The Patron's Dilemma: The Dynamics of Foreign-Supported Democratization

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The Patron’s Dilemma: The Dynamics of Foreign-Supported Democratization

Michael K. McKoy1 and Michael K. Miller2

Abstract
We analyze an understudied mode of democratization in which the acquiescence of an autocratic regime’s foreign ally, or patron, is pivotal to the success of a democratic movement. Although a democratic patron may prefer having democracy in its dependent allies, regime change threatens the economic and security benefits associated with the alliance. We formalize this dilemma through a repeated principal-agent model and demonstrate that the critical dimension is the patron’s beliefs about the potential democracy’s policies rather than its value for democracy or the alliance goods. Patron support hinges on democratic movement signaling of its capacity to rule, popular support, and commitment to preserving the alliance. To test our theory, we analyze twenty-five democratic openings in American cold war clients, followed by case studies of US-aided democratization episodes in the Philippines and South Korea. We conclude with an analysis of the recent Egyptian revolution.

Keywords
democratization, foreign policy, democratic movements

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What determines foreign support for democratization when regime change threatens economic and security interests? Specifically, what can lead an authoritarian regime’s democratic ally to switch its allegiance to a democratic movement? We analyze an understudied mode of democratization in which the acquiescence of a powerful foreign ally, or patron, is pivotal to a democratic movement’s success. International patrons are often critical to the survival of autocratic regimes, hence activists fighting for democratization must both combat the regime and co-opt its patrons. However, by creating uncertainty and destabilizing the domestic balance of power, democratic change can endanger the entrenched interests of foreign powers. This pattern of foreign-supported democratization is notably relevant today as the United States confronts pro-democracy movements in several of its Middle Eastern clients, including Egypt, Yemen, and Jordan.

Democratization does not occur in a vacuum. Not only have international actors played a major role in the global spread of democracy (Whitehead 1986, 1996; Huntington 1991; Levitsky and Way 2005; Gleditsch and Ward 2006), democratic activists pay close attention to international events (Kuran 1991; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Beissinger 2007). Whitehead (1996, 9) estimates that “approaching two-thirds of the democracies existing in 1990 owed their origins, at least in part, to deliberate acts of imposition or intervention from without.” Huntington (1991, 98) credits the United States, for instance, as having had a “critical” or “contributing” role in sixteen democratic transitions during the Third Wave. Smith (1994) and Carothers (1999) chronicle the varying techniques of American democracy promotion over more than a century.

When confronted with the prospect of democratization in one of its dependent allies, or clients, a democratic patron faces a dilemma between an ideational preference for democracy promotion and national interests that favor client stability. Although democracy confers domestic and international legitimacy, the patron depends on the client to provide alliance goods, such as natural resources, economic access, and security commitments. Since the essence of democracy is outcome uncertainty (Przeworski 1991), the client populace may elect a government that opposes providing the alliance goods or lacks the capacity to do so.

How then do activists gain support for democratization from their regime’s foreign allies? We argue that the critical dimension is the patron’s beliefs about the potential democracy’s policies. Democratic activists must lessen the uncertainty surrounding democratization by signaling that they are supportive of patron interests and have the ability to satisfy them post-transition. In particular, we focus on signaling through peaceful public demonstrations, strong electoral performances, public commitments to uphold the patron-client relationship, and alliances with governing elites and moderate groups.

The strategic interaction between domestic actors and patron states has been surprisingly overlooked. Much work has been done on how dissidents influence the incumbent regime (Lohmann 1993; Gavious and Mizrahi 2003) and the general public (Kuran 1991; Lohmann 1994; Ginkel and Smith 1999), and how patron pressure
affects the incumbent’s willingness to liberalize (Adesnik and McFaul 2006; Yeo 2006). Moreover, dissidents and insurgents are known to employ media strategies to garner international sympathy (Bob 2005). However, there is little theoretical work on how they gain support from external patrons of the incumbent regime.

The current literature instead ties patron support for democratization to exogenous changes in the patron’s geopolitical and economic interests, which can alter the patron’s estimated value for democracy or the alliance goods. Although much of the work on American democracy promotion emphasizes America’s continuing “mission” of spreading democracy (Smith 1994; Carothers 1999), the United States has been highly selective in its targets. Scholars argue that the intense security competition during the cold war dictated American support for authoritarian regimes (Muller 1985; Westad 2005; Schmitz 2006). Soviet collapse made these regimes less valuable as allies and freed the United States to more forcefully promote democratization abroad (Meernik, Krueger, and Poe 1998; Dunning 2004). Others claim that patrons support autocratic rulers to gain access to markets and resources and to prevent economic nationalizations (Krasner 1978; Kinzer 2006). These arguments are likewise used to explain current Western support for authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. Oil dependence, fear of Islamic terrorism, and hope for Arab-Israeli peace all ensure continued support despite an ostensible preference for democratic change (Bellin 2004; Wittes 2008).

Using a formal model, we demonstrate that changes in patron interests are not necessary for policy change and may in fact have counterintuitive effects. Rather, democratic movements garner patron support by signaling moderation and competence. As Whitehead (1986, 7-8) states, “Clearly certain types of transition from authoritarianism (those that pose no risks to the existing system of external alliances, those that preserve or strengthen existing political and economic ties with the dominant power) will [be more likely]. . . to receive effective international support.” Democratic movements are aware of this condition and shape their goals and strategies accordingly. Hence, our model gives priority to the agency of democratic activists and the interdependence of the patron-client relationship.

In the following sections, we first explain the aims of the patron state and the democratic actors and how they can be mutually satisfied through strategic interaction. We then develop a repeated principal-agent model of this interaction. The model predicts that the patron’s values for democracy and the alliance goods have non-monotonic effects on the likelihood of support for democratization. Rather, credible signals of competence and moderation by the movement and the existence of a patron pull-back option determine patron support. To test our theory, we analyze the United States’ support for democratization in its clients during the cold war. To provide context to our case studies, we begin with a preliminary study of twenty-five such democratic openings. This is followed by a case study of the democratic movement in the Philippines, as well as a comparison between South Korea’s
unsuccessful democratic movement in 1980 and its successful movement in 1987. We conclude with an analysis of the recent Egyptian revolution and implications of our findings for democracy promotion in the Middle East.

