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Uniting Against Autocrats

Opposition Coordination, Turnovers and Democratization by Elections

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UNITING AGAINST AUTOCRATS

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Opposition Coordination, Turnovers and
Democratization by Elections



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

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Department of Political Science
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1. Introduction

As counter intuitive as it might sound, autocracy without elections is a rare combination today. What once was an institution restricted to the affluent West is now a practice spread across the globe. Multiparty elections have become the standard procedure for electing political leaders, even in places like Eastern Europe and Africa where most countries remained closed autocracies all the way to the 1990s. Elections do not constitute democracy, but they can promote democratization. The aim of this dissertation is to study the process of democratization through elections, focusing on the effect of opposition coordination. This dissertation does so in four independent, but related, articles probing the overall question: How is democratization by elections achieved and what causal explanatory power can be attributed to opposition coordination for obtaining democratizing outcomes in authoritarian elections?

This dissertation concludes that much of the previous literature has confused alternation with democratization and argues that these two outcomes must be clearly separated. Regime change often does not promote change in the regime-type. Oppositional politicians radically change their institutional preferences once they assume office. Elections promote democracy because they create institutional maturity, not because they occasionally change the leaders controlling democratically flawed institutions.

Several earlier authors have emphasized the importance of the alternation moment under electoral authoritarianism. A number of long-standing authoritarian regimes fell in popular elections in the beginning of the 21st century. These instances were often used as a proof for the democratizing potential of authoritarian elections. Both academics and journalists frequently used the term “electoral revolutions” to refer to instances where authoritarian regimes lost control of the electoral arena and an empowered opposition was able to secure a victory, either after contesting rigged elections or through an immediately recognized victory.

Many of these dramatic events shared a common denominator. They featured a strong, coordinated opposition coalition, wherein previously rival opposition parties gathered under one common banner to contest the election.

In the literature, several authors have emphasized the importance of electoral coordination as a causal explanation for democratization by elections (e.g., Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Howard and Roessler 2006; Rakner and Svåsand 2004; Weingast 1997). Similarly, several international organizations working with democratization and party system development have used opposition coalition building as one of their main strategies for democratic assistance in electoral authoritarian regimes (e.g., Bader 2008:9; Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Burnell 2000; Carothers 2006; Resnick 2011).

This dissertation studies how, why and when opposition challengers coordinate their electoral efforts; how it affects election outcomes; and how government alternations affect the prospects for democratization beyond the electoral turnover. The findings of this dissertation diverge radically from much of the earlier research and are highly critical of the notion of “electoral revolutions”. This dissertation questions the general causal relationship between opposition coordination and democratization by elections. In cases where parties are poorly institutionalized and appeal to voters through patronage rather than through different distinguishable policy agendas, coordination often reflects the probability of election turnovers rather than causes democratization.

This dissertation closely studies one example, Kenya in 2002, where alternation did not create democratization. After decades of uninterrupted rule by the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) party, a diverse coalition of regional and ethnic parties, named The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), secured an impressive victory. Hopes were high of democratic improvements. However, NARC did not maintain its coalition for long. In 2005, the coalition fell apart before an important referendum on a new draft of the country’s constitution. During the next election, it became painfully clear that Kenya had not taken any clear steps towards democracy. Instead, the election showed significant irregularities and resulted in an unprecedented amount of ethnic violence.

Kenya is not the only country where the democratic record of a newly elected government has been highly disappointing. It might seem puzzling that opposition parties who were once loud advocates for democratization abstain from further democratization after being elected. However, it is important to acknowledge that democratization can have both intrinsic and instrumental value. Although opposition parties are not intrinsically driven by democratization, increasing electoral fairness has an instrumental value for the opposition, simply because freer and fairer elections increase the opposition’s chance of winning an election. However, once in office, the incentives for institutional change alter dramatically. The rules of the game, which were once to the opposition’s disadvantage, can now be turned into a tool for its political survival.

The four articles in this dissertation flesh out this argument in more detail. This introduction places the broader research project within the larger debate on party politics and authoritarianism. It clarifies some of the basic theoretical understandings and elaborates some important concepts. It summarizes the dissertation's findings and offers an account of the collective contribution made by the four articles included in this dissertation.

2. The articles in brief

The overall research question and main aim of this dissertation was presented in the introduction chapter. This study uses four independent, but related, articles, all with their own specific sub-questions and empirical and theoretical aims, to examine the overall research question. All the articles in the dissertation contribute to an overall argument, but no particular article is able to individually answer the dissertation's main research question.

To simplify, one may argue that two of the articles (articles 1 and 2) use coordination as a dependent variable and two articles (articles 3 and 4) use coordination as an independent variable when studying democratization. How coordination is measured and how coordination relates to other variables varies between the articles.

2.1 Article 1

In article 1 (Wahman 2011), coordination is used as a dependent variable. The aim is to understand why and when opposition parties create pre-electoral coalitions (PECs) in competitive authoritarian regimes. It uses a newly collected dataset on coalition building in 111 competitive authoritarian regimes and is the first large-N study researching why and when opposition parties form PECs in this context. The article contributes to answering the overall research question of the dissertation by giving a more complete picture of the causal chain that determines electoral outcomes in authoritarian elections. To understand why coordination affects election outcomes, we must understand why opposition parties coordinate in the first place. The article argues that two specific dimensions are key to explaining the creation of PECs in competitive authoritarian regimes: (1) the prospects of defeating the incumbent government and (2) whether the opposition parties have a policy agenda distinct from the incumbent government's policy agenda. This argument is supported using logistic regressions and illustrated with cases strategically chosen on the basis of the statistical results. The results suggest that two different types of coalitions exist: those that are at least partly driven by

a common policy agenda and those that are mostly driven by the prospects of getting into office. For the future progress of the project, it becomes interesting to investigate whether the type of coordination might have an effect on the prospects for the long-term democratization.

2.2 Article 2

Article 2 also concentrates on coordination as a dependent variable. It studies the case of Kenya, a case where opposition coordination seems to have been foremost an office seeking strategy and parties are formed along ethnic lines rather than according to identifiable policy cleavages. The aim of article 2 is to obtain a clearer understanding of coalition building in party systems where the spatial model of voting does not apply. By studying this topic in more depth, it is possible to better understand why opposition parties often abstain from coordination in these contexts, despite the potential electoral benefits that may be derived from coordination. The article acknowledges that traditional theories of coalition building are hard to apply in contexts where parties do not compete spatially. The absence of transitive preference orders among voters makes strategic defection less likely. As a consequence, parties do not have to coordinate out of fear of substantial voter defection. Ethnic parties have clear incentives to remain independent challengers when incumbent defeat seems unlikely. They can remain in the race to consolidate their status as ethnic frontrunners and maximize their probability of winning local races in constituencies inhabited by their core ethnic supporters. Creating a PEC is only rational if senior partners can offer a credible commitment to power sharing. This article studies essentially the same question as article 1 but uses a different type of data. It studies voter coordination with constituency level election data and elite incentives with interview data from Kenyan political stakeholders. Although this article does not have the same level of generalizability as article 1, it adds substantial depth to the understanding of why opposition parties often chose to run separate campaigns in electoral authoritarian regimes.

2.3 Article 3

In article 3 (Wahman 2013), coordination is used as an independent variable affecting democratization by elections rather than as a dependent variable. A seminal article by Howard and Roessler (2006) shows that opposition coordination is the most important determinant of democratization by elections. The article shows that Howard and Roessler's conclusion relies on a very specific view of democratization by elections. Studying 251 electoral authoritarian elections in the period 1973-2004, the article shows that the previously acknowledged democratizing effect of coordination is better understood as an alternation effect, through which coordinated opposition parties increase their likelihood of winning elections. However, the initially positive democratic effect of coordination is short-lived and is largely a measurement effect, as democratic indices tend to improve when elections result in turnovers. As in article 1, the study also shows evidence of partial endogeneity. Opposition parties create coalitions because they realize that this will strengthen their electoral challenge, and coordinated opposition parties more often win elections than uncoordinated opposition parties. However, coalitions are not randomly assigned among the cases under investigation. Coordination is more common in places where the incumbent government is weak and where the opposition believes that a victory is feasible. Article 1 and 2 make a stronger case for this conclusion, but article 3 adds to this argument by studying this hypothesis on a larger sample.

2.4 Article 4

Lastly, article 4 studies the relationship between alternation and democratization in electoral authoritarian regimes. It asks whether there is a general relationship between alternation and further democratization and why alternation leads to democratization in some cases but not in others.

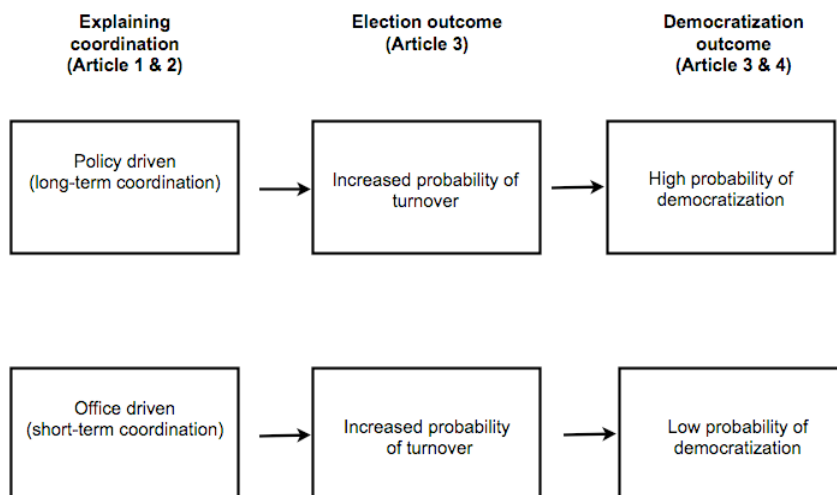
The article offers a potential explanation for why the democratic effects of opposition coordination are generally short-lived. Alternation is not democratization. Although coordinated opposition parties may win elections more often than uncoordinated opposition parties, it is not obvious that they will introduce further democratization after winning office. Using simple quantitative techniques, it is possible to show that there is no clear difference in the democratic performance of newly elected and re-elected governments.

Newly elected governments seldom have incentives to democratize the political system. However, the type of opposition coordination does matter for the democratic outcome after alternation. Cases where the new government relies on a stable coalition with long-term commitments are more likely to democratize than cases where political actors without long-term commitments make up the new government coalition. To refer back to article 1, there should be a substantial difference in the expected democratic outcome of governments that are formed at least partly due to a shared policy agenda. In cases with low party-system institutionalization, electoral uncertainty becomes high and a newly elected government becomes unwilling to increase electoral fairness by abolishing electoral advantages. The causal mechanism here is much more intricate than in article 3, and the cases of Ghana, Kenya and Senegal are studied more closely to illustrate the theory.

2.5 How they fit together

The four articles' separate findings yield a more general argument about coordination and democratization by elections. The figure below illustrates how the individual articles of this dissertation contribute to the collective argument.

Figure 2.1: The role of the individual articles



The combined results of the four articles suggest that opposition parties coordinate for different reasons. The nature of coordination is likely to affect the prospects for democratization after the defeat of the incumbent. Opposition parties coordinate because they think they can increase their chance of getting elected, and coordination increases the prospect for turnovers. However, all turnovers do not lead to long-term democratization. The dissertation is highly critical of the notion of “electoral revolutions”: the fact that a political system is competitive enough to experience a turnover might be a symptom of increased democracy but might not be a guarantee for further democratization beyond this particular point. For newly elected governments where the involved actors lack long-term commitments, abolishing incumbent advantages is often detrimental for the chances of re-election. In such cases, senior partners must account for the risk of coalition disintegration and maintain institutions that could help to keep them in office despite a diminished power base.

