Syria, moreover, has not produced the democratic outcomes we would expect from the claim of Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens that diminishing or eradicating the power of anti-democratic landed elites is a powerful cause of democracy.\textsuperscript{73} Furthermore, while a strong oligarchy was no obstacle to rural incorporation in Syria, counter to the expectations of Collier and Collier, it was in fact a relatively powerful landed elite who participated in a rural-incorporating coalition in Turkey. The power of landed elites does not, therefore, consistently predict the propensity for rural incorporation.\textsuperscript{74} Finally, while one might attribute the longevity of the Mexican regime to the institutional features of its single-party regime, a broadly similar single-party regime in Turkey was established in the same period, but gave way to a democratic regime in 1950.\textsuperscript{75} These four cases, in sum, prompt the conclusion that a number of prominent claims--those concerning the role of oil revenues, the strength of oligarchic classes, and the characteristics of political institutions--do not stand up well to the comparative test. Note finally that while these four cases receive the
bulk of attention below, they are followed by more abbreviated discussion of cases in which the absence of rural incorporation is associated with elevated levels of regime fragility.

_Syria._

Beginning in the eighteenth century, in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire constituting contemporary Syria, urban notables who acted as local political agents of the Ottoman state gradually accumulated large landholdings, transforming independent peasants into sharecroppers and dependent political supporters. Leaders of the Arab nationalist movement against the Ottoman Empire, these large landowners proved to be valuable allies of French mandatory authorities and thus consolidated their entrenched political positions. By the time Syria achieved independence after World War II, the political arena was dominated by an agrarian oligarchy, and politics, according to Raymond Hinnebusch, “Was an urban game of competition for the spoils of office between small groups of landlord-notables and their followers.” Inter-elite conflict thus emerged in a political system marked by the fusion of political power and economic domination.

Opposition to this oligarchic state stemmed from actors championing competing visions of Syria’s political-economic future and the role of the state in promoting development. Elements of the Syrian bourgeoisie that advocated a more activist and interventionist state and some accommodation with lower classes, in part to enlarge the domestic market, collaborated with middle-class reformers, especially the Ba’th party. The Ba’th party is associated today with radical, authoritarian regimes seeking socialist
transformation at home and an anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist foreign policy. But the radicalization of the party was in part an outcome of oligarchic intransigence. In the 1947 elections, for example, the Ba’th party ran for office advocating direct election of deputies, neutral poll watchers, and elimination of a system of allocating parliamentary seats to religious groups. By the early 1950s, the Ba’th party was increasingly calling for fundamental social reforms, including land reform, and adopting a more antagonistic attitude toward the oligarchic state. In confronting the oligarchic state, however, the party worked through established political channels and collaborated with members of the Syrian bourgeoisie.  

Syria’s strong oligarchy, however, blocked these reformist projects, and the reformist coalition was never able to translate its platform into policy. Over time, reformers came to see parliamentary government as an illegitimate protector of oligarchic privilege. By the end of the decade, Marxist intellectuals and military officers from provincial rural towns who were dedicated to the eradication of the oligarchy came to occupy a more prominent position within the Ba’th party. Threatened by this change, the Syrian bourgeoisie sought protection by returning to an alliance with its oligarchic cousins, ending the experiment at collaborative reform. The inability to broker a compromise altered the induced preferences of major actors and virtually eliminated the possibility of negotiating a transition to new arrangements.

Hence, when the Ba’th party came to power in 1963, the old civilian leadership who were willing to compromise with the leaders of the ancien regime still occupied prominent positions in the government. But their power to control events, never strong to begin with, was in steep decline, and by 1966, they had been pushed not only out of
power, but out of the country. Consistent with the proposition linking rural incorporation to the intensity of elite conflict, one of the first acts of the new regime was land reform, the major means for incorporating the countryside. Land reform stripped the old elite of its major source of social power while wedding peasant loyalties to the authoritarian regime. The state forged a tacit bargain with peasants, linking state power to the welfare of peasants: in return for eradicating their dependence on traditional elites and providing for their welfare, the state called on the peasantry to accept a new position of dependence on the state, to provide symbolic support through participation in the state’s legitimating institutions, to provide its sons and daughters for service in the state bureaucracy and armed forces, and to cooperate with state agricultural policies. Peasant compliance with this bargain has made a major contribution to regime stability, which has been striking given Syria’s frequent military conflicts, a violent urban insurrection, and sustained economic crisis since the early 1980s.

Mexico.

“The spectre haunting Mexico in 1910,” John Womack writes of the origins of the Mexican Revolution, “was the spectre of political reform.” Alan Knight has convincingly demolished the notion that immediate economic grievances--the effects of the 1907 recession or status demotion, for example--directly motivated the opposition to Diaz. “Madero and his supporters harped upon political themes,” he insists with good reason. The early days of the Mexican revolution represent a clear example of what I have called moderate elite conflict. This conflict emerged in the first decade of the 20th century as Mexican liberals of middle-class origins in northern provinces chafed under the
exclusionary rule of Porforio Diaz, ultimately rallying behind Francisco Madero who represented provincial elites, landowners, and businessmen when he launched his revolution on behalf of electoral reform and political inclusion. Consistent with this paper’s core hypothesis, Madero made only modest efforts to mobilize a rural base and, upon establishing his provisional government, refused to implement even these minor concessions. In this respect, as the Colliers note, elements of the Mexican opposition movement strongly resembled their counterparts in Brazil and Chile, where reformers reached accommodation with oligarchies rather than displacing them.84

But lurking behind factional disputes were broader and sharper divisions engendered by the fusion of economic and political power that characterized the Mexican ancien regime. And because the process of including Mexican middle classes was a lengthier and more violent process than in most other Latin American countries in the early part of the 20th century, there was more time for these bases of potential conflict to generate the intense elite conflict that would motivate widespread rural incorporation.85 Indeed, the violence of the revolution itself provided incentives for rural incorporation: following the murder of deposed President Madero, heads of contending factions must have known that loss in elite conflict threatened huge and unbearable costs.

At the deepest structural level, Mexicans differed profoundly over the role the state should play in reshaping the agrarian regime. From the early 19th century, Mexican liberals influenced by the experience of northern capitalist economies had sought to recalibrate the relationship of state to society by removing agrarian property from the political realm, disentailing corporate wealth, and transforming communal Indian cultivators into independent yeoman farmers who would be the social basis for a virtuous,
universal citizenry. Beginning in the middle of the 19th century, liberals allied with the northern Mexican bourgeoisie in the mining, agriculture, and commercial sectors pushed through a series of reforms, but conservative opposition blocked others and permitted traditional haciendas to persist. The tremendous economic growth of the Diaz years moderated without eliminating this conflict, so that by the turn of the century, members of the progressive bourgeoisie such as Francisco Madero had come to believe that traditional hacendados based on debt peonage and supported by a centralized dictatorship “represented an obstacle to the creation of a more balanced and rational land and labor market.” Moreover, Diaz’s economic policies, formulated by a technocratic elite and heavily reliant on foreign capital and exports to foreign markets, sparked broader discontent among broad sectors of Mexican society, from landowners and small businessmen to industrial workers and peasants. While scholars agree with Knight’s assessment that many Mexicans gained handsomely from collaboration with American capital, and that northern Mexican business interests such as the Madero family sought “to emulate American enterprise, not liquidate it,” northern provincial elites who spearheaded the revolution had good reason to fear “the influx of American colonists claiming title to Mexican land and resources,” especially as many of them had witnessed “the earlier loss of Texas to American colonists and the ensuing economic takeover of the territories that later became the southwestern United States.” Finally, in constructing his political regime, Diaz had both centralized power, stripping Northern provincial elites of the autonomy they had enjoyed in the 19th century when they were an important military component of the Mexican state used against border Indians, but also allowed his local oligarchical allies to use their political monopolies to build economic monopolies. The
oligarchies of Sonora and Chihuahua, the two states which provided the bulk of the middle-class leadership of the revolution, “became the prime target of an opposition that united the most diverse groups of the population, albeit by little more than their common hatred of the omnipotent caudillo oligarchy.” Unlike Brazil and Chile, then, rival groups in Mexico contended not simply over political inclusion and institutional modernization, but over the uses behind which political power would be deployed, and the interests that would be favored or injured by a more activist state. Combined with the violent and prolonged struggles to capture power, there were multiple and heterogeneous incentives for rural incorporation.