The Patron’s Dilemma: The Actors’ Aims and Interaction

The patron-client relationship entails a principal-agent dynamic of mutual interdependence. As Bercovitch (1991, 15) states, “Patron-client relations involve a special type of interaction between two states of manifestly unequal resources linked together through joint interests or effective bonds to provide mutual services or common goals.” The patron provides the client with a security guarantee in the form of military or economic aid, weapons sales, or a significant troop presence. In return, the client gives its allegiance and provides an assortment of alliance goods, often including natural resources, economic access, and security commitments. A democratic patron may prefer client democracy but will recognize that democratization creates adverse selection and moral hazard problems.

The Patron’s Aims

If a patron believes the incumbent regime will reliably supply alliance goods, democratic movements pose a clear threat. Patrons often fear that democratic clients lack the strength or capacity to govern ably (Jones et al. 2006). In addition, regime change inherently creates uncertainty in alliance relationships (Siverson and Starr 1994; Leeds 2003). Democracies are more inclined to favor public opinion over patron interests, fostering “rival agency problems” for the client government (Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2006). Patron dominance often creates animosity among the client populace, who may favor policies inimical to patron preferences. Indeed, the initial patron support for the authoritarian regime is often due to the general public opposition to the patron-client relationship (Gasiorowski 1990).

Nevertheless, democratic patrons equate legitimacy in the modern international system with domestic civil liberties and democratic governance (Whitehead 1986, 10; Smith 1994; Weinert 2007). Supporting repressive regimes violates ostensible democratic values and may ultimately be counterproductive if a democratic regime comes to power despite patron opposition. Failure to support democratic movements often means the end of the alliance if the movement is victorious (Ratner 2009).

Moreover, allying with a stable democratic regime brings with it notable benefits. Democracies can prove to be more reliable partners, as agreements between democracies are more likely to survive government transitions (Lipson 2003). For the patron, be it democratic or authoritarian, democratic change can bring about the patron’s ultimate goal of the depoliticization of alliance good provision. Instead of depending on “the personalization of a security contract in an autocracy [which] . . . make[s] it likely the contract will be challenged in the event of regime change” (Cooley 2008, 15), agreements can be ensured by stable, transparent institutions.
that survive successive administrations (Martin 2000). Yet the transition from authoritarian regime to consolidated democracy is neither immediate nor easy. It often involves considerable policy ferment, in which nationalist appeals and changing coalitions put former international agreements and relationships in jeopardy (Hegre et al. 2001). To achieve the benefits of legitimation, a patron runs the risk of client defection.

*The Democratic Movement’s Aims*

Democratic activists typically must co-opt the patron state to achieve their goal of democratization. Many authoritarian regimes depend on external patron support to maintain their coercive capabilities, and the loss of this support can cause collapse (Bellin 2004). Lichbach (1995, 190) notes, “[I]f dissidents can cut off the regime’s foreign patrons, rebellion may be dramatically encouraged.” The Soviet Union consistently intervened militarily to put down rebellions in its clients and depose reformist governments, just as the United States intervened on numerous occasions to ensure that its client regimes stayed in power and continued supplying alliance goods (Adelman 1986; Kinzer 2006). Dissidents seeking democratic regime change therefore need either support from a rival patron or the support, or at least neutrality, of the patron itself. Attracting the patron is most preferable, since it means both a withdrawal of regime support and an increase in dissident strength.

Oftentimes, the interests of democratic activists and patrons genuinely conflict. For many dissidents, part of democracy’s appeal is the removal of foreign domination, especially if the current authoritarian regime was installed by the patron to ensure its influence. The democratic movement in South Korea, for instance, was marked by pronounced anti-American sentiment (Shorrock 1986; Kim 1989). When Hungarian reformists took power in 1956, one of their first decisions was to remove Hungary from the Warsaw Pact (Rice and Fry 1986). Agreeing to perpetuate patron influence in return for patron support may be difficult for democratic actors or the general populace to accept, but success may depend on it.

*Patron–Movement Interaction*

If democratic activists credibly signal they have both the capacity and the willingness to provide the alliance goods post-democratization, the patron will be more inclined to offer its support. Capacity encompasses both experience in government and broad popular support. The latter is particularly important, as it ensures popular legitimacy and indicates the likely winner of future democratic contests. Democratic actors can demonstrate popular support through public demonstrations and protests (Lohmann 1993; Bermeo 1997) or through elections in competitive authoritarian regimes (Levitsky and Way 2002). If the patron is concerned about experience, demonstrating bureaucratic cooperation is also helpful, although a change in patron support may itself bring along moderate governing elites.
The patron’s other major concern is the post-transition problem of commitment to the alliance. Democratic movements are often dependent on some groups hostile to patron interests. Direct communication decreases uncertainty about dissident aims and allows the actors to more effectively align their goals. Dissidents can also signal their support for the patron-client relationship by publicly endorsing the patron and openly repudiating factions opposed to the patron or to the provision of the alliance goods. Marginalizing anti-patron groups reduces the chance they will be part of any governing coalition and signals to the general public the democratic movement’s governing agenda. Widespread popular acceptance of this repudiation counters fears of anti-patron groups later being elected.

After being assured of the democratic movement’s competence and moderation, the patron can pressure the authoritarian regime to make reforms or peacefully abdicate by threatening to withhold aid or to militarily support the dissidents. Without the backing of its external patron, the incumbent will likely be forced to concede.

A Model of Foreign-Supported Democratization

In this section, we model the interaction between a patron and a client state’s democratic movement as a repeated principal-agent problem that combines both adverse selection and moral hazard. The patron chooses between maintaining support for the autocratic client regime, which guarantees the provision of an alliance good, and switching support to the movement, thus prompting democratization. After an initial round of signaling, the patron chooses between democracy and autocracy in each round, although overturning democracy comes at a cost. Under autocracy, the patron faces a friendly government and is assured of getting its full alliance good. Under democracy, the movement is empowered and chooses whether to provide a fixed portion of the alliance good. In addition, both actors get a positive payoff from the existence of democracy.