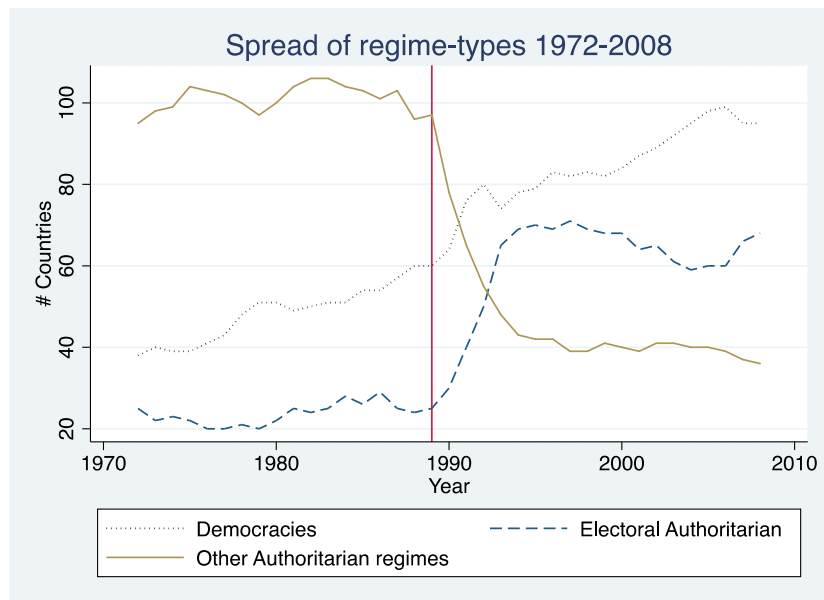
In the following chapters the articles are situated within broader theoretical traditions. Articles 1 and 2 rely heavily on the traditional party literature, and Chapter 4 of this introduction essay reviews this literature in more detail. Chapters 2 and 3 review relevant parts of the democratization literature, which are important for the analysis in article 3 and 4.

3. Electoral authoritarianism

Global political development has been quite astonishing since the end of the Cold War. Before 1989, only a minority of the countries in the world arranged multiparty elections. Today, elections have become the standard procedure for electing national leaders, even in regions far from democracy's western origin.

There is really no doubt that the world is freer today than it was in 1989, but the development has been ambiguous. Civil and political rights have increased impressively in Eastern and Central Europe, together with South America. However, alongside the expansion of the democratic regime-type, the most remarkable development during the last two decades has been the spread of the electoral authoritarian regime. From being a relatively rare regime-type in the late 1980s, it has undoubtedly become the most important version of authoritarianism found today.

Figure 3.1. Spread of regime-types 1972-2008



Source: Hadenius, Teorell and Wahman (2010). The category “Electoral Authoritarian” corresponds to the category “Limited Multiparty” in the database and “Other Authoritarian regimes” corresponds to those classified as “One-party”, “No-party”, “Military” or “Monarchy”.

Elections and authoritarianism might seem contradictory, and indeed they were considered such in the earlier democratization research. Elections are a central institution for democracy, but they are not contradictory to the concept of authoritarianism. To this day, the way in which we define the boundaries of democracy and authoritarianism is still a topic of contestation. The number of publications on this issue is steadily increasing, but a minimal consensus still seems distant. Democratization research still lacks a common language for categorizing the universe of political regimes. This “babel in democratization studies” has been the source of much confusion. Some approaches to this issue are directly contradictory, while other seems to boil down, more or less, to pure semantics (Armony and Schamis 2005). No research studying the foggy zone between democracy and authoritarianism can avoid this discussion. This dissertation will use the term “electoral authoritarianism” to describe the class of regimes under

scrutiny (Schedler 2006). As will be shown, the reason for this decision is based on theoretical considerations and has practical consequences for the performed research. Below, a definition of this concept is outlined and compared to closely related and rivaling views of regime classification.

3. 1 Definition of democracy

Obviously, electoral authoritarian states are not democracies. Democratic theory has given rise to an important normative discussion about the definition and continuation of democracy. Democracy is a contested concept because of its positive connotation. However, for empirical research on democratization there are clear advantages to measuring the process of democratization against an empirically existing class of regimes. This is not to say that these countries fully guarantee their citizens the highest possible degree of freedom, equality and well-being. On the contrary, democratic regimes may have several shortcomings and exhibit vast inequalities.

Instead of a normative definition, this study uses a conventional and empirical understanding of democracy. As in much of the research on electoral authoritarianism, the definition of democracy is taken from Robert Dahl (1971). Dahl uses four criteria to define democracy (or more precisely polyarchy): (i) free, fair and competitive elections; (ii) full adult suffrage; (iii) broad protection of civil rights, including freedom of speech, the press and association; and (iv) the absence of unelected "tutelary" authorities that limit elected officials' ability to govern.

Dahl's definition of democracy is often cited as an example of a procedural definition, along the lines of the Schumpeterian understanding of democracy (Collier and Levitsky 1997; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986:6; Schumpeter 1947). Procedural definitions of democracy aim to separate inputs into the political system from the outcomes they produce. In empirical research, there are clear advantages of using narrowly defined concepts. By pinning down the concept to its conceptual core, the concept can be used more precisely as a potential independent or dependent variable (Collier and Levitsky 1997). Procedural definitions of democracy are highly concentrated on elections. It is possible to define a democracy as a regime where government offices are filled as a consequence of free and fair elections. However, to do so, one has to understand "electoral fairness" broadly. As Dahl (1971) correctly acknowledges, certain civil rights are needed to hold meaningful elections. The fairness of political systems is not only determined on election day, depending on the fairness of the expression of

preferences. There also has to be fairness in the formation of preferences, and such fairness is impossible without a certain level of civil liberties, such as freedom of press, speech and association. Levitsky and Way (2010a) argue that a “reasonably level electoral playing field” should be added as additional criteria to the definition (see also Greene 2007). Although I would argue that this criterion is implicit in Dahl’s criteria on “free and fair” elections and “broad protection of civil rights”, this is a useful illustration of how to distinguish democracies from autocracies with elections. Incumbent advantages exist even in consolidated democracies. For example, there is a huge literature on incumbent advantages in congressional and presidential election contests in the United States (e.g., Alford and Brady 1988; Cox and Morgenstern 1993 and; Erikson 1971). However, the difference between democracies and autocracies is the degree to which the political system is biased in favor of the incumbent. The advantages in autocratic regimes are often obtained by illiberal or unconstitutional means, such as using state resources for incumbent campaigning and vote-buying, restricting the opposition’s access to the public media or appointing partisan electoral commissions. Kenneth Greene (2007) uses the concept of “hyper-incumbency advantage” to describe the relationship between the incumbent and the opposition in authoritarian elections.

In this dissertation, democracy is seen as a continuous, rather than a dichotomous, variable with cutoff points to establish different regime-types. How to find the cutoff point between electoral authoritarianism and democracy is discussed later. At this stage it is important to establish that it is possible to talk of different levels of democracy. As a consequence, the process of democratization among electoral authoritarian regimes should be seen as a gradual development rather than as a sharp transformation in which countries change regime-types at decisive moments. Following this logic, the dependent variable becomes closer to what O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) label “liberalization” than “transition”. When thinking about democracy as a continuous, rather than a dichotomous, concept, the concept of “transition” becomes problematic because it supposes that there exists a qualitative difference separating autocracy from democracy (Teorell 2010: 32).

There has been a vivid debate about the pros and cons of a continuous or dichotomous view of democracy (e.g., Collier and Adcock 1999; Munck and Verkuilen 2002; Sartori 1970). Both theoretical and methodological reasons have informed the decision to treat democracy as a continuum rather than a dichotomy. As Sartori argues (1970: 1038), “concept formation stands prior to quantification”, but theoretical considerations often have methodological consequences. When looking at the criteria set out by Dahl, it is reasonable to

conclude that different regimes can fulfill them to varying degrees. Some regimes might fulfill some but not all criteria (Teorell 2010). On a methodological note, because this dissertation sees democratization as a continuous process, where higher levels of democracy can be obtained in small steps, measuring democracy as a dichotomous variable would seriously truncate the dependent variable. Moreover, regardless of whether we study democratization qualitatively or quantitatively, the magnitude of measurement errors will increase when only assigning two potential values to the dependent variable (Elkins 2000).

3.2 Definition of electoral authoritarianism

Within mainstream democratization research, debates on regime classification have not been primarily focused on the definition of democracy. Instead, most of the discussion has been on whether it is desirable to distinguish between different types of authoritarian regimes and, if so, how to do so. Since the mid-1990s, there has been a significant increase in the interest of regime classification (see e.g., Brownlee 2009; Geddes 1999; Hadenius and Teorell 2007). The starting point for this development was the recognition of the hybrid regimes located in-between the classic definition of authoritarianism and democracy. Although some argue that this is not a historically new regime-type (Brownlee 2007), it is obvious (as shown in figure 2.1) that they became an empirically much more important phenomenon during the 1990s. The increased interest for these hybrid regimes called some of the old assumptions in classic democratization theory into question. A number of authors started to question how classic democratization theories could relate to the most pressing challenges of democratization in the 1990s and tried to develop new frameworks for understanding contemporary problems of democratization (e.g., Case 1996 and Zakaria 1997). Inspired by these authors, Thomas Carothers (2002) challenges what he labels the “transition paradigm” of earlier democratization research. In this type of research, conducted by many of the pioneers in the field such as Rustow (1970) and O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), the focus of democratization research was the transition to democracy. From this perspective, the implementation of democratic institutions

and rules was the primary object of study. The problem with this perspective is that, from this point on, the process of democratization is supposed to enter either into a consolidation phase or eventually fall back into authoritarianism. However, many countries make little democratic progress after adopting formal democratic processes. As later empirical research has shown (e.g., Hadenius and Teorell 2007 and Levitsky and Way 2002), electoral authoritarianism seems to be the most common pathway to democracy, but it can also be a stable political system moving towards neither liberal democracy nor closed authoritarianism.

Given this development in democratization research, it is not surprising that most authors have abandoned the dichotomous view of democracy. A noteworthy exception is Przeworski et al (2000) who still argue that this is a superior way of conceptualizing democracy.¹ In their view, which also relies on Dahl, a democracy is a regime where governmental offices are filled as a consequence of contested elections and where the opposition is allowed to compete, win, and assume office. This definition includes two different sets of criteria, one obviously more demanding than the other: (i) governmental offices are filled by minimally competitive elections and (ii) the opposition is able to win elections. As will be further elaborated in article 4 of this dissertation, this definition is problematic both for operational and theoretical reasons. It is noteworthy that this definition could easily be used to create a trichotomy of regime-types: one where elections are not held, one where elections are held but where the opposition has no chances of winning, and one where the opposition actually has the ability to win elections.

There have been a number of attempts to build more detailed regime classification schemes. All of these have acknowledged a middle category where authoritarian rule is combined with formally democratic elections in some way.² This category has been given many names including, "hybrid regimes" (Diamond 2002), "illiberal democracies" (Zakaria 1997), "semiauthoritarian regimes" (Ottaway 2003) and "pseudodemocracies" (Diamond 1989). It is sometimes unclear if these terms differ in any substantial way, and I am unsure whether the introduction of new names to describe this regime-type has furthered the state of democratization research.

The problem with the earlier labels like hybrid regimes, pseudodemocracies, and semi-democracies (or semi-authoritarian regimes) is that these labels do not

1 See Cheibub et al (2010) for a similar regime classification.

2 Some attempts have also been made to categorize the cases where elections are not held, into different authoritarian sub-categories (e.g. Geddes 1999 and Hadenius and Teorell 2007). But since these categories are clearly outside the population of this study I see no reason to go into this discussion in any depth.

specify how different dimensions of autocracy and democracy are combined.

In this regard “electoral authoritarianism” and “illiberal democracies” are better labels. In a study such as this, focused on elections, it is important to use a categorization where elections fill a somewhat similar meaning. For this reason, the label of electoral authoritarianism is useful because the quality of elections is the defining feature of the category. As opposed to “illiberal democracy,” where liberalism could be implemented in a specific country later than free and fair elections.

Democracies and electoral authoritarian regimes are both multiparty regimes that allow for recurrent popular elections, where voters elect their national leaders. In this way, these regimes are clearly and qualitatively distinguished from closed authoritarian regimes, which do not hold multiparty elections (Schedler 2006).