Incentives, I have stressed, are not sufficient to make rural incorporation inevitable, and so it is no surprise that most efforts at rural mobilization prior to the mid-1930s were half-hearted and short-lived. It is thus necessary to consider as well the capacity for rural incorporation. The first consideration is infrastructural power. To give one clear example, Francisco Madero made his first modest appeal for rural support from the city of San Antonio; even if he had been fully committed to this project, he would not have had the logistical capacity needed for its implementation. Ten years later, a number of state-level leaders attempted to gain greater prominence in national politics through state-level rural incorporation: these efforts were successfully rebuffed by national leaders who opposed the erosion of centralized political power they represented. A second consideration pertains to the net benefits of rural incorporation: specifically, for leaders whose main support base lay among the propertied elites of the northern states of Sonora and Coahuila, the gains of rural incorporation would be offset by the loss of landlord support. Thus, in late 1914, when the lower-class armies of Zapata and Villa were
launching powerful offensives across the country, the leader of the Constitutionalist forces, Venustiano Carranza, who relied on armies led by generals who had no interest in land redistribution, felt compelled to promise land expropriations to compensate dispossessed villagers. But within a few months, under American pressure to deradicalize and enjoying growing oil revenues that financed a string of military successes, Carranza made a new promise to refrain from confiscation of agrarian property. Finally, even leaders such as Alvaro Obregon who regularly professed populism had to fear that rural mobilization would only revitalize Zapata’s and Villa’s forces.

Consequently, as the 1920s drew to an end rural incorporation was still an unfinished project. President Plutarco Elías Calles established hegemony at the elite level, in large part through the creation of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario which coopted individual rivals for power without, however, attracting and organizing a large-scale rural base. Consequently, Mexican society and politics were anything but stabilized: the nationwide violence of the previous decade had ended, but “local and regional violence remained endemic,” as Alan Knight reminds us:

The massive peasant mobilization engendered by the Cristero revolt of 1926-29 racked centre-west Mexico. In the localities, landlord fought with villager, agrarista with Cristero. Caciques battled for power; communities, for land or corporate independence. The Sonoran ship of state bobbed on the waves of an agitated society. At times...Mexico threatened to go the way of Colombia after 1949: that is, towards endemic, self-sustaining, factionalized conflict on the lines of the Violencia.
Ironically, Calles helped stabilize Mexican society and politics by setting the stage for intense elite conflict and ideological polarization which culminated in rural incorporation, an outcome he would not have championed. While the PNR represented institutional innovation, Calles largely guaranteed his hegemony by recreating the fusion of political and economic power and reimposing the economic policies characteristic of the pre-Revolutionary Mexican oligarchic state. New revolutionary landlords supplanted the traditional hacienda elite, monopolizing landownership, dominating local politics, and providing the backbone for the PNR in exchange for protection from continued revolutionary change and class conflict. Backed by the support of organized urban labor, Calles worked to reduce foreign debt, balance the budget, and promote efficient administration, conservative goals which were fully compatible with the recreation of the political and economic structure of the ancien regime. Foreign capital collaborated with the pre-revolutionary bourgeoisie as well as a new group of capitalists emerging from within the state to control important sectors of an economy oriented toward American markets. Indeed, in response to the depression of 1929, Calles and his supporters renewed their commitment to a development model based on private enterprise and a relatively passive state by pronouncing agrarian reformer a failure and curtailing ejidal agriculture.

The fusion of political and economic power and the development model pursued by the political elite generated within the revolutionary elite a sharp cleavage mirroring in its intensity earlier political-economic conflicts; but now elite polarization occurred within the PNR. While Calles and the veterans of the 1920s opted for a conservative approach (and flirted with fascist models), opponents in the 1930s championed more dirigiste
models, influenced by the New Deal in America and economic planning in the Soviet Union. Within this rival camp, agrarianistas, supported by mounting agrarian protest in several states, objected to the repression of peasant movements and the reinstallation of an oligarchic agrarian economy, while progressives called for government promotion of industrialization by “an active interventionist state, controlling and directing the national economy.”

Cardenas came to power on behalf of uniting these two goals in one development project, combining the Keynesian-inspired economic growth of capitalist economies with the concern for equity and social justice of socialist economies. Facing an entrenched elite whose core interests were profoundly threatened by the agrarianista program and which therefore refused to cede any of its power, Cardenas turned to rural mobilization to resolve inter-elite conflict. As numerous studies have documented, rural mobilization was central to Cardenas’ victory, allowing him to gain the edge over Calles at the national level while circumscribing the autonomy of elites at the regional and local level.

Rural incorporation did not simply pave the way for the victory of Cardenismo and a new development model over the conservative elite that came to power in the 1920s; rural incorporation, in the consensus opinion of a broad range of scholars of Mexican politics, had “profoundly stabilizing consequences” for Mexican politics. Agrarian incorporation boosted Cardenas’ development strategy, particularly by the end of the decade as he ended redistributive policies and recultivated ties with the Mexican bourgeoisie. As Sanderson summarizes, rural incorporation forged a powerful organizational weapon against political rivals, engendered social justice with obvious implications for regime stability, allowed the state to supervise agrarian production, and
assisted, through transfers of rural surplus, industrial development.\textsuperscript{101} Rural incorporation, in other words, combined the functions of accumulation and legitimation in one political regime.

In both Syria and Mexico, then, intense elite conflicts and political instability were resolved only when one faction of the elite solicited and organized the support of the countryside. In both countries, moreover, the fusion of political and economic power meant that entrenched elites could not afford to negotiate an end to the conflict with their rivals. Insurgent elites thus had little choice but to use extra-institutional measures to displace regime incumbents, and thus little incentive to permit democratic competition subsequent to their coming to power. The result in both cases was a durable dictatorship. But durable dictatorship was not an inevitable outcome of intense conflict and rural incorporation: different antecedent conditions provided powerful incentives for embattled elites to incorporate the countryside but also to negotiate a transition to democracy, as we shall see in the cases of Venezuela and Turkey.

\textit{Venezuela.}

As in Mexico, opposition to the Venezuelan oligarchic state stemmed from middle-sector groups angered at their political exclusion. But these demands for a more open political regime were buttressed by demands emanating from commercial, financial, and middle-sectors for a modernizing state that would depart from dictator Juan Gomez’ strategy of relying on foreign capital and granting foreign concessions.\textsuperscript{102} Members of the student movement that took the lead in contesting oligarchic rule, especially the movement’s leader, Romulo Betancourt, were motivated by the belief “that Gómez was more than a national despot, that he was also the instrument of foreign control of the
Venezuelan economy. For them, the battle cries became democracy, economic nationalism, and social justice. Exiled following an abortive coup, Betancourt decided that political and economic change in Venezuela required overthrowing the regime, not collaborating with it, and that the revolutionary changes envisioned could only be accomplished by organizing a mass base. Consequently, upon his return to Venezuela in 1935, Betancourt established a series of mass political organizations, culminating in Accion Democratica (AD), and began to organize a mass base among urban workers and, more importantly for Venezuela’s democratic future, peasants. By October 1945, AD could count on the support of 2,000 village leaders and over 100,000 peasants, complementing its powerful position among urban labor; three years later, with a renewed burst of rural organizing, membership had climbed to 500,000 peasants.

AD’s mass support made it an attractive coalition partner to the junior military officers who staged a coup in 1945, but it was not sufficient to sustain the party in power, as inter-elite conflict was quickly reignited. AD’s military partners sought institutional reforms, particularly military modernization. This project was consistent with most features of the oligarchic state, and the officers preferred collaboration with elements of the ancien regime to the large-scale socioeconomic change that AD championed. In addition, reformist parties chafed at growing AD hegemony and its partisan control of the reform process which was granting the party a seemingly permanent advantage. The emergent cleavage among reformist parties provided structural space for the traditional elite to mount more effective opposition, eventually forming an implicit alliance with opposition parties. In 1948, AD was removed from power, and Venezuela reverted to authoritarian rule for the next decade.
Venezuela’s return to democracy was anchored in the 1958 Pact of Punto Fijo in which AD agreed to a power-sharing arrangement with the other two main political parties. The pact allowed AD to complement its mass base with inter-elite collaboration that would help stabilize Venezuelan democracy for the next four decades.\textsuperscript{108} AD’s willingness to compromise with rival parties perhaps reflects Betancourt’s statesmanship as well as the lessons learned under dictatorship.\textsuperscript{109} The democratic outcome might also plausibly reflect the role of oil revenues which, Karl stresses, financed Venezuelan democracy.\textsuperscript{110} Yet neither of these explanations seems sufficient. Many dictatorships, after all, are followed by other dictatorships, casting doubt on arguments attributing democratic outcomes to learning effects; and oil revenues are far more likely to finance dictatorships than democracies.\textsuperscript{111}

I argued above that political pacts reflect structural conditions, both of which are highly relevant to the Venezuelan case. First, the separation of structures of political authority from agrarian property regimes made democracy possible. The historical origins of autonomous authority and property structures can be attributed to Venezuela’s oil exports, which strengthened the central state at the expense of large landowners who increasingly engaged in urban commercial and financial activities.\textsuperscript{112} AD therefore negotiated with other political parties that partially represented the traditional oligarchy but whose leaders obtained political power from organizational positions, not from control over economic--especially agrarian--resources. The core interests of the leaders of these parties were thus not threatened by AD’s control over the countryside. Moreover, because of their growing support among urban voters who had not been mobilized by AD, these parties had every reason to believe they would be viable contenders under a
competitive system. A pacted democracy did not threaten their political positions; democracy, rather, enhanced their political positions. With reformist parties united in a solid bloc, elites favoring the authoritarian status quo had no partners with which to challenge democratic rule and the reforms enacted by it.