In balancing the certain alliance good against democracy, the patron faces two sources of uncertainty: what portion of the alliance good’s value the movement can provide and how costly this provision is to the movement. In real-world terms, these correspond to the movement’s competence and moderation, respectively. Although we do not pursue the idea for lack of space, the model also applies to a purely domestic story of democratization, complementing protest signaling models like Lohmann (1993, 1994) and Gavious and Mizrahi (2003). We derive equilibrium behavior predicting movement signaling, patron support for democratization, and movement provision of the alliance good. The solution concept we use is perfect Bayesian equilibrium (PBE), which requires both subgame-perfection and Bayesian updating over types.
Basic Elements

The game has two players, the patron and the democratic movement. There are two states of the world, Autocracy and Democracy, that the game transitions between based on the patron’s choices. The game begins in Autocracy.

The movement’s type is described by two unknown factors: $\gamma > 0$ specifies what portion of the alliance good’s value the movement can provide and $\beta > 0$ specifies how costly this provision is to the movement. The patron’s prior expectations over these values are given by the cumulative distributions $F(\gamma)$ and $G(\beta)$.

Both players have a discount factor $\delta$ (with $0 < \delta < 1$) that applies to each round in the Subgame described below.

The complete sequence of play (with the Regime Subgame pictured in Figure 1) is as follows:

Step 1: Nature selects the movement’s type and the movement observes $\gamma$ and $\beta$.
Step 2: Signaling. To appeal to the patron, the movement chooses a level of effort $e \geq 0$ at cost $e/\gamma$.
Step 3: The Regime Subgame. Each round in the subgame is played according to the state of the world at the beginning of the round. The initial round is played in Autocracy and the state of the world in each subsequent round is determined by the path of play. This is repeated indefinitely. Play is as follows.

**Autocracy.** The patron decides whether to support democracy (SD) or not support democracy (NSD). If NSD is chosen, the patron is guaranteed the alliance good payoff \( A > 0 \), the movement gets 0, and Step 3 is repeated in Autocracy. If SD is chosen, the movement has the option to provide the alliance good (PG) or not provide the good (NPG). In either case, the patron and the movement get a direct payoff from democracy of \( D_p > 0 \) and \( D_m > 0 \), respectively. If PG is chosen, the patron additionally gets \( \gamma A \) and the movement loses \( \beta \). In addition, \( \gamma \) is revealed to the patron if not revealed previously. Step 3 is then repeated in Democracy.

**Democracy.** Everything is the same as in Autocracy, except that NSD comes with an additional cost \( C > 0 \) to the patron. Again, if the patron chooses SD, the next round repeats Step 3 in Democracy; otherwise, Step 3 is repeated in Autocracy.

**Equilibrium Results**

The central equilibrium results (pictured in Figure 2) can now be stated. We then sketch some intuition behind the results. Full proofs are left to Appendix, which also defines the function \( e^*(D_p) \) included in the following proposition:

**Proposition 1.** Equilibrium results can be organized by the value of \( D_p \).

\[
e^*(D_p) = \frac{A - C(1 - \delta)}{A - C(1 - \delta)}
\]
1. Region I \((A < D_p)\): In all equilibria, the patron chooses SD and the movement chooses NPG in each round.

2. Region II \((A - C(1 - \delta) < D_p < A)\): In all equilibria, the patron chooses NSD and the movement chooses NPG in each round.

3. Region III \((D_p < A - C(1 - \delta))\): There exist equilibria in which the patron chooses SD in the first round if and only if \(e e^*(D_p) > 0\). If and only if \(g\) is sufficiently high and \(b\) is sufficiently low, the movement chooses \(e = e^*\), then the patron chooses SD and the movement chooses PG in each subsequent round.

If \(A < D_p\) (Region I), the patron chooses SD in each round since democracy matters more to the patron than the alliance good. For smaller values of \(D_p\), the patron chooses SD only if it has a high expectation that the movement will choose PG once Democracy is reached. Since PG is costly, the movement must in turn believe that choosing NPG will trigger a patron choice of NSD. In essence, the combination of SD and PG operates like an exchange between the patron and movement, enforced by the patron’s threat to exit from Democracy.

This logic produces the most counterintuitive result of the model, namely, that increasing \(D_p\) (relative to \(A\)) may switch the patron away from supporting Democracy. The source of this surprising outcome is that \(D_p\) may be sufficiently high that the patron lacks a credible threat to retaliate with NSD once in Democracy, hence the movement will not provide the alliance good. Knowing this, the patron is better off in Autocracy as long as \(D_p < A\). This is visualized in Figure 2 by the gap in the values of \(D_p\) (Region II) within which Democracy is never reached in equilibrium.

For smaller values of \(D_p\), the patron has a credible threat to choose NSD in reaction to NPG (Region III). As a result, the exchange of SD and PG can hold provided that \(g\) is high enough to satisfy the patron and \(\beta\) is low enough to satisfy the movement. At the outset of the Regime Subgame, the patron will thus choose SD if its beliefs about \(g\) and the probability that the exchange will hold are sufficiently high. If necessary, the movement can signal higher values of \(g\) by choosing positive values of the costly signal \(e\). Since the cost of a given \(e\) declines with \(g\), a willingness to send the signal indicates a high-\(g\) type. For any \(D_p > 0\), we can define a critical value \(e^*(D_p)\) such that in equilibrium the patron chooses SD if and only if \(e \geq e^*\). Further, \(e^*\) obeys the following comparative statics result:

**Proposition 2.** For \(D_p < A - C(1 - \delta)\) (Region III), the level of effort \(e^*\) required for the patron to support democracy in the first round is weakly decreasing in \(D_p\).

This result makes intuitive sense, since a patron with higher \(D_p\) requires a lower expected \(g\) to support democracy. There may or may not exist values of \(D_p\) for which \(e^* = 0\), implying that no signaling is necessary. All of the above results are proved in Appendix.
Implications

What does our model suggest about patron-client democratization? The preceding analysis leads to three hypotheses, which will be tested empirically in the following two sections.

First, no clear, monotonic relationship necessarily exists between the likelihood of patron support for democratization and the patron’s value for the alliance goods or democracy. There exists a gap in values such that the patron supports democracy only if $D_p$ is outside this gap. Hence, as $D_p$ rises relative to $A$, the patron may turn away from supporting democratization. This is the most surprising and counterintuitive result of the model, and calls into question the existing literature’s focus on changes in the intensity of patron preferences. Although such preference shifts may affect patron support for democratization, we have shown this is not a necessary relationship.