However, the qualitative difference between democracies and electoral autocracies is more blurred, although they differ in regard to their respective degree of electoral fairness.³ Electoral authoritarianism can be understood as a cluster of regimes where elections are severely manipulated to favor the incumbent government. Similarly, the category of democracy is a cluster of regimes with a higher level of electoral fairness. With this understanding of regime-classification, it becomes hard to talk about a “transition” from electoral authoritarianism to democracy because it is hard to find a qualitative definition that allows us to observe the movement where a country transfers from one regime category to the next. However, we still need to find a way to distinguish our population when studying electoral authoritarian regimes. This is a methodological rather than a theoretical problem, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

In some of the articles in this dissertation (article 1 and 4), the term “competitive authoritarian” will be used to describe the population of regimes under investigation. This is a term, first used in the work by Levitsky and Way (2002). I do not consider the two concepts to be theoretically contrary in any way. Instead, I consider “competitive authoritarianism” to be a sub-category of the wider “electoral authoritarian” category. In this more narrow concept, those regimes that do not have a reasonable amount of competitiveness are disregarded. This limitation of the broader concept could be theoretically desirable, but methodologically it introduces yet another problematic threshold of competitiveness. Therefore, the dissertation will relate primarily to the broader category of “electoral authoritarianism,” although it was necessary to limit the population for practical reasons in some of the articles.

3 Note that electoral fairness should be interpreted in a broad sense, also including restrictions of civil liberties that ultimately affect democratic choice. For a full list of dimensions affecting electoral fairness see chapter 3.4.

3.2.1 How to recognize electoral authoritarianism

The strength of the electoral authoritarian approach is that the lower cutoff point (i.e., against closed authoritarianism) is relatively clear. Electoral authoritarian regimes hold elections permitting a minimal degree of competition; closed authoritarian regimes do not. It is accordingly easy to mark the day of the first national multiparty election as the day when a country moves away from closed authoritarianism.⁴

The upper cutoff point is more problematic. The difference between an electoral authoritarian regime and a democracy is one of degree rather than type. When does a country's electoral arena become competitive enough to enter into the electoral democratic category? Przeworski et al. (2000) give the general recommendation to base classifications on observations rather than judgments. As sound as this argument might be, this is simply not possible for theoretical reasons. Practically, the decisive moment for Przeworski et al. separating authoritarianism from democracy is when the incumbent regime first loses an election and passes political power to the opposition. Similar thoughts have been articulated by, for example, Larry Diamond (1999:15) in his definition of pseudodemocracies: "This requires a second cutting point, between electoral democracies and electoral regimes that have multiple parties and many other constitutional features of electoral democracy but that lack at least one key requirement: an arena of contestation sufficiently fair that the ruling party can be turned out of power."

A fundamental idea in this dissertation, which is strongly advocated in article 4, is that an opposition victory should not be seen as the moment of transition from autocratic to democratic rule. Even authoritarian regimes can lose control of the electoral arena, and the transition of power to the opposition is not a guarantee of future steps towards more democracy. Like Levitsky and Way (2010b), I argue that it is unfair elections, in the broad understanding of the word, that characterize electoral authoritarian regimes.⁵ For an electoral turnover to result in democratization, the new regime must actually increase electoral fairness through real change in behavior or institutional reform. A good example is the case of Kenya (article 2), where elections remained equally, or possibly even more, manipulated after the electoral turnover of 2002. Moreover, as argued by, for example, Bogaards (2010) a country could become democratic even without the occurrence of an electoral turnover. Cases like Botswana and South Africa

4 Countries have, however, quite commonly slid back to closed authoritarianism.

5 Or in Levitsky and Way's terminology, "Competitive Authoritarianism".

enjoy a higher degree of competitiveness than, for instance, Kenya and Senegal even though the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) and the African National Congress (ANC) have still to lose their first elections.

Although Przeworski et al (2000:33) also acknowledge the merits of a minimalist procedural definition of democracy, I would argue that including alternation in the definition moves us apart from the procedural tradition by including outcomes in the definition. When including alternation in the definition, we exclude the possibility of conducting research like the one presented in article 4 of this dissertation.

Hence, an upper threshold between electoral authoritarianism and democracy, must be based on other indicators. When establishing the threshold quantitatively, Schedler (2006) suggests using the Freedom House index. This dissertation takes a similar approach, although using a combined Polity and Freedom House measure. As Hadenius and Teorell (2005) argue, this is desirable to compensate for the respective weaknesses in the two indices. The threshold has been put at 7.5 on the 10-point scale. Hadenius and Teorell (2007) derived this threshold by calculating the mean cutoff point in the most authoritative sources on regime classification. Admittedly, this quantitative cutoff point is somewhat arbitrary, and one may argue that only studying democratization within a certain interval of competitiveness truncates the dependent variable. However, the problem becomes less severe because of the graded approach to democracy utilized here (Elkins 2000). When using a continuous approach to democracy and democratization there is an obvious risk of miscategorization. However, we do not run the same risk of measuring the dependent variable incorrectly as we do when employing a dichotomous view of democracy. For example, even though it is possible to debate when, exactly, Ghana became democratic enough to be labeled a democracy, it seems fair to conclude that it was more democratic in 2001 than it was in 1999 (Smith 2002; Minion and Morrison 2004).

3.4 How elections are manipulated

The severity and means of manipulation varies between authoritarian elections, but authoritarian elections are, by definition, never fair. It is important to flesh out how elections are manipulated to effectively recognize electoral authoritarianism and steps toward increased levels of democracy.

Andreas Schedler (2002b) talks about a "menu of manipulation" used by autocrats to control the electoral arena (see also Elklit and Reynolds 2005). He identifies seven different "Dimensions of Choice" that are often manipulated to

decrease competition: (1) the object of choice (by limiting the scope or jurisdiction of elective offices); (2) the range of choice (by excluding or fragmenting opposition forces); (3) the formation of preferences (by restricting political and civil liberties and the opposition's access to resources); (4) the agents of choice (by formally or informally restricting suffrage); (5) the expression of preferences (by intimidating or buying voters); (6) the aggregation of preferences (by electoral fraud or institutional bias); and (7) the consequence of choice (by preventing elected officers from taking office or by restricting their constitutional terms).

This view of manipulation resembles the broad understanding of "electoral fairness" utilized in this study. Most of these categories of manipulation are relevant for electoral authoritarianism. However, I would argue that the object of choice should not be restricted under electoral authoritarianism. Elections under electoral authoritarianism should, at least theoretically, be able to replace the *de facto* national chief executive. Countries like Iran, where a non-elected body (the Guardian Council) has the ultimate power, should hence not be considered electoral authoritarian regimes.

Schedler (ibid. 41) states, "Elections may be considered democratic if and only if they fulfill each item on this list. The mathematical analogy is multiplication by zero, rather than addition. Partial compliance with democratic norms does not add up to partial democracy. Gross violation of any one condition invalidates the fulfillment of all the others. If the chain of democratic choice is broken anywhere, elections become not less democratic but undemocratic." I agree with the statement that severe manipulation of any of these conditions makes an election undemocratic. However, there is a vast difference between how many of the dimensions that are violated and to what extent they are infringed.

I would argue that it is possible to talk about levels of democracy in relation to these criteria. The process of democratization is a gradual process where elections become less manipulated over time. Understanding democracy in this way should also be the logical consequence of a graded approach to measuring the central concept.

For instance, if we compare the 2001 election in Belarus to the 1997 election in Mexico, it seems highly reasonable to argue that they exhibit clearly varying degrees of authoritarianism. In Belarus, opposition candidates were harassed and killed, the media was completely regulated, the central bureaucracy and electoral commission were controlled by the incumbent and the tallying of votes was manipulated (Silitski 2005). Mexico had implemented institutional reform to make elections more free and fair in 1996, and there was no major voter fraud in the 1997 election. However, there was still a quite extensive resource advantage for the incumbent, which was used to attract voters with patronage politics (Lawson

2000). Consequently, whereas the Lukashenka regime in Belarus manipulated most of Schedler's dimensions, the Mexican Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) regime only manipulated one. Elections both in Belarus and Mexico had a clear incumbent bias. However, Mexico should be seen as less autocratic, and a movement from the conditions found in Belarus in 2001 to those found in Mexico in 1996 signals democratization.

When writing about Mexico, Magaloni (2006: 6) states, "A focus on electoral fraud as the sole reason for the PRI's survival would thus lead us to two erroneous conclusions: first, that Mexico was more democratic in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s than in the 1980s and 1990s, an odd conclusion given that the electoral institutions were transformed in the 1990s; and that the PRI was not able to win elections clearly, which for the most part it did." I disagree with this view of democracy. The level of democracy should not be based on the outcomes a political system produces but on the input that goes in to the electoral procedure. Incumbent defeat might be a sign of a more democratic input, but it is not a sufficient way of measuring democracy. Therefore, when talking about democratization, this dissertation refers to the process of increasing electoral fairness as described by Schedler (2002b) above.

It is also important to acknowledge that democratization is not a linear process, where the level of democracy is always on the rise. In the classic account of democratic consolidation, or what is often referred to as "negative consolidation", researchers have been studying the stability of democracy (Schedler 1998). In this literature it has been acknowledged that new democracies often break down and revert to authoritarianism after the initial transition (Linz and Stepan 1996). According to the definition of democracy applied in this dissertation, de-democratization or what Teorell (2010) refers to as "democratic downturns" can occur even among electoral authoritarian regimes. Therefore, when measuring democratization by elections in authoritarian regimes, we must be open to the possibility that elections can have negative effects when autocrats decide to increase manipulation to handle electoral uncertainty.

4. Democratization by elections

It might seem puzzling that autocratic regimes arrange elections. Opening up the political arena for competition can threaten political survival. The initial implementation of elections is often not a deliberate choice for many authoritarian regimes. After the end of the Cold War, the increasingly powerful West started to use its economically dominant position more actively to export democracy and human rights. With regards to Africa, Joseph (1999: 246) argues, “After 1989, while local citizens invariably decided the details of the transition, they seldom determined the decision to introduce political reforms solely or independently”.

Although it is true that many, or possibly even most, introductions of multipartyism after 1989 were driven by donor pressure, it cannot explain why many autocrats decided to introduce elections prior to 1989 or why many autocratic countries, like Zimbabwe, continue to arrange competitive elections even though they have already lost all democratic credentials among donors. A number of authors have highlighted how elections can be used to stabilize authoritarianism and prolong the tenure of authoritarian leaders.

Magaloni (2006: 7 ff.) argues that elections served four core functions in the Mexican context: (i) distribution perks and positions among party elites; (ii) showing potential opponents the strengths of the authoritarian party (if election results show that there is no realistic chance of getting into office if running for an oppositional party, few members of the political elite are tempted to join oppositional parties); (iii) provision of information about their “real” support to authoritarian parties (elections are an easy way to evaluate whether there is a strong opposition against the rule of the authoritarian party among the electorate); and (iv) incorporation of the opposition into the formal political process (when giving the opposition the chance to participate in the flawed elections the risk of civil unrest is decreased).

The last mechanism suggested by Magaloni is also highlighted by Gandhi and Przeworski (2007). Elections are used to mitigate dissatisfaction against the top-level autocrats of the regime among fellow party members as well as oppositional parties. When opposition representatives are included in the legislature, the opposition is given a stake in the survival of the regime. Empirically, the authors show that autocratic leaders within countries that allow for oppositional

contestation in elections enjoy significantly longer tenures than leaders who do not allow contested elections.

Wright (2008) argues that it is economically beneficial for dictators to institutionalize elections in countries dependent on “un-earned incomes” and where incomes are not collected from natural resource extraction. In these states, dictators have to make a credible commitment to constrained power. When a dictator shows that he/she is willing to share power with other elites, the incentives for domestic investment increase, and the dictator can expect increased income from rents.