Second, AD’s powerful and uncontested position in the countryside permitted it to make significant concessions while still maintaining a minimum winning coalition. AD’s strategic calculations were based on the party’s performance in the 1947 and 1948 elections, overwhelmingly dominated by the party thanks to its rural support. Rural support alone, however, would not allow AD to rule, as the downfall of democracy in 1948 demonstrated. A pact, on the other hand, would still leave AD the dominant party in a position to implement its policy preferences, especially agrarian reform. The overwhelming electoral support that AD had earned by organizing the countryside provided the party with a rare opportunity to make significant concessions to other parties without fear of losing its electoral advantage or its power to impose its policy preferences.

In contrast to the cases of Mexico and Syria, all leaders of all Venezuelan political parties had powerful incentives to look favorably on a negotiated transition to democracy. The separation of political power from agrarian property made democracy possible; the mobilization of the countryside made pacting feasible for AD, the dominant party. Together, the two structural conditions combined to make Venezuela one of the more durable democratic regimes in the post-World War II, post-colonial world, one that survived as its neighboring democracies succumbed to bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes. 

*Turkey.*
Rural incorporation is not a one-size fits all solution to all potentially destabilizing conflicts. Since the 1950 transition to democracy in Turkey, direct military interventions have occurred three times, and military encroachment on civilian politicians has increased since the early 1990s. In sharp contrast to democratic breakdowns elsewhere, however, Turkish military interventions have always been temporary, reequilibrating projects: no military government has seriously considered establishing an entrenched military dictatorship, in large part because of the pro-democratic regime preferences held by the majority of Turkey’s major political actors. Turkish democracy may more resilient than it is stable, and its deviations from democratic ideals may be deeply disturbing, but given the political and economic crises Turkey has faced, the persistence of at least minimal forms of democratic governance demands explanation, particularly when juxtaposed to the pervasive stable authoritarian regimes governing most of the Middle East.

The necessary condition for Turkish democracy was a sharp divide between structures of political authority and structures of agrarian property ownership. The autonomy of political authority from agrarian property quite sharply distinguishes Turkey from Syria, not in spite of their shared history of Ottoman rule but rather because of their shared imperial history. The Ottoman Empire grafted new institutions onto a foundation inherited from the Byzantine Empire: a centralized state staffed by officials drawn from non-landed families maintained intact an independent peasantry as a bulwark against the consolidation of a powerful, landed aristocratic class that could challenge the state. The success of this strategy was a function of the infrastructural power of the state: in the central regions of Anatolia, where state power could be directly projected, an independent peasantry persisted into the twentieth century. In outlying provinces, such as Syria,
however, state infrastructural power was sharply attenuated and, as we have seen, a
landed elite had the autonomy to expropriate property and eventually establish an
oligarchic state. The radius of infrastructural power during the Ottoman period, in
other words, set the stage for both Turkish democracy and Syrian authoritarianism. With
independence, the new Turkish Republic reproduced this structure of political authority,
as civilian and military officials from non-landowing backgrounds staffed the state and
ruled the country in alliance with local landowning notables who were distinctly junior
partners in the governing elite. This separation of political and economic power, let me
emphasize, did not produce democracy as long as no sharp cleavage separated the two
wings of the elite and generated new regime preferences. Once that intense conflict
erupted, however, the autonomy of political power from agrarian property ownership
permitted and encouraged a negotiated transition to democracy.

Intense elite conflict was a product of two policy packages: those promoting state-
led industrialization in the 1930s, followed by wartime mobilization policies of the
1940s. These policies pinned enormous burdens on urban and rural lower classes:
more importantly, for our purposes, is that they drove a wedge between state officials, on
the one hand, and propertied elites, on the other hand. Members of the Turkish
bourgeoisie initially benefitted from many of these policies, which transferred surplus
from the agrarian to the industrial sector while depressing wages in the industrial sector.
Subsequent to a series of state actions that privileged state industries at the expense of
private firms (and even nationalized a handful of private firms), however, the Turkish
bourgeoisie came to fear accurately that an unrestrained state would eventually threaten
not only the profitability of their enterprises, but their core interests in secure private
property as well. When, in the immediate post-war period, the state elite floated a proposal for land reform, a transparent and ineffectual effort to buttress its position through rural mobilization, even rural propertied elites moved into the opposition. Predatory state practices thus destroyed the alliance of state officials and propertied elites, as the latter came to view the state as arbitrary and despotic and consequently determined that challenging state policies was insufficient; a change of regime and government was called for. Those same predatory policies alienated workers and family peasants and thus created a mass base for the propertied wing of the elite, encouraging its leaders to move into the opposition and to check state predation by encouraging a transition to democracy. When President Inonu sought to defuse escalating political tensions by permitting opposition parties to contest elections, four members of parliament who had long defended private property against state predations established the Democrat Party (DP), and immediately sought the electoral support of peasants. Given that state policies had exploited peasants for the previous two decades, the party was able to garner sufficient rural support to win the 1950 elections and form a new government more sympathetic to propertied interests.

The structural differentiation of political authority and economic power played two roles in the Turkish case. On the one hand, that Turkey’s central state elites did not have a large stake in the private economic sector encouraged them to pursue statist development policies that alienated such a broad sector of Turkish society. Once intense elite conflict broke out, Turkey’s propertied elites could fashion an alliance with rural lower classes because a large class of landowning, family peasants would not demand land reform as the price of political support. If anything, mobilized peasants promised to
provide a conservative social bloc supporting private property. From the perspective of oppositional elites, then, rural mobilization enhanced their political position without threatening their economic position. So long as a negotiated transition to democracy was possible, they had no reason to prefer dictatorship to democracy.

The divergence between agrarian property structures and structures of political power, on the other hand, allowed Turkey’s state elites to make similar pro-democratic calculations when faced with widespread opposition. The mobilization of the countryside did not threaten their incumbency in the highest echelons of the state bureaucracy, while their representation within the ruling party of the period, the Republican People’s Party, endowed them with political resources with which to contest elections. Finally, the primary policy goals of the state elite, the Kemalist project of political and sociocultural modernization, would not be disadvantaged by either democracy or rural mobilization. Consequently, in 1947, President Inonu, representing the state elite, negotiated a pact with the leadership of the opposition party, in which the latter committed themselves to retaining the fundamental elements of Kemalism should they come to power. Inter-elite conflict made rural mobilization a preferable strategy for oppositional elites; structural conditions made democracy the outcome of elite conflict, while rural mobilization created the basic foundation for persistent and resilient, if not fully consolidated, democracy.

Ceding the Countryside to Oligarchic Domination

Conversely, cases of non-incorporation of the countryside can be attributed to one of two causes: either the intensity of elite conflict was far lower, creating incentives for challengers to collude with incumbent elites rather than build a popular base in the
countryside, or, given higher levels of conflict, prevailing conditions lowered the expected gains of rural incorporation relative to the risk that mobilization would impose intolerable costs.