Second, the principal-agent problem that characterizes patron–movement interaction can be solved through a signal $e$ with cost related to the movement’s unknown type. Through their activities and coalition composition, democratization movements can signal both competence and moderation with behavior that is less costly when these characteristics are high. What forms of behavior can serve as these informative signals? Most importantly, competence can be signaled by demonstrations of popular support. Large protests, peaceful strikes, party-based mobilization, and strong electoral performances (if possible) all serve this purpose. Moderation can be clearly signaled through the actual composition of the opposition, combined with clear rejection of radical elements and statements of patron accommodation. Ideal opposition moderates include middle-class elements, religious organizations, professionals, and allies in the military, bureaucracy, and police force. Finally, signaling for both factors can be improved by freer information environments, including the provision of basic civil liberties, free media, and limited multiparty elections.

Third, the patron will want to preserve a pull-back option in the event the democratic movement fails to provide the alliance good. This is analogous to O’Donnell and Schmitter’s (1986, 24-25) description of “coup poker,” whereby old-regime moderates retain the option of supporting a coup if the new regime radicalizes. If we alter the model above so that democracy is permanent once installed, the movement will never provide the alliance good and thus the patron will support democracy only if it values democracy more highly than the alliance good. Moreover, a higher cost $C$ for exercising the pull-back option widens the gap in values within which democracy can never be supported. The pull-back option necessitates strong control over client domestic affairs and preferably a reliable ally capable of overthrowing democracy and ensuring conservative policies. History suggests that this will likely be the military.
US Clients and Democratization

The primary tests of our hypotheses are in-depth analyses of democratization episodes in the Philippines and South Korea, discussed in the following section. However, to provide greater context to these cases, we first consider a broader sample of eleven US clients that faced a large-scale democratic movement during the cold war. Hence, each provided an opportunity for the United States to support and have some impact on the probability of democratization. In four of the eleven cases, it did so. We also analyze fourteen other democratic transitions in US clients during the same period.

Our aim is to provide groundwork for our case study analysis by confirming the impact of patron support for democratization, screening out some alternative explanatory factors, and providing tentative support for our hypotheses. The case studies then demonstrate the mechanisms of democratic movement signaling and address issues of endogeneity concerning movement signaling and patron support.

This analysis and our case studies are limited to US clients during the cold war, although we believe our model has high external validity. Limiting our attention to this period has several advantages. First, it represents a hard case for our argument, as it ensures that the client had high strategic importance to the United States. Second, the cold war focus keeps most aspects of the geopolitical environment constant, facilitating comparisons across cases. In particular, it maintains the United States as the dominant democratic power and hence the natural target for democratic movements to appeal.

Data

Our sample is all democratic openings that occurred in American clients during the late cold war (1970-1988). The most comparable subset for our case studies is the set of democratic movements coded by Minier (2003, 231), who defines a democratic movement as large in scale, engaged in physical demonstrations, and explicitly pro-democratic. We also consider American clients that democratized without large-scale movements, coded by democratic transition in either Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010) or the cumulative Polity score (Marshall and Jaggers 2005; using a threshold of 6).

We code a regime as an American client based on significant military investment by the United States, a common marker used in the literature (Gasiorowski 1990; Lake 2009; Ratner 2009). Specifically, the regime must satisfy one of three conditions: (1) it housed a major American military installation, containing 1,000 or more US troops (Kane 2006); (2) it received at least 0.4 dollars per capita in military aid from the United States in the year prior to the democratic movement (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith 2007); or (3) it received at least 0.1 dollars per capita in military aid and engaged in uninterrupted arms trading with the United States (SIPRI 2009). Finally, our determination of the dependent variable, whether the US supported
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>US support?</th>
<th>Democratization?</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>US support?</th>
<th>Democratization?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic movements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>1979–1980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other democratic transitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Along with the country and year, the table indicates whether the US supported democratization and whether the country democratized within two years. The top section includes the set of democratic movements from Minier (2003). The bottom section adds all other democratic transitions.
To code US support, we require the United States to have applied significant pressure, not just rhetorical support, for fair elections.

In total, this produces a sample of eleven democratic openings in which the US supported democratization and fourteen in which it did not. These cases are displayed in Table 1. Because of sample size, our primary methodology is cross-tabulation, in which we determine which variables display statistically significant differences between the two outcomes. These averages are shown in Table 2. To minimize endogeneity, all variables except the measure of protest are lagged by one year.

Table 2. The Table Compares the Mean Values of Several Variables Between Clients for Which the United States Did and Did Not Support Democratization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (US support)</th>
<th>Mean (no US support)</th>
<th>t value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic movements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Military Aid</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>(−0.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troops</td>
<td>14,645.00</td>
<td>15,919.86</td>
<td>(−0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil value</td>
<td>59.94</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>(1.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>1,511.69</td>
<td>1,164.46</td>
<td>(0.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP/capita</td>
<td>4,463.86</td>
<td>4,009.87</td>
<td>(0.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>(−0.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>13.49</td>
<td>11.90</td>
<td>(0.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful Protest Index</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>(1.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful Protest Index (outside Latin America)</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>−0.33</td>
<td>(3.03)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All democratic openings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Military Aid</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>(−1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troops</td>
<td>6,314.91</td>
<td>9,101.93</td>
<td>(−0.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil value</td>
<td>88.45</td>
<td>10.39</td>
<td>(1.79)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>1,841.50</td>
<td>1,228.52</td>
<td>(2.28)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP/capita</td>
<td>5,184.98</td>
<td>4,453.14</td>
<td>(0.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>(−1.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>18.72</td>
<td>15.64</td>
<td>(0.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful Protest Index</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>(2.28)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful Protest Index (outside Latin America)</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>−0.18</td>
<td>(4.34)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: GDP = gross domestic product. The t value testing a difference of means between the groups is shown. All variables except the Peaceful Protest Index are lagged by one year. The top section includes the set of democratic movements from Minier (2003; N = 11). The bottom section includes all democratic openings (N = 25).

*p < .10. **p < .05. ***p < .01.

democratization, is based on country case studies. To code US support, we require the United States to have applied significant pressure, not just rhetorical support, for fair elections.