4.1 One term, separate meanings

The set of literature cited above advises us to be cautious about placing too much hope in elections in authoritarian regimes. However, there has been a noteworthy second strand of literature studying the potentially democratizing effects of elections. If elections are not by definition democracy, it is possible to conceive of authoritarian elections as a potential independent variable promoting democratization.

A number of case studies and small-N comparative studies have highlighted how elections have produced democratic socialization and more inclusive political systems. According to this view, elections create institutional maturity over time. Actors such as political parties, voters and civil society organizations learn how to behave in this new political system (e.g., Barkan 2000; Eisenstadt 2004 and Hermet 1978).

A study by Lindberg (2007), studying 232 elections in 44 African countries, shows that repeated elections tend to increase the level of democracy. According to Lindberg, democratizing countries learn to become more democratic through holding elections, even though most of these elections fall short of international requirements on freedom and fairness. Teorell and Hadenius’ study (2009) reaffirms Lindberg’s positive message when looking at the same question for a significantly larger global sample and applying more elaborate quantitative methods.

The innovative aspect of Lindberg’s (2007) work is its use of quantitative data to emphasize the long-term effect of elections, focusing on how elections strengthen political institutions. A number of previous scholars had implicitly or explicitly studied “democratization by elections” by studying specific noteworthy elections where a country’s political landscape was significantly altered after authoritarian defeat.

Similarly, a number of studies have tried to systematically study the nature of these “breakthrough” elections. After the “color revolutions” in post-communist Europe and Central Asia, several studies tried to establish how these democratic breakthroughs were made possible (e.g., Bunce and Wolschik 2011; McFaul 2005; Tucker 2007).

In another study looking at the short-term process of democratization by elections, Howard and Roessler (2006) study factors contributing to what they label “liberalizing electoral outcomes”. The authors come to the conclusion that opposition cohesion, the focal point of this dissertation, is the most powerful predictor of democratization by elections.

Schedler (2002a) talks about a nested two-level game of authoritarian elections, where opposition parties compete both to win elections and reform electoral rules. Hence, the process of democratization by elections is a struggle over both rules and outcomes.

Although all of the studies cited above speak about democratization by elections, they highlight very different mechanisms and ultimately perceive the process in radically different ways. Teorell and Hadenius (2009) make a useful distinction when separating the democratization by elections literature into two separate theoretical camps. One theory, labeled “mouse nibbling” highlights the cumulative long-term positive effects of elections. A second “pressure chamber” theory poses democratization by elections as a dramatic short-term effect. The mouse-nibbling theory is most clearly illustrated by the work by Lindberg (2007), whereas the pressure chamber metaphor is applicable to the studies of Bunce and Wolshik (2006; 2010; 2011) and of Howard and Roessler (2006).

As articles 4 and 3 make clear, this dissertation is highly critical of the empirical credentials of the “pressure chamber” theory. The authors within this tradition have tended to focus on proximate actor-oriented causes for democratization by elections and have neglected structural explanations for incumbent defeat (Way 2008). Moreover, they have often made premature judgments on the effect of alternation on democratization and not profoundly studied the incentives for newly elected regimes to initiate democratic reform.

4.2 Democratization and electoral alternation

According to the pressure chamber theory’s understanding of the democratizing power of elections, alternation in power is the clearest example of an event where democracy would emerge from one decisive election. I argue that alternation is not democratization per se, regardless of whether we believe that democracy

emerges through a gradual process or if we think about an actual transition to democracy. Nevertheless, it is possible to think of situations where alternation causes democratization. Three different situations where alternation and democratization have been connected in the literature are presented in article 4.

1) The incumbent party loses its ability to manipulate elections and, as a consequence, loses the election. Much of the literature on authoritarian elections has been concerned with the question of why dominant parties lose. The most notable research on this topic has been performed in relation to the electoral defeat of the PRI party in the 2000 Mexican general elections (e.g., Eisenstadt 2004; Greene 2007 and Magaloni 2006). Greene argues that the eventual defeat of PRI arose due to a slowly declining incumbent resource advantage. After the economic crisis in the early 1980s, Mexico experienced a radical process of privatization. For decades the PRI had relied on patronage politics to secure impressive electoral victories. When the state's (and consequently PRI's) control over the economy declined due to privatizations, the electoral playing field was significantly leveled, which enabled an opposition victory.

I argue that this situation should not be understood as democratization through elections. For the Mexican case, it is reasonable to argue that it was the increasingly level playing field that enabled the transition in power. In other words, democratization enabled alternation, not the other way around. Brownlee (2007:9) has argued a similar point, saying, "elections under authoritarianism tend to reveal political trends rather than propel them."

From this perspective, alternation is more accurately understood as a symptom rather than a cause for democratization. It is much easier to register changes in behavior during election years and due to imprecise measurement we tend to recognize the large improvements in democracy during years when elections are held. Moreover, the risk of exaggerating the effects of alternation is especially apparent in quantitative research where election outcomes tend to be used as an indicator for the level of democracy (see article 3). This observation suggests that we have to carefully distinguish between alternation as a cause and a symptom of democratization. A way of studying democratization through elections with less measurement error would be to extend the time frame over which we measure the effect of alternation, thereby also studying longer-term effects of alternation beyond the actual election year. Even if measurement errors might account for a significant part of the cases where alternations have been associated with democratization, this does not mean that alternation can never lead to a higher level of democracy. Alternation can be a symptom of democratization but still lead to higher levels of democracy beyond the turnover.

2) The incumbent's advantages are not tied to the executive office *per se*, but to specific actors in the system. When those actors are voted out of power, the new government does not have the ability to employ the same types of manipulation. As a result, democratization follows not because the opposition deliberately liberalizes the political system, but because they do not enjoy the manipulating capacities of their predecessors.

A clear example would be countries with reformed military governments. In these cases, incumbent parties often use the military's coercive capabilities to harass the opposition and secure electoral advantages. It is not clear that such coercive capabilities would easily transfer to a new government if they lack the same close relationship with the security forces as their predecessors.

It is possible to conceive of such cases, although it is most likely rare for all institutions that could be used for manipulation to be autonomous from the incumbent office. Moreover, realignments often occur when the electoral fortune turns on incumbent governments. Business interests, clientelist brokers and military officers are likely to change loyalties to ensure fruitful relations with the new government in office, and good incentives for the new government to accept these new supporters often exist. Take, for instance, the old religious marabout (Sufi leaders) brokers in Senegal, who used to form an important clientelist network upholding the Socialist Party (PS) dominance for decades. These leaders used to overtly support the PS regime but assumed a more neutral position in the 1990s, which can be seen as a main explanation for the eventual defeat of the PS in the 2000 election (Boone 1990; Beck 2008). After alternation, young ambitious marabout leaders have been co-opted by the new regime, more or less copying the PS' old survival strategy (Dahou and Foucher 2009:25).

3) The uneven playing field is inherent in the system. The new government could theoretically employ the same manipulative measures as the previous government, but it decides to abolish incumbent's advantages through democratic reforms and to act in accordance with the constitution.

This dissertation is especially interested in this third possibility. Many studies have not reflected critically on the possibility that newly elected governments may not find it attractive to democratize once they have entered into office. In a study by Bunce and Wolchik (2010:72), the authors aim to "address the puzzle of

why elections in competitive authoritarian regimes have the divergent outcomes of either leading to the victory of the opposition or, more commonly, producing continuity in authoritarian rule,” hence excluding the possibility that opposition victory may not put an end to autocracy.⁶ McFaul (2005:6) was quick to label both the Georgian and Ukrainian alternations “democratic breakthroughs.” Similarly, when talking about Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, Beissinger (2007:259) notes, “since 2000, four successful revolutions have occurred in the post-communist region, each overthrowing regimes practicing fraudulent elections and bringing to power new coalitions in the name of democratization.”

It is essential to think about what incentives newly elected regimes actually have to democratize the political system after assuming office. All political systems consist of leaders who strive to stay in power and challengers trying to elevate their political position. Or, as expressed by Bueno de Mesquita et al (2005:9), “The desire to survive motivates the selection of policies and the allocation of benefits; it shapes the selection of political institutions and the objectives of foreign policy; it influences the very evolution of political life. We take as axiomatic that everyone in a position of authority wants to keep that authority and that it is the maneuvering to do so that is central to politics in any type of regime.”

Under competitive authoritarianism, opposition parties are often pro-democratic organizations pushing for institutional reforms. In the 1994 Ukrainian presidential contest, the incumbent government temporarily closed down the HRAVIS TV-station, which had shown its support for the opposition challenger Leonid Kuchma. Quite understandably, this violation of press freedom was deemed unacceptable by the opposition. The election resulted in a turnover and after taking office, Kuchma disbanded the so-called “council of Broadcasting media,” stating that it was improperly appointed by his predecessor. (CIA Human Rights report). These early developments in media regulation spurred hopes of more liberal media policies, but when Kuchma left office in 2004, it was clear that Ukraine had experienced a substantial decline in press freedom, with a regime that had severely censored public and private media and where critical journalists had been harassed and mysteriously disappeared (Dyczok 2006).

How should we think about Kuchma and other opposition leaders who radically change democratic rhetoric into autocratic practices after assuming office? It is tempting to think about such political leaders or parties as “false democrats,”

6 Interestingly two (Georgia and Kyrgyzstan) or arguably three (Ukraine) out of the six “successful” cases in their study have not produced democratization, despite alternation (see Kalandadze and Orenstein 2009). In Bunce and Wolchik’s (2011:27) later book on this topic, the authors more clearly acknowledge the fact that there was a significant difference in the outcomes after alternation, but they still define a “democratizing election” concentrating on electoral outcomes.

adopting democratic façades to attract support from voters and international actors. However, it is essential to recognize that democratization can have both an instrumental and an intrinsic value to political actors. In addition to the possibility that some opposition leaders in autocratic systems may be normatively motivated to promote democratization, instigating institutional reform might be a way to pursue more office-seeking objectives. To use a sporting metaphor, every soccer team would prefer an objective referee to one who systematically rules in the favor of the opponent, not necessarily because they are genuinely concerned about the integrity of the game, but because an unbiased referee would increase their chances of eventually securing a victory.

When newly elected regimes abstain from democratization, this does not necessarily imply that their preferences have changed. If the ultimate goal is to secure office, democratization is likely to be a good strategy in opposition but a less attractive strategy after having won political power. Electoral authoritarian institutions can be valuable for newly elected regimes. In Senegal and Kenya opposition parties radically changed their constitutional preferences after assuming office (Creevey et al 2005; Murunga and Shadrack 2006). Similarly, Saakashvili could continue to benefit from the weak and politically dependent judiciary in Georgia after his 2003 electoral victory. In the years after the turnover, the new regime applied anti-corruption laws selectively to punish counter-elites but spare government supporters (Devdariani 2004). In Malawi, the Muluzi government inherited a strictly regulated, biased media after beating the Banda regime in 1994. The new regime continued to use public media in the same way as their predecessors to create electoral advantages (Ihonvbere 1997).

Seen from this perspective, the critical question is not why so many transitions in power have failed to create real democratization. Instead, the real puzzle, one that article 4 investigates, is as follows: why would any newly elected government ever instigate institutional change and promote democratization?

Some changes leading to more equal competition enhance, rather than hurt, the prospects for a newly elected regime to secure re-election. For instance, when the new New Patriotic Party (NPP) government in Ghana evened the size of the parliamentary districts, it eliminated an old bias in the electoral system that would never have worked to NPP's advantage (Smith 2002). However, the new regime also liberalized media regulations by abolishing media legislation that could have been used to bias the press to the new government's advantage (Abdulai and Crawford 2010). A similar development can be found in Slovakia after the 1998 election. The new Dzurinda government decided to meet the democratic requirements for joining the European Union. For instance, reforms were introduced to include opposition parties in parliamentary commissions and

give a more independent role to the judiciary (Pridham 2002).