Consider first low-intensity inter-elite conflict in Brazil and Chile. As we have seen, cases of rural incorporation stemmed from notably intense conflict over basic political-economic arrangements that went beyond institutional modernization and the political inclusion of emerging middle sectors. In contrast, although the chain of events leading to Vargas’s assumption of power in Brazil began with conflict over coffee prices following the onset of the Great Depression, the 1930 revolution resembled in many important respects the inter-elite factional disputes that had characterized Brazilian politics for the previous century. What distinguished this episode, Thomas Skidmore argues, was that it was preceded by agreement among diverse sectors of the elite over the need for political reform. 118 The heterogeneous coalition supporting transformation of the Republic’s political institutions embraced liberal constitutionalists drawn from dissident factions of the political elite from whose ranks Vargas emerged, 119 senior military officers seeking modernization of the army, and coffee growers. 120 Advocates of more radical socioeconomic reform were restricted to one group of junior military officers, the tenentes. But the tenentes never exercised any influence, and only after 1937 did Vargas adopt parts of their program, while excising others, such as agrarian reform, that would threaten the accommodationist alliance with agrarian elites. 121 Brazil is thus a clear case of moderate elite conflict and the absence of rural incorporation. 122

Similarly moderate elite conflict in Chile also resulted in new political coalitions that excluded rural lower classes. In Chile, a heterogeneous reformist coalition united
advocates of political inclusion, institutional modernization, and preemptive attention to labor.\textsuperscript{123} Absent an analogue of Brazil’s \textit{tenentismo}, Chilean reformers allocated even less attention to reform of the latifundia system.\textsuperscript{124} Consequently while reformers in Mexico and Venezuela were amenable to lower-class mobilization, reformers in Chile and Brazil feared such mobilization.\textsuperscript{125}

Alternatively, even when cleavage structures arise from relatively intense conflict, the existing distribution and organization of power may preclude the low-cost construction of a minimum winning coalition through popular incorporation. Martin Shefter hypothesizes that “Incumbent politicians are unlikely to enter into a process of competitive mobilization if the deepest line of cleavage in the political system runs along geographic (rather than class or sectoral lines) and the nation’s institutions allocate seats in the legislature to geographically defined constituencies.”\textsuperscript{126} In Colombia, for example, the Liberal and Conservative parties both represented heterogeneous elements spanning class and sectoral divides as well as urban-rural cleavages. At the core of each party were rural elites who controlled extended patron-client relations with rural lower classes. As each party had geographically specific bases of rural support, neither party could launch an attack on the rural basis of its opponent without threatening its own rural elites. Thus, when Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, a young and popular member of the Liberal Party from an urban petit-bourgeois background, briefly flirted in the early 1930s with the idea of mobilizing rural lower classes, he was attacked by both Liberals and Conservatives and forced to leave the Liberal Party.\textsuperscript{127} The struggle for lower-class support, therefore, was confined to rivalry between the Liberal and Socialist parties for the loyalty of urban workers.\textsuperscript{128}
In Lebanon, national political leaders also based their position on patronage networks that were even more geographically segmented than in Colombia, and that were divided along confessional lines as well. Consequently, not only rural incorporation, but even incorporation of urban labor was precluded. As in Colombia, inter-elite conflict that could not be resolved through popular incorporation resulted first in political stalemate and subsequently in civil war. In the Philippines, on the other hand, oligarchic politics also precluded rural mobilization, and intensifying inter-elite conflict did not emerge along strictly class or sectoral cleavages. But rather than provoking civil war, threats to oligarchic supremacy were doused when Marcos declared martial law in 1972. In a bargain reminiscent of the state-building coalitions supporting absolutist states in Western Europe, Marcos first disarmed most private militias and centralized the coercive apparatus of the state, and then cut a deal with the oligarchy, trading relatively secure property rights for oligarchic commitments to eschew politics for the pursuit of gain. Those oligarchs who insisted on competing for political power quickly found that “property was not power, since at a stroke of the martial pen it ceased to be property.” Taming the oligarchy appeared to allow Marcos to consolidate his power without mobilizing rural lower-class support, but the renewal of inter-elite conflict in the 1980s rendered his regime no more stable than the oligarchic democracy it had supplanted.

The Explanatory Role of Structures

Following their heyday in the 1960s and 1970s, structuralist approaches to regime change have been on the defensive over the past two decades. A great divide opened up in studies of regime dynamics in the late 1970s, when Juan Linz argued forcefully that it
was elite miscalculations about how to best manage political crises and not irresistible social forces that caused democratic breakdowns in interwar Europe: studies of regime dynamics, Linz continued, should focus on the process of elite-opposition interactions and decision making, not antecedent conditions.\textsuperscript{134} Linz’s counsel seemed especially prescient over the next decade as authoritarian regimes were rapidly replaced by new democracies in countries whose social and economic indicators did not indicate that they were ready for a transition to democracy. Starting in the mid-1980s, a series of influential books and articles adapted Linz’s perspective to the study of democratic transitions. Although their specific arguments were heterogeneous, they converged on the position that relatively indeterminate transition processes and not sociological or economic conditions provide the key to understanding the global spread of democracy in the world since the mid-1970s. Scholars subscribing to this “transitions” approach argue that given the institutional void attending the breakdown of authoritarian regimes, imperfect information, malleable interests and identities, rapidly changing strategic calculations, and a strong role for contingent events combine in various permutations to preclude structuralist accounts of regime change. There are, in other words, no irresistible preconditions for democratization; nor can “normal” social scientific methodology guide the analysis of democratic transitions.\textsuperscript{135}

The focus on process and strategic action is a useful corrective to overly abstract theorizing that paid little attention to linking macro-level variables to individual action at the micro level.\textsuperscript{136} But closely related methodological and theoretical considerations are prompting a third generation of scholarship to reject the purely process-based approach. First, many of the claims constituting the transitions approach were written as transitions
were taking place and before comprehensive research could be conducted. They were thus based more on anecdotes than on full case studies. Defending his decision to conceive of the major actors in transitions in terms of strategic posture and not class position, for example, Adam Przeworski writes that the class-based approach “appears to of little predictive value, at least as one impressionistically surveys the dynamic of the situation in Spain or Greece.”

But as scholars have gone beyond impressionistic surveys, they have found clear evidence for the need to combine, in some form, the class-analytic and strategic frameworks which usefully complement one another.

Second, the case for underdetermined transitions processes was based on a biased selection of cases. However understandable the normative bias for studying democracies, a research design that focuses almost exclusively on cases that have democratized does a grave disservice for those scholars who insist that structural preconditions have little role to play in democratization processes that are inherently contingent and indeterminate, as Michael Coppedge observes, for it cannot disconfirm the plausible structuralist interpretation that the goals, perceptions, and choices of elites and groups involved in the transition “may have been decisively shaped by the context in which they were acting.” I have argued for one structural precondition for democratization: the death of the authoritarian regime, an event which can neither be taken for granted nor treated as the inevitable outcome of economic crisis. Differences in antecedent conditions--the coalitional basis of authoritarian regimes--clearly distinguish democratizers from either non-democratizers like Syria or eventual democratizers like Mexico whose authoritarian regime spanned most of the twentieth century.
A third complaint raised against the transitions literature is its predisposition toward what Terry Lynn Karl calls “excessive voluntarism.” Karl thoughtfully suggests a number of social structural variables such as powerful landed classes that are highly inimical to democracy. More importantly, she points to other factors such as dependence on petroleum or mineral exports that may not only hasten the demise of anti-democratic landed elites, but also ease the process of institutionalizing democratic agreements. Calling for a new methodology of “structured contingency,” she observes that social structural factors may both delimit choice sets and thus constrain leaders, but also “predispose them to choose a specific option.” In a similar vein, James Mahoney and Richard Snyder attempt to advance this integrative agenda by suggesting both how to derive testable hypotheses and how to resolve the nagging agent-structure debate. Unfortunately, their comprehensive survey indicates that all such integrative strategies either overly privilege agency; or overly privilege structure; or, worse yet, indiscriminately privilege both agency and structure. Their own solution, a resource model of agent-structure relations that conceives of structures as “environments that delimit the range of possible actions without determining action,” is a step backward from Karl’s suggestion that structures not only constrain by delimiting choice sets but also might, under some circumstances, predispose actors toward certain goals and strategies.

It strikes me as futile to decide a priori that a particular approach is excessively voluntaristic or deterministic. As social scientists, we affirm a belief that we gain knowledge of the world only by formulating hypotheses and testing them according to some agreed-upon criteria: it is inconsistent with this foundational commitment to reject any hypothesis based on some presumed a priori knowledge of how the world works.
Moreover, there is no a priori reason to believe that the social or the natural world is composed of a uniform causal order. Some domains may be random, some may admit stable probabilistic relations, and some may be utterly determined. Needed, then, is a set of estimators for assessing whether events in a particular domain are the result of probabilistic or deterministic causes. Finally, to conclude as Mahoney and Snyder do, that structures influence outcomes by delimiting the options available to agents without determining which option is chosen is to concede the anti-structuralist position. Powerful logical arguments targeted against structuralist accounts by, among others, Youssef Cohen, Jon Elster, and Adam Przeworski criticize structuralist explanations precisely for failing to recognize that structures constrain without dictating, for even severely delimited choice sets contain multiple options from which actors choose.