In total, this produces a sample of eleven democratic openings in which the US supported democratization and fourteen in which it did not. These cases are displayed in Table 1. Because of sample size, our primary methodology is cross-tabulation, in which we determine which variables display statistically significant differences between the two outcomes. These averages are shown in Table 2. To minimize endogeneity, all variables except the measure of protest are lagged by one year.
Analysis

In our analysis of these twenty-five cases, we wish to establish several facts concerning the United States’s impact on the likelihood of client democratization, the explanatory power of opposition activity and region, the temporal trend in US support, and the predictive power of alliance good value (as popularly measured in the literature).

As shown in Table 1, US support had a substantial impact on whether a democratic movement was successful (democratizing within two years, as coded by Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010). In nine of the eleven cases, the US-preferred outcome was realized.

As preliminary support of our hypotheses, we test whether the signaling power of moderate, nonviolent opposition groups encourages patron support. To measure this, we constructed a Peaceful Protest Index, the net number of protests and strikes minus the number of riots, in the year the democratic movement or transition was initiated (Banks 1976; Norris 2008). As predicted, this index is significantly positive for US support across the whole sample and for non-Latin American democratic movements. Outside of Latin America, cases of nonsupport featured on average more riots than peaceful acts of protest. In comparison, cases of support featured about six peaceful protests beyond the number of riots, indicating moderate and well-controlled opposition movements. Building on this observation, the following section illustrates how protests and other democratic movement actions contribute to democratization.

A striking pattern in Table 1 is US support for democratization in six of the nine Latin American cases. Although we did not anticipate this relationship, we posit that it may arise because of the United States’s confidence in its ability to control policy post-democratization, either through direct influence or the threat of the pull-back option. Given the United States’ mixed record in the region, this further illustrates the distinction between being pro-democracy and pro-democratization: a democratic patron may support democracy as an outcome but demand control over the democratization process. As a result, a probit model with only two variables—a dummy variable for Latin America and the Peaceful Protest Index—successfully predicts twenty-two of the twenty-five cases.11

Since our case studies are from late in the cold war, we need to examine whether the United States upped its likelihood of supporting democratization over time. There are a number of reasons to predict such a temporal trend, including the rising normative pressure favoring democracy, easing tensions in the cold war, and Reagan’s second-term policy shift (Huntington 1991, 92-8). However, as Table 1 shows, there is no strong temporal trend in the period we examine. From 1985 onward, the United States supported democratization in South Korea and the Philippines, but resisted democratic movements in Sudan and Liberia, as well as a transition in Pakistan. We further found little predictive power from development (measured by gross domestic product [GDP] per capita, from Gleditsch [2002]), economic performance
(measured either by real GDP growth or inflation, from World Bank 2008), the party of the US President, or the ideology of the client leader (Beck et al. 2001; Keefer 2005).

Finally, contrary to much of the literature, our model predicts a null relationship between the value of alliance goods and patron support. To see if this is plausible, we examine the explanatory power of the four variables most commonly employed in the literature to measure alliance value: US military aid (in dollars/capita, from Bueno de Mesquita and Smith [2007]), which indicates the country’s strategic importance to the United States; US troop presence (total stationed American troops, from Kane 2006); oil value (total annual oil revenues, in millions of US dollars, from Humphreys [2005]); and trade sector size (total exports and imports in dollars/capita, from Heston, Summers, and Aten [2008]), an indicator of the country’s commercial value. Each of the four variables has been the focus of theories on patron support for autocracy. In contrast, we find that US military aid and troop presence are unrelated to support in either sample. Surprisingly, if anything, higher oil and trade value both predict support for democratization. Although our findings may be explained by the heterogeneity of American interests, it is striking that these variables provide almost no explanatory power, even in combination. A probit model with a Latin American dummy, oil value, US troop presence, and US military aid predicts only seventeen of the twenty-five cases. Hence, the notion that the United States consistently protects its more valuable authoritarian partnerships is not validated.

Case Studies

We now analyze the democratic movements in the Philippines and South Korea to demonstrate that US support hinged on movement signaling, and that movement success in turn depended on US support. The United States was an external patron to authoritarian governments in both countries but supported democratization in 1986 and 1987, respectively. In contrast, the United States did not support democratic change in South Korea in 1980. We argue that the movements’ abilities to signal moderation and competence explain this variation. Again, signals of moderation include direct communication with patron officials, demonstration of middle-class support, public commitment to provide alliance goods, and public repudiation of antipatron groups and sentiments. Signals of competence include large public demonstrations, strong electoral performances, and participation or endorsement from governing elites and bureaucrats.

The Philippines

American support was vital to the ultimate victory of the Philippines’ “People Power” Revolution in February 1986. The United States had long supported President Ferdinand Marcos with military and economic aid, and by 1986, the United States made up nearly 60 percent of the Philippines’ foreign investment (Dolan
2003, 147). Marcos in turn agreed to American leasing of Clark Air Base and the Subic Bay Naval Bases, which were crucial in maintaining American control over the Asian-Pacific sea lanes. Marcos’s autocratic rule was increasingly unpopular in both the Philippines and the United States, particularly after the assassination of chief opposition leader Benigno Aquino. Nevertheless, out of concern for democratization’s uncertain consequences, the United States initially withheld support for the opposition.

**Movement signaling.** Filipino opposition leaders understood the need to demonstrate support for American bases and economic ties and to put forth a credible strategy to defeat the long-standing Communist insurgency. As far back as 1978, the opposition’s “moderate political stance positioned the group as a viable alternative to Marcos, friendly to both domestic capitalists and U.S. interests” (Brownlee 2007, 183). Many of their supporters, however, viewed American bases as an unwanted remnant of their colonial past. Salvador Laurel, a key opposition figure, was castigated for supporting a renewal of the bases agreement. Corazon Aquino, Benigno’s widow and the new opposition leader, was initially ambivalent. Moreover, she called for a six-month cease-fire with the insurgents, believing she could persuade most to quit the fight. This position made many in the Reagan administration and the Philippines’ military quite apprehensive (Bonner 1987, 391-2). In general, Aquino was considered untested on important issues. Early in her presidential campaign, she blithely declared to an American journalist, “What on earth do I know about being President?” (quoted in Bonner 1987, 392).