This dissertation argues that such developments are made possible when democratizing the political system does not immediately threaten the political survival of the chief executive. In the case of Slovakia, for instance, it seemed likely that the new government would be able to keep together and compete successfully in the next election even under higher electoral integrity. Moreover, success in the EU negotiations was key for the political survival of the Slovakian government and was dependent on democratic improvements (Pridham 2002). However, when electoral uncertainty is high and a new incumbent regime has the choice to maintain incumbent advantages, we do not expect to see any significant steps toward democracy.

4.3 Does coordination create alternation or democratization?

The discussion above suggests that it is important to distinguish between alternation and democratization. The problem with much of the literature arguing the importance of opposition coordination for democratization by elections is that this distinction has not been clearly made. Article 3 discusses some of the methodological problems that arise when not making this distinction and presents statistical evidence suggesting that coordination is associated with alternation rather than democratization. In article 4, the theoretical problems of equating alternation with democratization are developed further.

Article 4 also shows that the democratizing effect of alternation is likely to vary depending on the nature of coordination. If coalitions are formed between uninstitutionalized parties lacking long-term commitments, newly elected regimes are less likely to democratize. If senior partners are concerned with an eventual defection from junior coalition partners, they might decide to keep incumbent advantages to increase their chances of political survival.

5. Voters and parties under electoral authoritarianism

To understand the process of democratization by elections, we must first understand how elections function in authoritarian regimes. Howard and Roessler (2006) argue that the main determinant of democratization by elections is opposition cohesion. When opposition parties coordinate their electoral campaigns, they are able to pool their resources and increase competitiveness thereby enhancing the chances of democratization by elections. Theirs was the first large-N evidence suggesting that lack of coordination decreased the probability of democratization by elections, but several earlier authors had cited opposition fragmentation as a recurrent obstacle in the process of democratization in many authoritarian regimes (e.g., Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Rakner and Svåsand 2004; Weingast 1997).

Despite a general understanding that opposition disunity is and has been a key obstacle to democratization in many contexts, the analysis of why, how, and when such coalitions are formed has been surprisingly absent from the research agenda. To assess the causal explanatory power of opposition cohesion, we have to study the incentives for opposition parties to coordinate and investigate how such coordination might affect democratization beyond the electoral outcome. As recognized by Bunce and Wolchik (2011: 253), “The role of opposition unity in democratic change, however, is more complicated than many analysts have recognized. One issue is methodological. Does the unification of the opposition lead to the defeat of dictators, or do the enhanced prospects for future success-prompted, for example, by crises in authoritarian rule- create the necessary incentives for collaboration among opposition groups? Another problem is that we in fact know very little in a detailed empirical sense about why oppositions resist cooperation and, thus, the circumstances that might encourage them to change direction and work together.” Article 1 of this dissertation studies these incentives for the first time using cross-regional statistical data. To understand the mechanisms more clearly, article 2 also studies this topic at the case-study level, looking at the notable case of Kenya. Interestingly, Howard and Roessler’s

(2006) study of the importance of opposition cohesion uses Kenya to illustrate the importance of opposition coordination for democratization by elections. In this dissertation, the same case is used to argue the complete opposite point.

There is a rich literature on party and voter behavior, developed mostly for the Western European and North American context. It would be wrong to assume that these theories are directly transferable to the authoritarian electoral context. In a way, doing so would repeat some of the serious misconceptions of the old “transition paradigm” (Carothers 2002). Elections, parties and voter incentives under authoritarianism often function differently than in their democratic counterparts. These differences are the very motivation for studying this phenomenon in more depth and probing the reasons why opposition parties choose to coordinate or stay divided.

However, assuming that the traditional theories of voting and party politics have no relevance in this context would be equally problematic. As was recognized in previous sections, there is no general qualitative difference between democracies and electoral authoritarian regimes. However, the lower level of electoral fairness can have consequences for some of the basic assumptions in the more traditional party theories. In addition to creating tools for understanding the role of coordination in the process of democratization, this dissertation adds to our general understanding of party politics. As electoral institutions have spread all over the world, it is essential to test some of the basic assumptions about party behavior outside of their contextual origin. Therefore, this dissertation is rooted in traditional party politics and voter theory while constantly questioning how these provisions should be altered to suit the context of electoral authoritarianism. Here the burgeoning research on elections under authoritarianism has been the main theoretical inspiration. Below, I start with a brief introduction to the classic understanding of party politics, based on the Downsian model of voting, a model that informs much of the analysis in articles 1 and 2. I then turn to the central question of the applicability and limitations of these classic theories of party politics in the electoral authoritarian context and how this should affect how we think about opposition coordination as a causal explanation for democratization by elections.

5.1 Traditional party theories

Most of the classic rationalistic work on voters and party systems are based on a spatial logic of voting (Black 1958; Cox 1997; Downs 1957, Hotelling 1929; Riker 1982) or what is often referred to as “the Downsian model” (e.g., Hinich

and Munger 1997). According to the spatial logic of voting, parties and voters can be placed along one or several policy continuums. Voters will act to maximize their utility by voting according to their preferences and strategic conditions set out by institutions (Cox 1997). Parties will adjust their policy position to maximize their expected number of votes. These assumptions have famously led to the so called “median voter theorem”, suggesting that the median position can never lose in a majority rule contest (Black 1958).

Because voters and parties can be placed on a continuum, voters have an ideal policy point. If there is a party located on this ideal point, the voter will vote for this ideal party. If there is no party located on this ideal point, the voter will vote for the party that is most proximate to this point. The Downsian model assumes that voters have “single-peaked” preferences, implying that the further away a party is from that ideal point the smaller the utility. As a consequence, voters have “transitive” preference orders, enabling them to rank the available parties based on their expected utility (ibid.). If the electoral rules make a voter’s preferred party unviable, the voter will defect to the viable competitor that offers the voter the highest expected utility (Cox 1997).

There have been several attempts to modify the assumptions in the Downsian model (e.g., Robertson 1976). First, several authors question the assumption that parties compete along a one-dimensional policy space (e.g., Davis and Hinich 1966 and Davis et al 1970). Instead, it is likely that most party systems have several politically activated cleavages, wherein parties can adjust their positions. For instance, most traditional political systems have one social and one economic dimension, where the position on one dimension does not necessarily have to determine the position on the other dimensions. The number of activated cleavages can vary in different political systems, and it has been suggested that political entrepreneurs can activate new political cleavages to make a more efficient appeal (e.g., Chhibber and Torcal 1997). Adding more dimensions to the Downsian model makes it more complex but does not distort the basic logic.

Second, actors might be driven by policy preferences, which should constrain them when adopting their policy positions to maximize votes. When talking about the incentives of party members, Downs (1957: 28) concludes, “We assume that they act solely in order in order to attain the income, prestige, and power which come from being in office. Thus politicians in our model never seek office as a means of carrying out particular policies; their only goal is to reap the rewards of holding office per se. They treat policies purely as the means to the attainment of their private ends, which they can reach only by being elected.”

Without abandoning the rational vote-maximizing idea of parties, there are good reasons to be skeptical about this assumption. All parties are dependent

on resources to make an effective appeal. Resources often come from actors that cannot realistically or have no intention of taking up public office. These actors could be donors or party activists and should not see an intrinsic value of office. Instead, they will demand policies in return for their resource investments. If parties converge around the center of the policy continuum, the expected utility of having one party in office compared to another would be too small to motivate “outsiders” to invest substantial resources in the victory of one party (Robertson 1976). Therefore, it is often hypothesized that parties will act to maximize both policies and offices.

According to the classic work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), Western European politics has been stabilized through fairly rigid foundations of political competition. Voters are supposed to align themselves with parties according to a number of social cleavages, most notably on the base of religion, social class, residence (urban or rural) and culture (minority or core). Social class has often been a dominant cleavage structure in Western European politics both historically and in modern politics. This class division transformed into a left-right continuum during the age of industrialization, when the lower classes favored more redistributive economic policies while the upper classes demanded a smaller welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1990). The general applicability of this basic spatial model in the context of electoral authoritarian regimes is probed later on. If parties do not primarily compete along a spatial continuum, such as the left-right spectrum, this should have important consequences for the coalition theories presented in the section below.

5.1.1 Coalition building

Since the 1950s, theories of coalition building have emerged as a central part of the party politics literature. The earliest contributions to this debate are often included in a tradition labeled the “size school” (De Winter and Dumont 2006). Based on the idea that parties are office-seekers, it was hypothesized that parties aim to maximize their utility of being in government by maximizing their weight within a given coalition (Riker 1962). Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1953) formulated the minimal winning theory, saying that parties unnecessary for obtaining a majority in parliament would never be included in a government coalition. In an extension, Riker (1962) suggested that parties always try to build a coalition with the slimmest possible majority in parliament.

The problem with these earlier theories on coalition building was that their predictive record was rather weak; moreover they were unable to explain oversized or minority coalitions (De Winter and Dumont 2006). As a consequence,

policy was introduced into the rational calculation. Policy was here understood in line with the spatial logic presented by Downs. Leiserson (1966) introduced the minimal range theory. Predicting that parties would build minimal winning coalitions with the smallest possible ideological distance. De Swaan (1973) developed this theory and presented the closed minimal connected theory, adding that parties positioned between the necessary coalition parties would also be included in coalitions. With this addition, it was possible to explain the existence of oversized coalitions.

In later contributions to the debate on coalition formation, policy has been elevated even further as a predictor of coalition formation. The median legislator theory even predicts that parties may sometimes stand outside of certain coalition constellations to maximize their policy utility (Laver and Schepsle 1996). Such predictions are unusual, but nevertheless most contemporary research on parties assumes that coalitions are built to maximize both office and policy (e.g., Bäck 2003; Müller et al 2008). Even though parties may not primarily be intrinsically driven by policy promotion, there are good reasons to believe that pursuing coalitions with ideologically proximate parties is rational from an office maximizing perspective (Austen-Smith and Banks 1988; Strøm 1990: 45 ff.). Voters take coalition strategies into account when placing their vote to maximize their expected utility. A coalition between ideologically disparate parties offers a set of policies rather distant from the party voters' ideal point. A party that has historically pursued coalitions with distant partners might hence lose credibility among voters (e.g., Duch et al 2010; Bergsted and Kedar 2009).

5.1.2 Pre-electoral coalitions (PECs)

Classic theories of coalition building are primarily concerned with government coalition building. However, knowledge from this literature has been proven to be easily transferable to the pre-electoral stage. The motivation behind PECs is to form an electoral coalition that will transfer into a government coalition. Therefore, parties are likely to choose PEC partners with a similar logic as they use when choosing government coalition partners (Debus 2009).

When talking about PECs, this text will use the same definition as (Golder 2006:1), "electoral or "pre-electoral" coalitions are [...] cases where party leaders announce to the electorate that they plan to form a government together if successful at the poll or if they agree to run under a single name with joint lists or nomination agreements." According to this definition, no distinction is made between more formal coalitions, such as joint lists, and less formalized verbal coalitions. The choice between a formalized joint list and separate campaigns is

often a consequence of electoral rules, where disproportionate voting rules would favor joint-list coalitions. The primary interest of this dissertation is opposition coordination, and such coordination may take different forms depending on institutional arrangements. Its goal is not primarily to understand the rationale for different coordination strategies but to understand why coordination occurs and how it affects electoral outcomes. Therefore, I have generally decided not to distinguish between different forms of coordination.

Although the literature on government coalition formation is well developed, the research on PEC formation is still at a nascent stage. In Golder's study (2006), the author concentrates mainly on opposition PECs in Western Europe and shows that they are rather common. According to Golder, PECs are used for two purposes: (i) to signal the ability to form a government after the election and to increase the information available for voters and (ii) to circumvent disproportionate voting rules. The empirical analysis shows that PECs are most common when voting rules are disproportionate and parties are closer in terms of policy.