The cases I have surveyed here support Karl’s position: pact-making in Venezuela and Turkey, for example, was not only made possible by structural factors, but was the optimal outcome for the actors involved given the set of structurally-given opportunities and constraints. Choices are made for reasons, and reasons may be highly conditioned by the structural environment. Yet however reasonable, Karl’s position does not explicitly confront the powerful argument that micro-level heterogeneity logically precludes structuralist analysis. Let me thus suggest two additional considerations that may help us to think about the relationship of structures and choices: the distinction between macro-level determinism and micro-level probabilism, and the issue of the explanatory objects of structural explanations.

With reference to the first issue, consider the radicalization of second-generation members of the Syrian Ba’th party. As Youssef Cohen has argued, “Radicalization is a
choice, and as such it cannot be explained without reference to the beliefs, preferences, and goals of those who make such a choice.” Actors’ intentions, he continues, “must therefore be treated as largely autonomous from the structural situation...”

But beliefs and intentions may very well be induced by the structural situation: while the Ba’th Party radicalized in the face of an uncompromising oligarchy that would make no substantive concessions, the leadership of AD in Venezuela, when confronting more accommodating parties from a position of political strength, cut ties with more radical members of the party in 1958. This contrast between Syrian radicalization and Venezuelan deradicalization, I have argued, is a function of macrostructural features in the two political economies: while fused authority and property structures led Syria’s oligarchic elite to dig in their heels, thus inducing challengers to radicalize, autonomous structures in Venezuela produced compromise among all parties.

To be sure, Cohen or Elster could counter that not every member of the Syria Ba’th party radicalized; nor did all members of AD in Venezuela seek compromise, as the expulsion of radicals indicates. But this complain carries little force. The key point is that macrostructural accounts are consistent with micro-level probability. Structural conditions need not explain why each and every individual actor made the choice they did; rather, they must explain why it was highly likely that under a specific set of conditions some actors would make a particular choice and that this choice made by a subset of relevant actors was sufficient to produce the hypothesized (and observed) outcome. The contrast space of structural explanations, in other words, is why under some conditions a relevant subset of actors is likely to make a specific, outcome-producing choice, while under other conditions, no relevant subset of actors is likely to make that same choice. In
his study of the sociological origins of suicide, Emile Durkheim identified a range of statistical regularities at the global level: suicide rates, for example, varied systematically between Catholics and Protestants. Durkheim never claimed to predict which individuals would commit suicide. Rather, he ended his study by arguing that the societal force he had identified as a macro-level cause of suicide did not “determine one individual rather than another. It exacts a definite number of certain kinds of actions, but not that they should be performed by this or that person.” Statistical regularities of this sort are quite common. They enter into the debate about structures versus unconstrained choice only when the existence of a (highly) probabilistic phenomenon is itself sufficient to cause another phenomenon of interest. Structural factors induce an undefined subset of actors to behave in defined ways; that behavior is subsequently sufficient to cause a democratic or authoritarian regime. Macro-level determinism is thus consistent with micro-level probabilism.

The second consideration pertains to the explanatory objects of structural explanations. Structures may not eliminate all choices, but they may eliminate divergent choices in different contexts. Differences in choice sets and not different choices from within choice sets play critical roles in the case studies presented here. The divergence of structures of authority from relations of economic domination in Turkey and Venezuela meant that actors had the choice of negotiating a pacted democracy; the substantial overlap of these two structures in Mexico and Syria removed this option from actors’ choice sets, even as it left intact other choices which, if made, would still not have led to stable democracy if the arguments made here are correct. Explaining why Turkey and Venezuela are democratic entails discussion of choice. Explaining why Mexico and Syria
are authoritarian entails discussion of choice. But explaining why Turkey and Venezuela are democratic while Mexico and Syria are authoritarian entails giving a central analytic role to structure because democracy was in the choice set of the first two cases, but absent from the choice set of the latter two cases. For each set of cases, the choices that were made were strongly influenced by the structural context. For comparison across the two sets of cases, structures explain why some choices available in some cases were not similarly available in other cases. Taken together, these two considerations assign central causal role to structures: actors certainly made choices but those choices were not obviously autonomous of structures and other choices, had they been made, would have produced similar outcomes.

Whether our explanations emphasize structure or agency is partly an ontological question, but also an issue of explanatory adequacy. The latter hinges on the contrast space entailed by the question we ask. As Alan Garfinkel argues in his study of contrast spaces and explanations, macro-level and micro-level theories “generally have distinct objects [of explanation]; this in turn means that for certain basic purposes the underlying level cannot replace the upper-level theory.”

Describing an instance of regime change in a single country requires narrating the choices actors made. A fully specified theory of regime change, however, must answer the question, “Why is this set of countries democratic while that set of countries is authoritarian.” To answer this question--to address this specific contrast space--we must focus our analytic attention on variations in choice sets and not on variations in choices. We must therefore incorporate structuralist propositions into our analysis. Those structuralist propositions are not invalidated, as I argued above, by observations of unit-level heterogeneity.
Conclusion

Two analytic tasks constitute the study of regime dynamics: the origins of political regimes and the sources of their relative durability. This essay has presented a theoretical framework composed of explanatory propositions addressing both tasks. Relatively durable regimes, I have argued, have attributes that clearly distinguish them from less durable regimes: they rest on broad social coalitions, the linchpin of which are rural middle classes. Rural incorporation endows regimes with tremendous resources for reproduction, granting them longer lives than regimes resting on narrow coalitions that exclude rural lower classes. This proposition has long been discussed in the theoretical and monographic literature. What has always been lacking has been answers to three questions:

(1) What factors determine the propensity to engage in rural incorporation? I argue that given the costs and the risks attending rural mobilization, only relatively infrequent conditions will provide the necessary incentives. Specifically, only when the political and economic elite is deeply divided by intense conflict threatening core interests will one faction of the elite engage in rural incorporation.

(2) What factors determine whether rural incorporation, when it occurs, will buttress a democracy or a dictatorship? I argue that the relationship between structures of political power and structures of agrarian property determine the incentives for contending elites to either negotiate a transition to democracy or completely displace rival elites and establish a dictatorship. Specifically, when large landowners also occupy strategic locations within the state apparatus and governing bodies--what I call fused
structures of political power and agrarian property rights--neither side of the divided elite has any incentive to negotiate a transition to democracy. Only when the main body of governing elites and state managers owe their status solely to their organizational location and have minimal and dispensible interest in the reproduction of the agrarian property regime--what I call autonomous structures of political power and agrarian property rights--do both sides have incentives to negotiate a transition to democracy.

(3) By what mechanisms does rural incorporation render regimes more durable? I argue that rural incorporation was less significant for the demographic heft it provided to regime incumbents than for the political latitude it gave them to negotiate alliances with other key social classes and to build institutions and policies that welded together its broad social coalition while denying opportunities for low-cost collective action to opponents. As propertied elites of the urban economy joined the coalition, the regime was able to perform both an entrepreneurial and a reformist function. The combination of capitalists and lower classes in one coalition allowed the regime to maintain simultaneously mechanisms of capital accumulation and mechanisms of populist welfare policies. Consequently, most major social actors preferred the regime status quo to its alternative; and those who preferred the alternative had neither allies nor institutional space to mount a regime-transforming offensive.

While I believe these propositions constitute a significant substantive contribution to the study of regime dynamics, I would like to emphasize the value of studying both halves of the regime equation--regime etiology and regime durability--in a unified framework. Few analysts have tackled both tasks simultaneously. Much scholarship, particularly quantitative scholarship, has conflated the two issues. In his seminal 1970
article, Dankwart Rustow cautioned scholars to distinguish carefully between functional explanations of democratic stability and genetic accounts of its origins. He noted that many scholars had mistranslated Seymour Martin Lipset’s *requisites* of stable democracy as *causes* of democracy, forcing functional accounts to “do double duty as genetic accounts.”¹⁵¹ Despite the clarity of Rustow’s appeal, some twenty-five years later Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi observed sufficient ambiguity in scholarly conceptualizations of the object of inquiry of regime-change studies that they felt compelled to echo Rustow’s indictment, charging scholars with conflating “endogenous” theories in which economic development causes democracy with “exogenous” theories in which economic development is unrelated to the installation of democracy but strongly encourages its survival.¹⁵² By properly identifying the “facts to be explained,” Przeworski and Limongi render obsolete a tremendous number of studies that neglected Rustow’s call for the conceptual clarification of dependent variables.