The opposition nevertheless coalesced around Aquino’s candidacy, as she alone had broad popularity throughout Filipino society. One key advisor told Aquino that to win over important constituencies in both the Philippines and Washington, she needed to display “competence, toughness, and winnability” (quoted in Bonner 1987, 399). She chose Laurel as her running mate to unify the opposition and signal a moderate ticket. She sent her brother to Washington to gauge American support and subsequently agreed to honor the base agreement until renegotiation in 1991 (Komisar 1987, 82). At a large opposition rally, Aquino further promised to not appoint any Communists to her Cabinet, stating, “I can’t possibly be a Communist, because I am a very devout Catholic and, as we all know, there is no God in Communism” (quoted in Komisar 1987, 85). Aquino’s bold declaration helped to assuage doubts about her affiliations and made clear the opposition’s preference for an anti-Communist candidate.

The Aquino campaign also prepared a postelection “second campaign” strategy in case Marcos tried to steal the election. It included nationwide peaceful demonstrations and direct appeals to American officials. Representatives were sent before the election to meet with Secretary of State George Shultz, Senator Sam Nunn, and Henry Kissinger to solidify American support (Burton 1989, 319-20). When Marcos fraudulently declared himself the winner, millions of Filipinos from all sectors of society took to the streets in support of Aquino: businessmen, churchgoers, nuns, laborers,
students, and even government officials. Excluded, however, were the more radical leftist groups, who Aquino continued to shun even after Marcos had the illegal results ratified (Komisar 1987; Burton 1989). This awesome display of “People Power” made it clear Aquino had broad support across Filipino society.

The sense of opposition competence was further aided by a military mutiny against Marcos, led by Defense Minister Juan Enrile and Army Vice Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos. Ramos in particular had long been a favorite of American officials because of his commitment to reforming the military and defeating the insurgency (Komisar 1987, 113-14). The union of Aquino, Laurel, Enrile, and Ramos guaranteed a competent leadership with military expertise.

**Patron response.** Prior to movement signaling, there was already displeasure with Marcos in the American government, but American officials questioned whether there was a viable alternative. Admiral William Crowe, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recalled, “The big argument in the U.S. government was ‘Can we work this out under Marcos, or must we facilitate or encourage a change?’ There were strong views on both sides. People were asking, ‘Suppose you engineer a change, who will you get? It could be worse’” (quoted in Burton 1989, 251). Paul Wolfowitz, then Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia, explained, “The goal of our policy was building up institutions that would have staying power beyond one individual. We could be very confident that a professional military, a democratic system, and a non-monopolistic economy would be good, but we could not be good at discerning who could successfully govern a country as deeply divided as the Philippines” (quoted in Burton 1989, 252). The Reagan administration therefore pushed Marcos in December 1985 to call a snap election for the following February to better legitimize his government.

Following Marcos’s fraudulent declaration of victory, Reagan equivocated and called on Aquino and Marcos to form a coalition government (Johnson 1987, 93-95). In response, Aquino publicly put the United States on the spot to back up its commitment to fair elections, declaring that ignoring Marcos’ corrupt practices “is not helping the Filipino people, but would be betraying their fight for democracy” (quoted in Komisar 1987, 103). Reagan subsequently acknowledged Marcos’s fraud but stopped short of calling on him to step down.

Even after the defection of important military units, Marcos still controlled large segments of the military and had genuine support across much of the country, notably in his home base in the North. Aquino, Enrile, and Ramos all feared that Marcos might throw the country into civil war. They therefore needed the United States to formally call on Marcos to step down. Once Reagan received an internal State Department communiqué arguing that any effort by Marcos to hold onto power would require coercive resources that could otherwise be devoted to putting down the insurgency, he finally became persuaded that Marcos could not maintain stability and therefore must go (Burton 1989, 364-65). Marcos very reluctantly agreed to resign, ending the threat of civil war and bringing democratic change to the Philippines.
In the years following Aquino’s ascension, segments of the military launched several coup attempts against her. The United States acted as key guarantor of her administration and Filipino democracy, most notably during the last and most serious coup attempt in 1991. Military forces attacked Manila and even shelled the presidential palace. In response, the United States performed “symbolic” flyovers of Manila and rebel-held bases, forcing the mutineers to capitulate (Reid and Guerrero 1995, chap. 11). This action demonstrated that the United States still held sway over democratic stability in the Philippines.

**Reasons for patron change.** The US supported democratization primarily because the democratic movement convincingly demonstrated widespread support and competent leadership. A switch in American support cannot be explained by a devaluation of American bases in the Philippines or an increased preference for democracy. When making his first statement about the disputed returns during the postelection crisis, Reagan declared that maintaining the country’s stability and keeping American control of the bases remained his administration’s top priorities (Johnson 1987, 93-95). Aquino did shrewdly test his public commitment to democracy, but it was the display of “People Power” and the military defections that were pivotal. These actions did not directly guarantee success, however, as Marcos was still willing and able to throw the Philippines into civil war. The American decision to abandon Marcos was ultimately critical to democratic success.

**South Korea**

Scholars have long recognized the important role the United States played in South Korea’s failure to democratize in 1980 and its success in 1987 (Stueck 1998; Fowler 1999; Yeo 2006). The United States helped establish the South Korean state in 1948, and the South Korean military was for years under the operational control of an American general. In South Korea’s first twenty years, American economic and military aid made up nearly 10 percent of its gross national product (Han 1980). The assassination of President Park Chung Hee in 1979 created an opportunity for democratic change. However, weak opposition leadership and minimal middle-class support convinced American officials to support the new authoritarian regime of General Chun Doo Hwan. When Chun’s seven-year term neared its end, democratic activists once again pushed for direct presidential elections and greater press freedom. This time, their leadership presented a strong, united front with broad-based support throughout Korean society. The United States subsequently pressured Chun to step down, and his designated successor, Roh Tae Woo, agreed to a direct presidential election and other democratic reforms.

**Movement signaling and patron response, 1980.** American officials favored liberalization following Park’s assassination in October 1979, but preferred a gradual approach that would not destabilize the government or encourage North Korean agitation. They pushed Park’s acting successor, Choi Kyu Ha, to institute constitutional
reforms, but he ultimately proved unable to stop General Chun from consolidating power. American Ambassador William Gleysteen feared that a military takeover would result in “renewed confrontation in Korean political society, with political leaders less willing to play a moderating role and students more likely to join the fray” (Gleysteen 1999, 109). Gleysteen’s comments likewise applied to the United States—it too was largely unwilling to play a moderating role and instead watched as events spiraled out of control.