5.1.3 Coordination between and within parties

A PEC is one specific form of coordination. PECs are closely studied in article 1 of this dissertation, but coordination does not necessarily have to be between parties. In some party systems, coordination instead follows more permanent patterns, and the opposition enters into the political system as one unified political party. Generally, this dissertation does not distinguish between coordination within and between parties as an independent variable to democratization. There is no obvious reason to believe that they should affect the democratization process differently, and as acknowledged by Downs (1957:24), parties are in themselves coalitions: "In the broadest sense, a political party is a coalition of men seeking to control the governing apparatus by legal means. By coalition, we mean a group of individuals who have certain ends in common and cooperate with each other to achieve them." Moreover, coalitions of political actors creating one common party are not necessarily more stable than coalitions between several parties. All parties include sub-units that may break away from the party and join or form rivaling parties (Sartori 1976). Looking at the Kenyan case, studied in article 2, it is noteworthy that parties have been as unstable as coalitions.

Article 2 evaluates the argument that we cannot fully understand strategic entry (or party coordination) without discussing strategic voting. According to basic Duvergerian (1954) logic, we expect candidates to create broader coalitions (or parties) of different political interests in systems with disproportionate voting

rules. Voters want to minimize their risk of “wasting” their vote on unviable candidates. According to Cox (1997), electoral systems put an upper limit to the number of effective parties in a constituency to $M+1$, where M represents the number of seats in the constituency.

Duvergerian logic normally entails that coalition building under disproportionate voting rules forces candidates to coordinate into formal parties using one single ballot, whereas proportional voting rules allow parties to coordinate without merging into one common party. However, the question is whether we should expect strategic voting to function similarly in clientelistic and programmatic party systems. Article 2 investigates this question. The reductive nature of disproportional voting rules might be affected if candidates do not have to fear massive voter defection if running as unviable candidates in disproportionate elections.

5.2 Party politics under electoral authoritarianism

Classic theories of party politics are useful when understanding opposition parties' behavior in electoral authoritarian regimes. However, there are important differences in how voters and parties typically behave under electoral authoritarianism as compared to the traditional consolidated democratic context. These differences should have profound consequences for how we explain opposition coordination and how we should expect coordination to causally affect democratization.

There are two general differences between electoral authoritarian party systems and those of consolidated democracies. The first difference is there by definition. The electoral system is more biased in favor of the incumbent in electoral authoritarian systems than in consolidated democracies. Electoral authoritarianism is defined by its higher levels of electoral manipulation. As a consequence, opposition candidates do not usually have a realistic chance to enter into the highest offices and will normally try to maximize their potential for winning lower offices or get co-opted by the incumbent government.

The second difference is not definitional but empirical. Most electoral authoritarian states tend to be new democracies with weakly institutionalized party systems. It is important to be cautious when stating this difference. Some consolidated democracies lack party system institutionalization, and some electoral autocracies have rather institutionalized party systems. Party system

institutionalization is not part of the democratic definition, but it is often used as an independent variable in explaining democratization. Hence, it is not surprising that many of the party systems in the world's electoral authoritarian countries are less institutionalized than those in the typical consolidated democracy (e.g., Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Kuenzi and Lambright 2005; Mainwaring and Scully 1995). As will be argued, the lack of party system institutionalization complicates the assumptions of many of the classic party theories considerably.

Party system institutionalization is here understood in a broad sense and does not only relate to a low degree of electoral volatility (e.g., Kuenzi and Lambright 2005; Lindberg 2007; Przeworski 1975). In the work by Mainwaring and Scully (1995), institutionalization relies on four conditions: (i) patterns of party competition manifest some regularity, (ii) parties have stable roots in society, (iii) political actors grant legitimacy to the electoral system, and (iv) party organizations are significant and not subordinate to the interests of ambitious leaders.

In the emerging literature on political clientelism, several authors have acknowledged that parties in new democracies and electoral autocracies often link to voters through a clientelistic, rather than, a programmatic appeal (e.g., Greene 2007; Hicken 2011; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Mainwaring 1999; Stokes 2007; Wantchekon 2003). In this way, parties are deprived of institutionalization because they lack stable roots and can easily be replaced if important patrons change their organizational affiliation.

Stokes (2007: 605) defines clientelism as “the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?” Voters in programmatic party systems, like those in clientelistic ones, often base voting decisions on private economic gain, often referred to as “pocketbook” or “egotropic” voting (e.g., Alvarez and Saving 1997; Romero and Stambough 1996). However, Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) make a useful distinction between clientelistic and programmatic party systems based on the type of goods politicians offer to attract voters. In programmatic party systems, politicians offer a combination of so-called public goods and club goods, whereas politicians in clientelistic party systems offer a combination of private goods and club goods. Public goods are outcomes that benefit almost everyone in society and of which no one can be deliberately excluded from enjoying the benefits (examples are external security, economic growth and reduced water pollution). Private goods, on the other hand, are goods that can only be enjoyed by specific citizens and that are distributed at the discretion of public officials (examples would be public sector

jobs, land rights and government contracts). Parties using public goods to attract voters use uncontested issues to draw support. These issues are often referred to as “valence issues.” Parties do not really disagree on valence issues and do not compete spatially on these concerns. Instead, parties try to be perceived as the most credibly providers of these public goods (Stokes 1992).

I would argue that although public goods provision is usually associated with programmatic party systems, most clientelistic parties hide behind the glittering façade of valence issues. In the Kenyan case, for instance, it has been noted that the policy manifestos of most political parties are extremely close in terms of wording and use uncontroversial catch phrases such as “democracy, anti-corruption, justice and development” to describe their political ambitions (Oloo 2007). By using the language of valence issues, parties appear legitimate without alienating voters, and they can combine this rhetoric with the provision of private goods to win support.

The really interesting division between programmatic and clientelistic party systems is in the nature of the distributed club goods. Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007:10) define club goods as goods that “provide benefits for subsets of citizens and impose costs on other subsets. Citizens external to certain group boundaries can be excluded from the enjoyment of such benefits, but none of those inside the boundaries.” Offering tax reductions to low income earners or building schools in rural villages inhabited by government supporters are both examples of club goods. The first example is programmatic, while the second one is clientelistic. The difference between programmatic and clientelistic club goods is that the first category is distributed regardless of voting history of that particular group, while the other is not dependent of voting loyalty (*ibid.*; Hicken 2011).

This distinction is disturbingly unclear. Imagine a political campaign where one party campaigns on the promises of increased pensions. When analyzing the electoral result, the party, which is now in office, notices that the proposed pension reform did not generate the level of support among retired voters that they were hoping for. As a consequence, they decide to retract the proposal and spend resources on other reforms they hope will generate more votes in the future. Should pension reforms in this example really be considered as clientelistic club goods? I argue that they should not. The essential difference between clientelistic club goods and programmatic club goods is the arbitrary distribution of clientelistic goods, where distribution of goods can be directed more efficiently to party supporters. Goods are not distributed to a collective that is defined at a too aggregate level. Doing so would create a problem with too many “free riders”, who benefit from goods without necessarily voting in favor of the incumbent party. Therefore, clientelistic club goods can be distributed to some groups but

withheld from others that share essentially the same characteristics.

Once again, clientelism is common among electoral authoritarian regimes but does not define them. As will be argued later on, the nature of the goods provided by political parties should radically change our understanding of coalition politics and also have consequences for the probability of democratization by elections.

5.2.1 Ethnic politics

Chandra (2004) convincingly argues that ethnic political systems are essentially a way to organize clientelism. Ethnicity is an easily accessible way to acquire information and create an expectation of future patronage payments. Voters will expect their co-ethnic candidates to favor their own ethnic group when distributing patronage, and candidates can hence use an ethnic appeal to win votes. This is an attractive way of understanding ethnic politics, although it is also possible to conceive of ethnic parties that combine clientelistic and programmatic appeals. For instance, in Latin America we have seen the rise of so called “Ethno populist” parties that are able to win votes by advocating extended minority rights as well as directing patronage to their own ethnic community (Madrid 2008).

I would argue that basic coalition politics could be used to understand why ethnicity has become such a salient political cleavage in many developing countries. Political competition has traditionally been essentially about distributing resources. In Western European politics, political competition has traditionally revolved around economic cleavages, where parties have been created to represent groups of voters that share similar economic interests (Esping-Andersen 1990). Hence, politics in these systems have essentially been fought over the distribution of club goods. A prerequisite for such a system has been that economic differences exist and that a sufficiently large group of voters can align with the different sides of the economic divide.

Put more clearly, for class to become a salient cleavage we need a substantial middle class. Appealing to poor voters in a political system where almost everyone is essentially poor would not create a minimal winning coalition. Why would a voter cast their vote for a party promising to distribute wealth to all poor people, when they could instead vote for a party that would distribute wealth to a subset of poor people, to which she herself belongs? In fear of radical economic redistribution, elites often did not favor democratic transitions in Western European countries before the emergence of a viable middle-class (Acemogulu and Robinson 2001; Moore 1966). However, the electoral dynamics of the

most unequal societies often makes class an ineffective cleavage line to mobilize electoral support.

In such societies, ethnicity is often a more effective cleavage to use for creating minimal winning coalitions. As Posner (2005) has argued, political entrepreneurs have historically been able to redefine the boundaries of ethnic groups to ensure a sufficiently large ethnic constituency to win elections. In Africa, such strategies were successfully used during colonialism and were subsequently adopted by various domestic political elites after independence. If ethnicities are used as a cue for transferring information about patronage distribution, parties will attempt to represent an ethnic constituency that is large enough to win office without carrying too much “unnecessary” weight. Minimal winning coalitions can hence be manufactured more efficiently using strategically chosen ethnic divisions, rather than using economic interests. Article 2 illustrates this argument with the case of Kenya.

5.2.2 Opposition coordination under electoral authoritarianism

There are two basic problems with theories connecting opposition coordination with democratization by elections. The first problem has already been emphasized: there has been little discussion about whether coordination achieves anything else than alternation. The second problem is that very little has been written about why and when parties coordinate. Consequently we, at best, miss a significant part of the causal story about democratization by elections when focusing only on the most proximate causes for the outcome. At worst, we might assign causal explanatory power to something that is, in fact, endogenous to democratization.

To say something about the causal effect of coordination, we have to reevaluate old theories of coalition building to see how they can be adjusted to the electoral authoritarian context and study under what circumstances opposition parties under electoral authoritarianism have incentives to coordinate. Articles 1 and 2 of this dissertation make the clearest contribution to this debate.

As recognized in article 1, the main differences between the typical electoral authoritarian context and the democratic system, or at least the theoretical idealization of democratic party systems, is (i) that parties do not compete spatially and exhibit clear policy differences and (ii) that the unleveled electoral playing field of electoral authoritarianism makes turnovers unlikely.

Given the results of article 3, which show that coordinated opposition parties are more likely to win elections, it might be surprising that opposition coordination is as rare as it is. According to the data in article 1, only approximately 20% of

the elections in the sample featured a coordinated opposition.⁷ I would argue that the relative rareness of these events is a consequence of the policy indifference of many opposition parties in electoral authoritarian regimes. Parties aim to obtain office but are often not too concerned about whom they share office with. As a consequence, they may delay coalition building until after the election. In article 1, it is argued that the likelihood of opposition coordination under competitive authoritarianism is a product of (i) the likelihood of incumbent defeat and (ii) the existence of a real programmatic policy divide between the incumbent regime and the opposition.

In unprogrammatically or clientelistic party systems, parties are less constrained in regard to choosing coalition partners than what is suggested in the classic theories of coalition building. When coming into office, clientelistic parties have to provide the goods they have promised before the election to maintain their support. In programmatic party systems depending on club goods, there will be intense conflict between certain parties and it will be impossible for some parties within a coalition to provide their favored club goods without hurting the constituency of other coalition parties. Take, for instance, a coalition between a social democratic party and a neo-liberal party. The neo-liberal party has made an electoral appeal based on more flexible labor market policies, attracting votes from business owners and the upper-middle class. The social democratic party, on the other hand, has a core constituency of blue-collar workers and has offered increased labor protection to appeal to their constituency. A coalition between these parties is unlikely, both before and after the election. Creating a coalition between these parties would hurt the involved parties' chances of getting elected, if announced before the election, or hurt the included parties in subsequent elections, if installed after the election (e.g., Bergsted and Kedar 2009; Hobolt and Karp 2010; Meffert and Gschwend 2011). Instead, parties try to form coalitions with parties supported by voters with similar or at least non-conflicting interests.