Other scholarship has properly distinguished between regime origins and regime durability. This distinction has been rigorously maintained by the literature on democratic transitions spawned by the “Third Wave” of democratization that began in southern Europe in 1974.¹⁵³ “It is essential,” Nancy Bermeo cautioned in a review of the first generation of literature treating these transitions, “to draw an analytic distinction between the disintegration of a dictatorship, the construction of a democratic regime, and the consolidation of democracy.”¹⁵⁴ We should admire this determined effort to avoid conceptual conflation; we should also recognize that the substance of scholarly debates tracks contemporary exigencies closely, and that the decision to elaborate new dimensions of a dependent variable reflects legitimate attention to contemporary problems. Thus,
even as debate continued to rage over the causes of democratic breakdowns in the late 1970s, the emergence of new democracies caused scholarly attention to shift, first to analysis of democratic transitions, and second to analysis of the problems of consolidating new democracies. As David Laitin warns us, however, “The downside of this incentive to respecify problems given changing concerns within the research community is that questions in comparative politics never get satisfactorily solved...”

The crux of the problem, I believe, is that most of the scholarship built on the conceptual tripod of authoritarian collapse, democratic transition, and democratic consolidation has not allocated equal analytic energy to all three issues. One clear problem that results is that studies of democratic transition and consolidation have not been accompanied by studies of authoritarian consolidation. Note, after all, how the issue of “regime durability” has been redefined in the transitions literature as “democratic consolidation,” obsuring the importance of research into “authoritarian consolidation.” Far too many studies of the transition to democracy have agreed, implicitly or explicitly, with Giuseppe Di Palma’s bold claim that “the record shows that dictatorships do not endure.” Di Palma emphasized ideological rigidity and loss of purpose as the cause of authoritarian obsolescence and collapse, a claim that was first made by Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter who write of the ideological schizophrenia of postwar dictatorships as their “Achille’s heel.” Schmitter and O’Donnell are less explicit than Di Palma that authoritarian collapse is inevitable, but such a position seems to underly their claim that even under the most “unfavorable conditions” in which the founders of authoritarian regimes unleash massive repression to eradicate any vestiges of democratic institutions, “soft-liners do eventually emerge with their recognition that, at some time in
the future, some kind of political “opening” will be necessary." These and other works differ about the sources of authoritarian debility and the process by which transitions begin, but they all take authoritarian collapse as a given and none offer a generalizable theoretical statement of why some dictatorships collapse while others enjoy impressive capacity for regime reproduction.\textsuperscript{160}

Since the downfall of dictatorships is rightly understood to be the first step in a process that might culminate in democratization, understanding when and where they fall—and when and where they do not—is, to repeat Bermeo’s wise judgment, an essential component of a comprehensive understanding of regime dynamics. Consequently, the many fine studies of recent democratic transitions that begin from the moment of authoritarian opening and that thus privilege actor strategies and processes over structural determinants do not aggregate into a theory of the origins of democracy; indeed, insofar as they misconceive the sources of authoritarian disintegration, it is not at all clear that they constitute explanations of particular transitions from non-durable dictatorships to democracy. To be sure, it could be the case, as Przeworski and Limongi argue, that the death of dictatorships and the birth of democracies is not only “random with regard to development” but also an outcome of heterogeneous causes such as wars, death of a founding dictator, economic crisis, or foreign pressure.\textsuperscript{161} But recall here the relatively durable authoritarian regime established in Syria in 1963. That dictatorship has now survived three major military defeats, one major urban insurrection, more than twenty years of economic crisis, and the recent death of a founding figure, Hafiz al-Asad. Any one of these generic crises has been mentioned as the cause of the downfall of
dictatorships elsewhere, and the resilient Syrian regime is not the sole “nondemocratic holdout.”

Note further how the question of authoritarian consolidation affects our understanding of debates about structure and agency. Advocates of the agency-based position have univocally claimed that no structural conditions characterize cases of recent democratic transitions. But taking into consideration observed variation in authoritarian consolidation casts doubt on that claim, for dictatorships based on rural incorporation have either survived the Third Wave of democratization to date, or, as in the case of Mexico, given way to a completed democratic transition almost two decades after its neighbors, confounding expectations that democratic transitions could be understood as “snowball effects” or international demonstration effects spreading rapidly throughout continental regions. Durable dictatorships differ from non-durable dictatorships on, at minimum, one key attribute: the breadth of the social coalition that supports them. We should therefore not be at all surprised to find dictatorships endowed with markedly different capacities and resources for reproduction. Indeed, that Latin American bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes rested on fragile social coalitions devoid of widespread social support was well-recognized before they collapsed, clearing the way for democratic transitions. The necessary and structural condition for a democratic transition, we must therefore conclude, is the absence of a durable dictatorship. Recognizing this basic claim would have allowed us to avoid years of fruitless debate about the role of structures in permitting democratic transitions.

Let us note, in conclusion, a second problem stemming from separating the study of democratic origins from that of democratic consolidation while ignoring the sources of
variations in authoritarian durability: the study of regime dynamics is becoming increasingly fragmented. Distinct and often heterodox theoretical frameworks explain transitions to democracy and democratic consolidation: authoritarian consolidation, however distasteful, is neglected; and increasingly rare are efforts to understand the origins of twentieth-century dictatorships. This last theme is important not only because there are reasons to believe that some current democracies will not survive, but also because past instances of authoritarian installations provide opportunities to identify and test causal mechanisms whose explanatory relevance may not be restricted to historical cases. Among other philosophers, Philip Kitcher has argued forcefully that a major ingredient of scientific progress is explanatory unification. Briefly, alongside of explaining relevant phenomena, one of our core imperatives must be to show how our various explanations fit together to increase our understanding of the world. Essential to this task is to minimize, whenever possible, the number of accepted patterns of argument so that we can derive many credible propositions from the fewest number of unprovable premises. Substituting unified explanatory frameworks for multiple explanatory frameworks with incompatible ontological and theoretical premises can only increase our confidence that we understand the world. This core philosophical concern mandates that regime dynamics be treated in the comprehensive format advocated here.
Notes

1 Note, therefore, that I explain the origins of durable dictatorships and of durable democracies; and that I explain why these regimes are partitioned into democracies and dictatorships; but I do not advance non-idiosyncratic hypotheses explaining specific instances of regime change among non-durable regimes. Because these regimes lack mechanisms of reproduction, a heterogeneous set of causes can trigger their downfall. The critical task for the analysis of these regimes is to identify the determinants of their fragility, and so I explain the causes of their non-durability only.


4 Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 486, writes “This assumption of inertia, that cultural and social continuity do not require explanation, obliterates the fact that both have to be recreated anew in each generation, often with great pain and suffering.” But Moore never explains continuity, a point that has been noted by many sympathetic critics, especially with reference to the fascist cases.

5 Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press). Huntington boldly opens his book by discounting the importance of alternative forms of governance in the US and the USSR, and emphasizing what the two political systems share, the capacity to govern.
Gregory M. Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy: Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Note further that Luebbert self-consciously restricts the relevance of all of his claims to interwar Europe, expressing doubt that the European experience will either be duplicated or even approximated in the post-colonial world. (310).


Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Note also that the authors are forced to treat the incredibly durable authoritarian regime in Mexico as a somewhat deviant case. Their Huntingtonian attachments to the overall Moorean framework do not give equal emphasis to explaining authoritarian as opposed to democratic durability, perhaps because they focus on cases of long-term democratization.

A second work that addresses both issues, albeit disproportionately favoring the question of regime type, is Deborah Yashar, *Demanding Democracy: Reform and Reaction in Costa Rica and Guatemala, 1870s-1950s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). The four theoretical propositions framing the book all address the question of regime type; only in a concluding chapter does Yashar address the question of durability. Note further that Yashar eschews any claim to universality and expresses (2)
deep skepticism “whether any theory can realistically offer an explanation across cases and across time.” Indeed, in his broader study of all five cases of Central American regime dynamics, James Mahoney concludes that Yashar’s arguments only hold for a comparison of Costa Rica and Guatemala: incorporating the three other Central American cases into the analysis demands an explanation based on variables antecedent to those proposed by Yashar. See his *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 26-7.

10 Moore claims that the fate of the peasantry “suggests one more condition of democratic growth *that may well be decisive in its own right.*” The absence of a peasantry means that large landlords will not require a coercive state helpful in surplus extraction and that there is no “massive reservoir of peasants to serve the reactionary ends of the landed upper classes, as in Germany and Japan. Nor was there the mass basis for peasant revolutions, as in Russia and China.” *Social Origins*, 426. While not restricting their analysis to class power, Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens endorse Moore’s claim that labor-repressive agriculture is inimical to democracy while rejecting his claim that the bourgeoisie is the major actor pushing for democracy. For a summary statement, see *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, 270-71.