Opposition leaders Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam privately assured Gleysteen they would be patient with the new post-Park leadership, but they were unable to convince student and labor activists to moderate their aims. The government-controlled media suppressed their calls for restraint in order to isolate student radicals and dampen international sympathy.13 Eventually, they themselves radicalized in order to maintain leadership over the democratic movement (Gleysteen 1999, 112-13). Gleysteen observed that street demonstrations were rather small and made up mostly of students and organized labor, without much support from older and middle-class citizens. American officials expressed greater concern as the demonstrations became increasingly violent. Although they cautioned the South Korean government against using violence in return, the United States largely acquiesced to the arrest of opposition leaders and the brutal crackdown of street protests in the summer of 1980 (Gleysteen 1999, 119-26). Chun afterward had himself “elected” President and became the first head of state to visit the United States upon President Reagan’s election. Many Korean dissidents were angry at the United States, expecting unconditional support for democratization, but learned the standard for patron support (Kim 1989).

Movement signaling and patron response, 1987. In the following years, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam demonstrated more competent leadership. Overcoming their rivalry, they organized the New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP), a unified moderate opposition party. In the parliamentary elections of 1985, the NKDP made huge gains and may have won a majority had election laws not favored the incumbent party (Oberdorfer 2001). In the wake of this surprising setback, Chun considered amending the constitution to allow himself to continue on as Prime Minister. In April 1987, he suspended talks with opposition leaders, who were pushing for direct presidential elections. Public protests escalated dramatically that spring, especially in response to a student death. These protests spread countrywide and included older and middle-class citizens, a marked contrast to the demonstrations of 1980 (Han 1989; Lee 2000).

In response, Secretary Shultz called on Chun to relent and make the needed reforms to allow for a fair presidential election. Chun proved obstinate and considered once again using strong force to put down the widespread protests. Reagan sent Chun a direct note, calling on him to honor his stated “intent to break free of what you correctly term ‘the old politics.’ A free press and balanced coverage by television and radio are essential to realizing your commitment to fair elections” (quoted in Oberdorfer 2001, 169). Soon after, Roh Tae Woo issued the June 29 Declaration

Another opposition split between the two Kims allowed Roh to win South Korea’s first free presidential election. His victory and that of Kim Young Sam in 1992 reassured military and American interests, allowing for gradual change in domestic and foreign policies and stable democratic consolidation.

**Reasons for patron change.** The US supported democratization in 1987 after the opposition demonstrated competent leadership and widespread support, as compared to 1980, when the movement was radical and narrow. A switch in American support cannot be explained by a devaluation of American bases in South Korea. President Carter attempted to decrease the number of troops stationed there, but this should have led to American support for democratization in 1980, not 1987. Events in Iran and the Philippines may have influenced American evaluations of client democracy. Released documents suggest that the shah’s fall in 1979 tilted American preferences in favor of stability, whereas Marcos’s downfall in 1986 tilted them back toward democracy and provided dissidents with a model for gaining American support (Fowler 1999).

The significant change, however, was not the preference for democracy but the change in the information environment. Park’s assassination created great uncertainty and made the United States wary of dramatic change, lest it spark a deeper revolution or a military coup (Gleysteen 1999, 73). Such concerns were partly motivated by the Iranian revolution, but would likely have been felt regardless. Chun’s consolidation of power helped stabilize the information environment, prompting consistent American pressure on Chun to make democratic reforms. The growth of a moderate and unified opposition movement alleviated any lingering fears and contributed to the United States’s continued and ultimately successful push for democratization.

**Conclusion**

When confronted with democratization in a valuable dependent ally, democracies are forced to balance an ideational preference for democracy against the uncertainty created by regime change. In analyzing this decision, the current literature emphasizes geopolitical and economic variables that influence the patron’s values for democracy and the benefits of the alliance. However, the results of our formal model dispute that these values ought to have consistent effects on patron support for democratization. This was confirmed by an analysis of US support for democratization in its cold war clients and case studies of the Philippines and South Korea. Rather, we argue patron support is shaped by information about the democratic movement that reduces the uncertainty over the potential democracy’s policies. It is thus critical that movement leaders act to influence the patron through direct communication, peaceful protests, and effective signaling of moderation and competence.
Our argument is strongly supported by the pro-democracy protests that recently engulfed several American clients throughout the Middle East. In particular, the surprising outbreak of protests in Cairo’s Tahrir Square in January 2011 forced the United States to again balance its preferences for democracy and policy stability. Staking out a cautiously supportive role, the Obama administration made clear its preference for a “transitional government that is acceptable to both the military and the people in the streets, [but] is not a coronation for the Muslim Brotherhood” (Landler, Cooper, and Kirkpatrick 2011). Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed fear of a movement that “in the name of democracy . . . [would be] hijacked by new autocrats who use violence, deception, and rigged elections to stay in power” (Fahim, Landler, and Shadid 2011). The United States instead supported a democratic transition that guaranteed civil liberties but was safeguarded by the military. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak’s resignation on February 11, 2011, largely brought about this desired outcome.

Recognizing the United States’ dilemma, the mostly peaceful protestors sent clear signals of their broad popular support and moderate aims. One American commentator noted that it was “encouraging to see that the demonstrators . . . are not shouting the same tired slogans about ‘death to America’ and ‘death to Israel’” (Ignatius 2011). In particular, protest leaders made clear that the movement was not dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood to “cultivate a moderate, democratic image in the eyes of . . . the West” (Ghosh 2011). The Brotherhood pledged to not run a candidate in a post-Mubarak presidential election. As a Brotherhood official explained, this was done “to take away the scare tactics that Hosni Mubarak uses to deceive people here and abroad that he should stay in power” (Kirkpatrick and Cowell 2011). However, the subsequent electoral success of Islamist parties and events like the September attack on the Israeli embassy in Cairo may continue to tilt the US towards the military regime.

Looking beyond Egypt, our analysis suggests that Mideast democracy activists can gain American support by acknowledging American regional interests and moderating their aims. In turn, American officials should support liberals and civil society groups as a buffer against extremists and as a potential source of movement coalescence. Moreover, the United States must confront its “problem of credibility” among the Middle East populace (Ottaway 2005), who are wary of the United States’ inconsistent track record in supporting democracy (Khan 2003). The United States should maintain open channels through which opposition movements can send credible signals of approval of American interests. To better gauge public attitudes, US officials should also continue to promote press freedoms and elections in its Middle Eastern clients, even if contested on an uneven playing field. Moderate mobilization, direct communication, and effective signaling can achieve the mutually desired outcome of stable democratic change.
Appendix

Proof of Proposition 1

We consider Regions II and III in turn, with the case for Region I trivial.