However, in a purely clientelistic party system there is no conflict between the supporters of different parties. The supporters of one party can become better off without the supporters of other parties becoming worse off. When coming into office, different parties are responsible to different groups of clients, but they should be indifferent about whom the clients of the other parties are. As a consequence, parties can form coalitions with all other parties in the political system, and the only interest of both the supporters and the politicians is to be in or have their patrons in office.

7 In Golder's (2006) study of Western Europe, about 50% of the elections featured a PEC. Note, however, that these figures are not directly comparable due to differences in conceptualization and operationalization.

With this logic, policy proximity becomes irrelevant simply because parties do not locate themselves spatially. However, the idea of minimal winning coalitions is still highly relevant. When distributing patronage, there is an obvious budget constraint. The whole idea of clientelism is that resources are paid to one person or group over the other. There is a limit in the number of government jobs, contracts or food deliveries a party or politician can make. The higher the number of clients to whom a patron has to cater, the smaller the expected patronage payment to each given client. A coalition should therefore not become excessively large so that other parties can attract the party's clients with a credible promise to more narrowly distributed resources.

The Kenyan case, studied in article 2, shows this mechanism clearly and also offers an explanation for why opposition parties in clientelistic (or in the case of Kenya, ethnic-clientelistic) party systems often do not coordinate. Running separate campaigns is often a better strategy when facing a superior incumbent. The winning coalition on a local constituency level is often considerably smaller, in terms of the number of groups that has to be included, than at the national level. With a more niche appeal, opposition parties can secure a number of offices, provide patronage for supporters and heighten the party's profile for upcoming elections. They are also able to do so without fearing defection from political entrepreneurs who decide to run campaigns on a more narrow appeal.

Moreover, article 1 highlights the importance of cooptation. If a party is indifferent about the policies offered by the incumbent regime and the other opposition parties, it does not have to choose coalition partners before elections. Instead, the party can wait until after the election and potentially be co-opted by the incumbent government. In article 2, this is exemplified by the behavior of Raila Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) party, which merged with the dominant KANU party after the 1997 election (Brown 2004).

The likelihood of opposition coordination increases when the prospect for incumbent defeat rises. Under these circumstances, it becomes rational even for non-programmatic opposition parties to coordinate. With the realistic chances of winning the election, the parties can pool their resources and compete for the highest office. Supporters of the party will also be prone to accept a broader coalition because their party has realistic chances of winning the national election.

5.2.3 Opposition coordination as a causal explanation for democratization by elections

Article 3 of this dissertation clearly shows that the opposition wins more elections when they coordinate. By probing the question on why opposition parties coordinate in the first place, we can better understand the potential power of coordination as an explanation for democratization by elections.

Coordination is not randomly assigned among countries. In countries where parties compete more with the use of patronage than policies, parties tend to coordinate when the incumbent shows weakness. Van de Walle (2006) advances a similar theory with his “tipping game” argument. Furthermore, Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009:411) share the suspicion that the relationship between coordination and democratization by elections might be endogenous.

It would be too crude to state that the relationship between turnovers and coordination is completely endogenous. There is a reason why opposition parties coordinate. They do so because it will increase their chances of winning elections. When coordinating, parties can pool their resources and circumvent different types of disproportionate voting rules, thereby enhancing their electoral challenge. However, the findings of article 1, suggesting that coalitions are more likely to form when the prospects of winning are high, advise us to look further back in the causal chain for the determinants of electoral turnovers.

More importantly, articles 1 and 2 show that opposition parties coordinate for different reasons. Some create more opportunistic coalitions designed primarily to win elections, while other coalitions share more long-term interests. Regardless of motivation, coordination increases the chances of turnover, but the motivation for coordinating is relevant for the longer-term democratization outcome beyond the turnover. As is argued in article 4 of this dissertation, opportunistic short-term coalitions introduce substantial problems to the democratization process after incumbent defeat. In the cases of Senegal and Kenya, parties formed coalitions because there was a realistic chance of winning the election as a unified opposition. In Ghana, on the other hand, the NPP party secured a victory in the 2000 election as an institutionalized party that had competed in several previous elections.

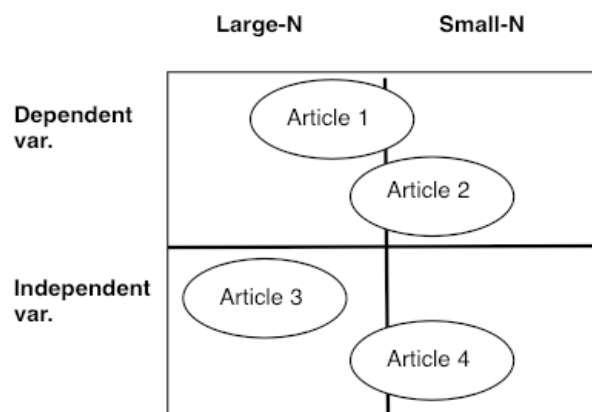
The ad-hoc character of the coalitions in Kenya and Senegal made these newly elected governments unstable from the beginning and created mistrust among the party leaders. In the interviews cited in article 2, some important Kenyan NARC politicians admit that future presidential ambitions among junior coalition members tore the coalition apart at an early stage. The lack of spatial competition made coalition formation an open process, wherein the coalition partners did not have

any long-term commitments. These results question the theory of the importance of the so called “rainbow coalitions.” These coalitions may increase the chances of alternation, but they do so only when the probability of alteration is already high. Moreover, by separating electoral and democratic outcomes, we obtain a more nuanced idea of the long-term democratization effects of such coalitions.

6. Methods

This methods chapter explains how the different methods applied in the four separate articles together answer the overall research question. Of course there are several important methodological questions with regard to each of the specific studies. Discussions about these issues are covered in more length within the separate articles. The guiding methodological principle for this dissertation is that there are no inherent conflicts between qualitative and quantitative approaches to social science. In the deductive tradition, both draw on logically consistent theories, derive empirically observable implications from that theory and test these implications against empirical data (King et al. 1994). This dissertation draws on both qualitative and quantitative data. Two of the articles (articles 1 and 3) are mainly quantitative and two are mainly qualitative (articles 2 and 4); three of the four articles (1, 2 and 4) include both qualitative and quantitative elements. The dissertation uses opposition coordination as an independent as well as a dependent variable, and methodological diversity has been sought in regard to both these questions, as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 6.1 Methods in articles



Mixed methods have been a growing trend within the social sciences during the last decades for good reasons (e.g., Bryman 2006; Coppedge 2005; Lieberman 2005; Small 2011; Tarrow 1995). Several authors have acknowledged that both qualitative and quantitative approaches have their respective strengths and weaknesses and are able to contribute with different types of insight in the quest for causal inference (e.g., Brady et al 2004; Lieberman 2005).

There are two general reasons for using a mix of methods. The first reason is confirmation (Small 2011). Qualitative findings unable to stand a conservative quantitative test are highly problematic. In qualitative social science, the risk of making inference on the base of a biased sample is obvious. Although good case-study work reflects on the relationship between the case/cases under scrutiny and the larger population of possible cases, there is always a great risk that researchers intentionally or unintentionally pick cases that exaggerate the relationship hypothesized by the theory. This risk occurs especially when studying a phenomenon such as democratization, where the researcher usually knows the value on the independent and dependent variable at the onset of the scientific investigation. On a similar note, quantitative findings that are only applicable at the general aggregated level and do not transfer to the cases within the sample are equally as problematic. If so, there are good reasons to question the validity of the measurements applied in the quantitative research and ultimately also the causal accuracy of the theory. When confirming results, it is possible to see that the hypothesis finds support on both the aggregate and concrete level.

The second reason for applying both quantitative and qualitative methods is that they complement each other (ibid.). Qualitative methods can explore causal mechanisms in a way that is often impossible in quantitative research. They can elaborate on these mechanisms in a more sophisticated way and give more detail to the process under investigation. When using quantitative methods, the problems of operationalization often make it impossible to test detailed theories (Collier and Mahoney 1996). Qualitative findings, on the other hand, are not as generalizable as quantitative findings and make isolation of the independent variable considerably harder (King et al. 1994). There has been a vivid debate within political science on the merits of small-N qualitative research for theory testing (see especially King et al. 1994; Brady and Collier 2004). With a systematic approach to case study research and a clear idea of how a small population of cases relates to a bigger population, it is indeed possible to test causal hypotheses using a small-N approach (King et al 1994). However, the main strength of qualitative approaches to social science is not to measure effects and test hypotheses. For this type of inference, quantitative approaches are generally more suitable. On the other hand, qualitative methods are better able

to capture the mechanisms connecting the independent and dependent variable (Gerring 2007). Therefore, the main aim of the case studies in this dissertation has been to explore mechanisms rather than test effects.

Acknowledging the value of complementation and confirmation, the main hypotheses of this study are, at least partially, tested both quantitatively and qualitatively. The incentives for creating coalitions are quantitatively tested in article 1. Article 1 establishes that the probability of coordination increases together with the probability of turnovers. When studying the same topic in article 2, the primary aim is to look closer into why this is the case in party systems with a low degree of spatial competition. Moreover, a problem with article 1 is that some of the main independent variables were hard to operationalize. Both the general idea about prospects for alternation and the measurement of ideological proximity are not perfectly measured. The Kenyan case study in article 2 allows me to measure these variables with greater accuracy, and the analysis supports the idea that problems of measurement did not distort the results in article 1.

It is important to re-evaluate the findings of Howard and Roessler (2006), using quantitative methods. A single case or comparative case study would not be sufficient for disputing their previous findings, which originated from the use of statistical data. In article 3, therefore, the sample size is not only comparable to that of Howard and Roessler, it is almost five times the size of their original study. The analysis showed that coordination has a short-term effect due to its correlation with alternation but no clear effect on democratization in the long run. Article 4 studies why this might be the case by looking into three cases where a unified opposition was able to win elections more closely. The study shows that many opposition victories do not lead to democratization simply because democratization is not in the interest of newly elected regimes. Because coordination is connected to democratization in the short-run through alternation, it is not surprising that the effect of coordination tends to fade as we move further away from the election. It would be possible to test versions of this theory in a quantitative study, but the complexity of the mechanism would ultimately decrease measurement validity.

There has been a certain amount of sequencing in this project, where the results of the quantitative articles have informed the qualitative articles. Normally, sequencing strategies are employed within the same project and presented in the same outlet (whether it be an article or book) (Tarrow 2004). Here, sequencing has instead taken place in the broader project between the articles in the dissertation. The two quantitative articles were written in the earlier stages of the project, and the results in these articles deeply affected the design and direction of the qualitative articles. The clearest example is article 1, findings from which

ultimately affected the questions asked to the respondents during the fieldwork in Kenya. Going into the field with a relatively strong hypothesis made it easier to construct interview questions that related to that hypothesis and also complicated the verification of the hypothesis.

The format of this dissertation puts some restraints on fully benefiting from the sequencing performed in the project. It is not possible to go back and change the research design or adjust theories of already accepted articles, after having fine-tuned the causal mechanisms in the qualitative articles. For this purpose, I believe that this introductory essay fills an important function in trying to weight the results from the separate articles together.

6.2 Case selection

As described in the above section, the effects and causes of coordination have been studied both quantitatively and qualitatively in this dissertation. The main problem when determining the sample for the quantitative studies was to establish an upper threshold for electoral authoritarianism (this problem was discussed in section 3.2.1). Although this is all but a trivial methodological question, sampling issues might be an even bigger concern when working with small-N case studies. Generalizability becomes especially important when testing theories, but is also important when investigating causal mechanisms. The fact that a correlation exists between X and Y does not necessarily implicate that X affects Y in the same way across all units of analysis. It is therefore still crucial to think about how the smaller case sample relates to the bigger population.