12 *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 461. To be fair, early in the book (12), Huntington roots political order and community in both the level of institutionalization and the scope of support for political organizations: the latter refers to the size of the
segment of the population that is politically organized. But the issue of scope of support is then deferred for hundreds of pages, and when it is reintroduced, the focus is not on scope per se, but on the sector of society from which support should be cultivated.

13 It is possible, after all, that in some instances, the initial conditions posited by my argument simply did not exist: it would be impossible to speak about rural incorporation in Saudi Arabia or the smaller principalities of the Persian Gulf. In other instances, the causal processes discussed here might be counteracted by others originating from either domestic or foreign sources. At minimum, the propositions discussed here can account for a large number of cases across time and space; they thus serve a metatheoretical function as a limit on the more extreme versions of causal heterogeneity championed by, among others, Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 31-46.

14 Note that due to space constraints, these case studies do not include evidence in support of the claim that rural incorporation is the decisive ingredient in regime durability. For this material, see AUTHOR.


See the summary of types of incorporation strategies in their *Shaping the Political Arena*, pages 161-68. The two cases of what the authors call “radical populism” are Mexico and Venezuela.


25 *Forging Democracy from Below*, 5.


27 Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, 23 and 29.
For a methodologically sophisticated effort to partition particular domestic causes from shared transnational influences, see Ruth Berins Collier, “Combining Alternative Perspectives: Internal Trajectories versus External Influences as Explanations of Latin American Politics in the 1940s,” *Comparative Politics* 26 (October 1993): 1-29.


My argument mirrors Jack Goldstone’s observations about the sources of stable states, i.e., those that are relatively immune to revolutionary overthrow. See his "Comparative Historical Analysis and Knowledge Accumulation in the Study of Revolutions,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 78. That elite unity is key to regime survival is a central insight of contemporary analyses in the “transitions” school. Like Goldstone, however, I consider it crucial to problematize stability by asking about the sources of elite unity.
Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy*. Luebbert supplies a different set of reasons why his arguments about stabilizing pacts in Europe have limited relevance to other experiences of the transition to mass politics.


The few exceptions to this claim that do consider urban-rural coalitions in the post-1980 political economy examine the implications of prior alliances with the countryside for post-1980s politics and economic reform. See, for example, Gibson, “The Populist Road to Market Reform.”


During the Islamist-inspired urban insurrection in Syria in the late 1970s, the regime armed peasants and organized them into “anti-feudal” battalions; there are also reports that the regular army troops who directly fought insurrectionaries in the cities were made of units comprised exclusively of members of families who had benefited from the earlier land reform. These maneuvers by the regime were covered extensively by the newspaper *Nidal al-Fallahin* (The Peasants’ Struggle).


See their *Shaping the Political Arena*, 503. Of course, in cases such as Syria, the party system is in fact no more than a monolithic single party that licences other quasi-independent parties to be established. The point is that in all cases, political participation is either grouped in the center or tightly controlled, an outcome that would be far more difficult if not impossible to achieve without a prior moment of rural incorporation.

By focusing on the elite incentives to incorporate the countryside, this analysis denies the more common argument that rural incorporation is a function of demands by rural lower classes. For a concise discussion of the collective action problems plaguing rural self-mobilization, see Ashutosh Varshney, *Democracy, Development, and the Countryside: Urban-Rural Struggles in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 193-200.

The powerful incentive to politically demobilize rural lower classes and then transfer agricultural surplus to urban-based development projects and political constituencies is explored to great effect by Robert H. Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

On the political marginalism of the countryside, see Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*, chapter 7. In principle, all of these calculations apply with equal force to the decision to incorporation urban labor as well. In practice, however, there are sound reasons why we should expect greater frequency of the incorporation of urban labor relative to rural incorporation. Most obviously, urban workers are in a stronger position to cripple the national economy. Moreover, while peasants may have high capacity to engage in collective action at the village level, without outside support, extra-village or extra-regional collective action is quite difficult to initiate and sustain relative to worker collective action. Workers are thus in a far better position than peasants to “demand” collective action. On the relationship between the propensity for collective action and the political significance of labor, see Collier and Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*, 41-48. On the problems of rural collective action, see Samuel Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

See her *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

See the essays in Doug McAdam, et al eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).
This argument is usually attributed to the influential work of Schmitter and O’Donnell, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, but the importance of splits between softliners and hardliners in the military was in fact first proposed in Huntington, *Political Order*, 232.

*Demanding Democracy*, 16-19.

In their study of eight Latin American countries, for example, Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier chronicle often long-standing and quite public political battles between traditional oligarchic elites and political leaders representing new, middle sectors. In all of these cases, conflict focused on issues ranging from modernization of the state to the expansion of the political franchise to the reconfiguration of state-economy relations. While all of these political crises resulted in the incorporation of urban labor, in only two cases, Mexico and Venezuela, was rural incorporation an outcome of elite divisions. See their *Shaping the Political Arena*, chapter 4.

As Martin Shefter argues, “Politicians will have an incentive to embark upon a strategy of mass mobilization, organization, and party building if a serious cleavage opens up within the political class that divides it along functional or sectoral lines, and that leaders cannot readily compromise or smooth over.” Martin Shefter, *Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 10.


Collier and Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*, chapter 3. The author’s excellent discussion of the capacity to incorporate the countryside is not complemented by analysis of the requisite incentives: consequently, they err in deriving the preference for incorporation from the capacity for incorporation. For further critical assessment of the Colliers’ hypothesis linking modes of popular-sector incorporation to the variable strength of the oligarchy, see Gerardo Munck, “Between Theory and History and Beyond Traditional Area Studies: A New Comparative Perspective on Latin America,” *Comparative Politics* 25, no. 4 (July 1993), 483-85.

Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (Oxford University Press, 1946), 82, writes of the modern state as one where rulers recruited salaried bureaucrats whose authority stems solely from their occupation of legally governed offices, so that “No single official personally owns the money he pays out, or the buildings, stores, tools, and war machines he controls...the ‘separation’ of the administrative staff, of the administrative officials, and of the workers from the material means of administrative organization is complete.”


Barrington Moore, Jr.’s classic formulation, “No bourgeoisie, no democracy,” reflects only one circumstance in which the structure of political authority diverges from
that of the agrarian property regime. Theda Skocpol bases her analysis of social
revolutions on a similar distinction: in her analysis, the characteristic that distinguishes
states prone to crisis from states that successfully adapt to international challenges is “the
presence or absence of a landed upper class with institutionalized political leverage at
extralocal levels, leverage in relation to fiscal and military/policing functions centrally
organized by royal administrations.” See her States and Social Revolutions, 110.

58 In their Capitalist Development and Democracy, Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and
Stephens argue that capitalist development promotes democracy in part by diminishing the
political and economic influence of anti-democratic, labor-repressive landed elites. As the
argument of this paragraph, and the cases of Mexico and Syria, demonstrate, some
modalities of eliminating oligarchic hegemony promote stable dictatorships rather than
democracy.

59 Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens, Capitalist Development and
Democracy, 60.

60 Structural analysis of these breakdowns has focused on conflicts in the urban
political sector, as exemplified in O’Donnell, Modernization and Bureaucratic
Authoritarianism. Insufficient attention has been paid to the increasing political role of
the rural sector and the threats this posed to entrenched political and economic elites. On
Brazil, see Frances Hagopian, Traditional Politics and Regime Change in Brazil
(Cambridge University Press, 1996). On Chile, see Scully, Rethinking the Center.
Adam Przeworski argues that institutions make democracy possible by lengthening actors’ time horizons, granting them the opportunity to reverse present electoral losses in the future. The separation of political from economic power may be a necessary condition for this outcome as it strips competition of at least some of its zero-sum nature. See his *Democracy and the Market*, chapter 1.


This definition adds to Schumpeterian minimalism the condition that have elections meaningful implications for who rules and what policies are enacted in order to avoid the “electoral fallacy” that has been identified by Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, “What Democracy Is...And Is Not,” in *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 45.


A leading scholar of Latin American democracy referred in 1990 to Venezuela as one of Latin America’s few democracies that was “relatively consolidated in that actors are not so preoccupied by the overriding concern with survivability.” See Karl, “Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America,” 12.


Note that the cases I identify as durable democracies were all unrestricted democracies, in which no major social group was structurally precluded from low-cost
political participation; and while all suffered periods of political instability, none were replaced by lengthy democracies. I thus exclude Chile from this list both because it was a restricted democracy during its four decades of competitive politics, and because the democratic era was followed by a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime. Uruguay’s three decades of unrestricted democracy were also followed by a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime.

70 With reference to India, Varshney argues that the establishment of democracy prior to an industrial revolution empowered the Indian countryside. See his *Democracy, Development, and the Countryside*. Varshney’s argument cannot be generalized: it does not help to explain rural incorporation under authoritarian regimes, nor does it adequately distinguish India from other cases in which democracy preceded industrialization without being accompanied by rural incorporation. See also Bates, *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* for powerful arguments that elites will choose to not incorporate rural lower classes.

71 Karl, “Petroleum and Political Pacts,” 197.

72 For a statistical test that confirms this proposition, see Michael Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy,” *World Politics* 53, no. 3 (April 2001): 325-61.

73 While the authors propose three clusters of power configurations that link capitalist development to democracy, the shift in the balance of class power that advantages pro-democratic classes and disadvantages anti-democratic large landowners using labor-repressive methods of production is the primary mechanism. See their
Capitalist Development and Democracy, 272. It may be the case, of course, that Syria, Mexico, and other instances of long-lasting dictatorships resting on rural incorporation represent cases where the balance of class power favored democracy, but the other two mechanisms were strongly biased against democracy; if this is so, then the analytic task at hand is to explain why the three causal mechanisms do not move in tandem in this important subset of cases.

74 Shaping the Political Arena, chapter 4.


80 For details, see Hinnebusch, *Peasant and Bureaucracy*.


84 Collier and Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*, 114, 117.


Katz, *Secret War*, 16.


Gibson, “Populist Road to Market Reform,” 348-49.


96 Knight, “Rise and Fall of Cardenismo,” 247.


99 Fox, *Politics of Food in Mexico*, 45-47; see also Cornelius, “Nation-Building, Participation, and Distribution.”


To repeat a point made earlier, it is not rural incorporation alone that renders regimes durable; rather, it is a host of coalitional and institutional strategies whose implementation is vastly facilitated but not absolutely necessitated by rural incorporation.


These claims are made by, respectively, Karl, “Petroleum and Political Pacts,” 217; and Nancy Bermeo, “Democracy and the Lessons of Dictatorship,” *Comparative Politics* 24, no. 3 (April 1992), 277.


See Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?”

AD won over 70% of the votes in a series of elections in which more than half of the new voters enfranchised by electoral reforms came from rural areas in which AD and its predecessor organizations had been organizing since 1936. Powell, *Political Mobilization of the Venezuelan Peasantry*, 67-69.


Writing of the end of the Brazilian ancien régime, Ruth Berins Collier argues that the 1930 Revolution “was not, of course a popular revolution but rather one that primarily expressed an inter-elite cleavage. However, this cleavage was not extremely intense, and there was no real sectoral clash between the agricultural and industrial sectors to the degree that has been found elsewhere.” She goes on to observe that in contrast to the Brazilian Revolution, the Mexican Revolution “represented a major escalation of intrafactional elite conflict that changed the rules of the conflict and introduced the mobilization of the popular sectors as a tactic in this rivalry.” See her “Popular Sector Incorporation and Political Supremacy: Regime Evolution in Brazil and Mexico,” in, *Brazil and Mexico: Patterns in Late Development*, edited by Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Richard S. Weinert (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982), 63, 65.

for extensive discussion of elite-level agreements to exclude rural lower classes from political participation.


125 Collier and Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*, 110, 117.


127 Gaitán’s project failed when he was told by both peasants and workers that “they could not easily vote for him now that he was not a Liberal. The power and patronage of local leaders was too strong, and support for them was a safer bet.” Herbert Braun, *The Assassination of Gaitán: Public Life and Urban Violence in Colombia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 61-67, citation from 67.


Linz describes this change in analytic focus as one from asking why regime change occurs to asking how it occurs. See his *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, 4.

Di Palma, for example, notes that in some studies, as many as forty-nine demanding preconditions for democracy have been adduced. See his *To Craft Democracies*, 4. On the rejection of normal social science, see Di Palma as well as Schmitter and O’Donnell, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 3-5.

Similar arguments for programmatic reformulation occurred in other fields as well. For important statements, See Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (University of California, 1988), 185-204, and Jeffrey Alexander, et al eds., *The Micro-Macro Link*.
Note that these and other authors did not see reasons to reject macrostructural variables, but rather sought to complement them with analysis of individual, usually strategic, behavior.


138 Collier, Paths Toward Democracy, 193-96, makes explicit the need to combine the strategic and the class-based frameworks. In his The Sources of Democratic Consolidation (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), Gerard Alexander makes painfully clear how the Spanish case was misinterpreted by transitions scholars and reinvigorates a powerful class-analytic perspective on European transitions, albeit one that is deftly infused with attention to actors’ strategic decision making.

139 Alternatively, a bias in the selection of explanatory variables is substituted for biased selection of cases. The massive quantitative study of Adam Przeworski and his collaborators, for example, rejects structuralist accounts of democratization based on a statistical model containing factors suggested by “the extensive work reported by others.” They conclude that if there are any factors explaining why dictatorships die and democracies emerge, they are either “idiosyncratic, impossible to catch in a statistical analysis,” or, alternatively, “they might be systematic, and we might simply have failed to find them.” See their Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being
in the World, 1950-1990 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), chapter 2, quotes from 81 and 137. The factors tested in the model--level of economic development, political legacies, past regime history, religious structure, ethnolinguistic and religious fractionalization, and international political environment--have indeed been extensively studied, but these are not the factors contained in seminal works commonly identified as being structuralist. Herbert Kischelt was, I believe, the first to notice that scholars in the the anti-structuralist camp have conflated rejecting modernization theory with rejecting structuralist theories and have thus failed to engage systematically with “the more hard-nosed comparative studies in the tradition of Moore and others that focus on property rights, class relations, and state institutions.” See his “Political Regime Change: Structure and Process-Driven Explanations?” American Political Science Review 86 (December 1992), 1032.

140 See his “Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large N and Small in Comparative Politics,” Comparative Politics 31, no. 4 (July 1999), 474-75.

141 Karl, “Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America,” 5-8. Elsewhere, Karl describes structured contingency as an approach in which structures not only restrict or enhance the choices available to decision makers, but also “produce a situation in which one path of action becomes far more attractive or far less costly than another, and thus they can define preferences by creating overwhelming incentives for decision makers to choose (or to avoid) a specific set of policies.” See her Paradox of Plenty, 10-11.
Mahoney and Snyder, “Rethinking Agency and Structure,” 25. The authors base their ontological synthesis on the position that structures do not act through agents, but rather agents use structures; this interesting point does not add any empirical punch to a point already made by Karl and others.

For the past 15 years, Stanley Lieberson has been urging social scientists to assume neither probability nor determinism, but rather to make the case for one or the other in their specific empirical fields, beginning with his *Making it Count: The Improvement of Social Research and Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). For a concise discussion of degrees of causal order, see John Dupré, *The Disorder of Things: Metaphysical Foundations of the Disunity of Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 171-74.


146 Cohen, *Radicals, Reformers, and Reactionaries*, 37, italics in original.

147 Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (Free Press, 1951), 325.


150 This problem of conceptual conflation is not, however, specific to any research tradition. In his review of recent qualitative studies of regime dynamics, Gerardo Munck laments their “mixed success in pinning down their dependent variables. To a large extent, research has been organized around three concepts: democratic transition, democratic consolidation, and democratic quality. But either these concepts have not always been clearly specified or they have been specified in different ways, so that multiple definitions of the same concept bearing an unclear relationship to each other coexist awkwardly in the literature.” See his “The Regime Question: Theory Building in Democracy Studies,” *World Politics* 54, no. 1 (October 2001), 123.

151 Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy,” 341. Lipset’s original formulation, recall, was that “The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances it will sustain


153 The phrase is courtesy of Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave*.

154 See her “Rethinking Regime Change,” *Comparative Politics* 22, no. 3 (April 1990), 368.


157 An important exception to this claim is the extremely valuable and under-appreciated contribution of Robert R. Kaufman, “Liberalization and Democratization in

158 Di Palma, To Craft Democracies, 33.


160 Others works conveying a strong sense that the opening of authoritarian regimes is all but inevitable include Przeworski, Democracy and the Market, 55-57; and Huntington, The Third Wave, chapter 3.


For these expectations, see especially Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies*, 185-87; and Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*, 3-5.