Although a substantial part of the data is taken from the African continent, I argue that this is not primarily a dissertation on Africa. Most of the quantitative analyses in the dissertation (including article 1 and 3 and the statistical analysis in article 4) have been performed using a global sample. Data has also been taken from other parts of the world in the more qualitative parts of the dissertation (especially the case illustrations in article 1 but also in this introductory essay).

At present, Africa is the most important continent to study from the perspective of electoral authoritarianism, simply because there is no other region in the world with more states applying this political system (Levitsky and Way 2010b). However, Africa does have its own special characteristics. Colonialism has left its marks, democracy was generally introduced rather late (i.e. in the early 1990s), ethnic polarization is significant, the continent is economically poor and aid dependent and institutions are generally weak, to mention a few characteristics. These special features of African politics set some boundaries to

generalizations. In article 4, for instance, lack of party system institutionalization is acknowledged as a particularly important factor increasing electoral uncertainty and decreasing the prospects for democratization by elections. Although the general logic should hold outside of Africa, it is quite possible that parties are in fact more institutionalized than other institutions in electoral authoritarian states on other continents. In Turkey, for example, weak institutions are most likely still an obstacle to democratization by elections, although weak party organizations are most likely not the most pressing concern. Instead, newly elected regimes might be more concerned about military interventions in politics as a threat to political survival than they are about government coalitions breaking apart.

Howard and Roessler's (2006) study of democratization by elections and opposition coordination remains the most authoritative source dealing with the effects of opposition unity in authoritarian elections. The study includes a list of cases with "liberalizing electoral outcomes." Only three of these cases, Ghana, Kenya and Senegal, are African. According to the authors, all these cases are good examples of instances where opposition coordination has created democratization by elections. To illustrate the mechanisms in which coordination creates democratization Howard and Roessler (ibid: 379) use the Kenyan case, concluding: "In the end, this coalition of opposition parties proved crucial to a liberalizing electoral outcome, not because the opposition was stronger or more popular in 2002- it received roughly the same proportion of the presidential vote as in 1992 and 1997, leading one scholar to declare the 2002 election 'a victory ten years delayed' (Ndegwa 2003: 148)- but because the way it was organized."

This dissertation focuses on the same three African cases that Howard and Roessler described as "liberalizing electoral outcomes" and, as with Howard and Roessler's study, examines the Kenyan case in particularly close detail. The theory promoted here is much more skeptical, than Howard and Roessler (2006), about the positive effect of opposition coordination, and the countries chosen can be thought of as "least-likely cases" due to their categorization in the Howard and Roessler study (Eckstein 1975).

In addition to being useful to illustrate the problems with existing theories of opposition coordination, these cases also make it possible to study why some types of coordination and alternations lead to democratization while others do not. When adapting a more long-term view of democratization by elections, looking beyond the actual electoral outcome, the cases exhibit different values on the dependent variable, two negative (Kenya and Senegal) and one positive (Ghana). The relative similarity on other potential independent variables discussed in article 4 (e.g., time of alternation, length of multiparty history, the role of the armed forces, whether the incumbent was in the running and the influence of

international actors) makes it easier to explain the divergent outcomes. A possible alternative explanation for the divergent outcomes, shown in article 4, is that the opposition organized coordination differently in the three cases. Whereas the opposition in Kenya and Senegal formed PECs, the opposition in Ghana was unified in one single party (the NPP). However, as mentioned before, we should not make a too large distinction between coordination within and between parties. The vital difference is instead the level of commitments between political actors. The fact that the NPP had stayed together as one political organization since 1992 despite repeated electoral defeats shows evidence of institutionalization. However, even formal party organizations can be poorly institutionalized with politicians moving in and out of the organization.

The most intensive case study, i.e., Kenya in article 2, has a rather limited scope. King et al. (1994) have rightly warned against the potential problems of generalizing from a single case study. However, once again, the aim here was not primarily hypothesis testing but explaining why parties in clientelistic party systems tend to stay divided until an electoral victory seems feasible. A contrasting case, where political candidates had formed more long-term alliances (e.g., Ghana), could certainly have been useful. However, for this project it was more important to study clientelistic coalition formation than more “traditional” policy seeking coalition behavior. The latter type of coalition building is more researched through the party literature studying consolidated Western party systems. Moreover, the case of Kenya is a rich case where several important coalition decisions can be studied. The goal has been to follow King et al’s (1994: 217 ff.) advice and study a multitude of cases within the case, thereby enabling comparison.

6.3 A note on interview methods

Article 2 of this dissertation uses elite interviews with Kenyan political stakeholders as its main source of empirical material. Although the article covers the main issues concerning how these interviews were conducted, the space restrictions of a journal article made it impossible to more deeply discuss more specific methodological issues regarding the interview methods applied.

The interviews for article 2 were crucial for the general project. Much of the theorizing performed in this dissertation has been performed on the basis of rational actor behavior. It was important to disaggregate the theoretical claims and study these assumptions at the micro-level by interviewing people who had themselves made crucial coalition decisions in an electoral authoritarian context.

As discussed previously, Kenya is a useful case because it contains a multitude of cases within the case where politicians have chosen to create or abstain from building coalitions. Moreover, all these events have occurred after the introduction of multipartyism in 1992. This is beneficial from a methodical point because this implies that most of the political actors interviewed for the study had been active (often at a strategic level) in more than one of the critical cooperation decisions studied. From a practical point of view, however, it did create some problems with access to key respondents, given the fact that most top politicians under the studied period were still at the height of their careers occupying key government positions.

The interviews were all conducted in Nairobi in the fall of 2010. In total, 24 in-depth interviews were conducted with an average interview length of 35 minutes. When choosing interviewees, I mainly targeted national level politicians with insight into concrete coalition formation decisions. In this way, the main selection criterion was centrality, although, of course, accessibility was often a restriction. Out of the 24 interviews, 12 were conducted with current or former members of parliament or government ministers (three of the interviewees had been or were at the time of the interview party leaders). The other interviewees were mostly party officials (five were currently the national Executive Director of parties represented in parliament). The sample of interviewees also includes top-level civil servants, NGO executives, political journalists and academics.

My goal was to obtain insight from many different angles of the coalition building process. Politicians and party officials were chosen to represent different parties and knowledge of specific critical events. I cannot claim to have gathered enough information from a sufficient number of sources to perform a thorough process tracing of any specific coalition decision (George and Bennett 2005). However, the goal has been to gather information on several different decisions to expose the hypotheses to several concrete cases. Some decisions were especially interesting, either because they signaled a radical break with the past (such as the first oppositional NARC coalition in 2002) or because they seemingly contradicted the theory (such as the ODM coalition in 2005, where parties seem to have formed a coalition based on a common policy agenda, that is opposition to the draft constitution).

The interviews were semi-structured. Two different interview guides were used, one for politicians and party officials and one for other political commentators. The different guides reflected the fact that the politicians could be viewed as both respondents and informants. Whereas the political commentators could only give information and interpretations of critical coalition decisions and coalition

formation in general, the reasoning of politicians' were in itself a part of what was being investigated (Singer 1972). The interviews with politicians also tended to be more open in regard to the interview guide to capture the interviewee's personal experience relating to coalition decisions they had been a part of or observed from a close distance.

All interviews were recorded and have been fully transcribed. None of the interviewees were explicitly concerned about the fact that the conversation was taped and no one requested to remain anonymous. This is fortunate given that much of the analysis relies on direct quotes from centrally placed politicians.

7. Concluding remarks

Taken together, the four articles presented in this dissertation lead to the conclusion that opposition does not generally promote democratization by elections. Coordination tends to happen when the incumbent government is weak. Although coordination increases the probability of alternation we must avoid the clear oppositional bias of assuming that alternation will ultimately lead to democratization. New elites moving into office will have clear incentives to maintain electoral authoritarian institutions to remain in power. These new governments will be especially reluctant to democratize if electoral uncertainty is high. Previous research has shown that elections promote democratization, but the results in this dissertation suggests that it is the gradual improvement of democratic institutions, rather than the occasional ouster of autocrats, that creates the positive outcomes attributed to elections (Lindberg 2006; Teorell and Hadenius 2010). Turnovers can create democratization and coordination can be a good strategy for increasing the chances of such alternations, but first the party system must develop to create stable relations between parties and political elites.

These results have possible policy implications. They suggest that the international community has to watch for autocratic tendencies when new “pro-democratic” governments move into office. Levitsky and Way (2005) acknowledged the problem of international agents’ tendency to reduce democratic monitoring in autocratic regimes after the introduction of multipartyism. As a result, many of these regimes manage to consolidate electoral authoritarianism without sufficient pressure from the international community to respect political and civil rights. There is a similar risk that international agents lose sight of the democratic development in regimes after their first peaceful transition of power.

Moreover, the conclusions should be relevant for organizations working with party-assistance in new democracies. International organizations involved in party-assistance often engage in active coalition building among opposition parties (e.g., Bader 2008:9 Burnell 2000; Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Carothers 2006; Resnick 2011). Although outside-assisted coalition building might increase the prospects for alternation, it might also be harmful for the long-run prospects for democratization. Instead of institutionalizing individual party organization

by fostering distinct party cultures with clearly separate policy agendas, ad hoc coalitions tend to downplay differences between parties and destroy organizational infrastructure. Creating such coalitions is mainly about altering the government in power and less about creating a real policy alternative to the incumbent regime.

Much more research is needed on elections in authoritarian regimes. In the traditional Western context we now know a great deal about the motivation of voters and parties. However, the lack of knowledge about elections in other parts of the world is becoming more and more problematic. These days, a minority of elections in the world is conducted in the West, and the lack of tools for understanding elections in new democracies or electoral autocracies is an increasing concern. Some highly influential studies on elections in authoritarian states have been published in recent years, but the literature is still at a rather nascent stage. To fully understand how elections are used to maintain autocracy or promote democracy, we need detailed knowledge about the inner workings of these elections. It is likely that we will see a proliferation of such research in the near future. Such knowledge should add substantially to our understanding of one of the 21st century's most central challenges for global democratization.

8. References

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Offices and policies – Why do oppositional parties form pre-electoral coalitions in competitive authoritarian regimes?[☆]

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ABSTRACT

Although previous research has suggested that the opposition's ability to form pre-electoral coalitions (PECs) in authoritarian elections is crucial for the electoral outcome, little has been written about why and when such coalitions are formed. The aim of this article is to fill this empirical and theoretical gap. A theory that combines oppositional parties' office- and policy-gaining potential when creating such coalitions is proposed. The article utilizes a unique database of 111 competitive authoritarian elections and provides a representative sample of strategically chosen cases. It is shown that, coalitions are more likely when structural conditions favor oppositional victories and when oppositional parties have a distinctive policy agenda in relation to the incumbent government. These factors are shown to be more important than electoral institutions.

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1. Introduction

When do oppositional parties form coalitions to contest elections in competitive authoritarian countries? This is the general question of this article. In traditional Western European party politics research, the question of pre-electoral coalition (PEC) formation has been gaining interest, as exemplified by the prominent work of Golder (2006). Looking to the competitive authoritarian context, this is still, however, a largely unexplored research area.

As Lust-Okar (2006) has convincingly argued, understanding the dynamics of authoritarian elections is

absolutely key to unveiling why electoralism seems to lead to democratization in some countries whereas other authoritarian regimes have remained stable despite, or perhaps because of, the implementation of electoral institutions. Authoritarian rulers have become skilled in manipulating elections and keeping the electoral arena under control. On the 'menu' of possible manipulation options available for authoritarian rulers, attempts to keep the opposition fragmented have become one of the more commonly used strategies (Schedler, 2002). In a widely cited article by Howard and Roessler (2006), it was shown that oppositional coordination is the most important determinant of democratization by elections. As increasing emphasis is being placed on oppositional coordination as an independent variable of democratization, our lack of knowledge about why and when such coalitions are formed is becoming increasingly problematic.

In this article, theoretical insights from the literature on coalition building in consolidated democracies are combined with theories of competitive authoritarianism. The article emphasizes two important dimensions that would determine the willingness to form PECs. First, similar to the argument of van de Walle (2006), it is argued

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