Region II \((A - C(1 - \delta) < D_p < A)\): Suppose there exists an equilibrium in which the movement always chooses NPG. Consider the deviation in which the movement chooses PG for some game history. After PG, it is strictly dominant for the patron to choose SD, since \(D_p/(1 - \delta) > C + A/(1 - \delta)\). Since PG is costly and SD is guaranteed, it is always dominant for the movement to choose NPG, a contradiction. In the first round, the patron thus faces a choice between \(A\) (from NSD) and \(D_p\) (from SD), hence will choose NSD in equilibrium.

Region III \((D_p < A - C(1 - \delta))\): We construct the specified equilibrium. First, assume that if NPG or NSD is ever played, then NPG and NSD will always be played subsequently. This is clearly in equilibrium once NPG or NSD is played, since \(D_p/(1 - \delta) < C + A/(1 - \delta)\).

Once in Democracy, the choice of either PG or SD requires that both actors find the exchange profitable over defection. \(\gamma\) must be high enough to satisfy the patron, which is true if \((\gamma A + D_p)/(1 - \delta) \geq A - C + \delta A/(1 - \delta)\) \(\Rightarrow \gamma \geq \gamma_D = (A - C(1 - \delta) - D_p)/A\). \(\beta\) must be low enough to satisfy the movement, which requires that \((D_m - \beta)/(1 - \delta) \geq D_m \Rightarrow \beta \leq \delta D_m\).

To choose SD prior to knowing \(\gamma\), the patron must have a sufficiently high expectation that the exchange will hold together. Two possibilities can follow SD: (1) the movement chooses NPG in the first round and the patron chooses NSD in every subsequent round or (2) the patron chooses SD and the movement chooses PG in every round. The former occurs if and only if \(\gamma < \gamma_D\) or \(\beta > \delta D_m\). Choosing SD risks going down either path (1) or (2), with each path’s probability dependent on \(F(\gamma)\) and \(G(\beta)\). This is balanced against the certain outcome following NSD.

Let \(\gamma_D = E[\gamma|\gamma \geq \gamma_D]\). Also let \(H = (1 - F(\gamma_D))G(\delta D_m)\), the probability of a type leading to path (1). The patron will choose SD in the first round if and only if its beliefs are such that

\[
H\left(\gamma_D A + D_p\right) + (1 - H)\left[D_p + \delta(A - C) + \frac{\delta^2 A}{1 - \delta}\right] \geq \frac{A}{1 - \delta} \\
\Rightarrow H\gamma_D + (1 - H)\delta \gamma_D \geq 1 - D_p/A.
\]

We now consider how the patron’s beliefs about \(\gamma\) and \(\beta\) vary according to the signal \(e\). We limit our attention to equilibria in which there is a value \(e^*(D_p)\) such that the patron’s estimate of \(\gamma\) is revised upward after observing \(e \geq e^*\) and revised downward otherwise.
The movement can signal higher values for $\gamma$ (and thus higher $\tilde{\gamma}^H$) by choosing $e^*$. If the movement cannot secure SD after the first round, it can gain only $D_m$ by sending the signal $e^*$. Hence, signaling in equilibrium requires $-e^*/\gamma + D_m \geq 0 \Rightarrow \gamma \geq e^*/D_m$. If the movement can secure SD indefinitely, then choosing $e^*$ is profitable if $-e^*/\gamma + (D_m - \beta)/(1 - \delta) > 0$. For given $\beta$, a choice of $e^*$ thus requires $\gamma > e^*(1 - \delta)/(D_m - \beta)$. Since SD is chosen if and only if $\gamma \geq e^*$, a movement will never choose $e > e^*$ or $0 < e < e^*$.

Since $H$ and $\tilde{\gamma}^H$ weakly rise with the lower bound of $\gamma$, and $\tilde{\gamma}^H > \delta \tilde{\gamma}$ by definition, the quantity $H\tilde{\gamma}^H + (1 - H)\delta \tilde{\gamma}$ weakly rises with the size of $e^*$. The equilibrium value $e^*(D_p)$ is set to be the minimum value necessary for $H\tilde{\gamma}^H + (1 - H)\delta \tilde{\gamma} \geq 1 - D_p/A$, conditional on the patron observing the signal.

It remains to show that for all $D_p > 0$, there is a value $e^*$ sufficient to satisfy this inequality. By assumption, $\gamma \leq k$ for finite $k$. If $e^* > kD_m$, we have $e^*/\gamma > D_m$ and thus a movement sending $e^*$ must be a type that can secure SD indefinitely. The patron thus updates to $H = 1$ and chooses SD if $\tilde{\gamma}^H \geq 1 - D_p/A$. Since $F(1) < 1$, there is a lower bound for $\gamma$ that satisfies this inequality.

**Proof of Proposition 2**

$e^*(D_p)$ is the minimal value such that $H\tilde{\gamma}^H + (1 - H)\delta \tilde{\gamma} \geq 1 - D_p/A$ after the patron observes the signal. The informativeness of the $e^*$ signal does not depend on $D_p$, hence, the necessary $e^*$ will be weakly decreasing in $D_p$ if the quantity $H\tilde{\gamma}^H + (1 - H)\delta \tilde{\gamma} \geq 1 + D_p/A$ is increasing in $D_p$.

Some calculus shows that $\frac{\partial \tilde{\gamma}}{\partial D_p} = -1/A$, $\frac{\partial H}{\partial D_p} = G(\delta D_m)f(\tilde{\gamma})/A$, and $\frac{\partial \tilde{\gamma}^H}{\partial D_p} = \frac{f(\tilde{\gamma})(\tilde{\gamma} - \tilde{\gamma}^H)}{A(1 - F(\tilde{\gamma}))}$, where $f(\gamma)$ is the density function corresponding to $F(\gamma)$. It follows that

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial D_p}(H\tilde{\gamma}^H + (1 - H)\delta \tilde{\gamma} + D_p/A)$$

$$= \frac{Hf(\tilde{\gamma})(\tilde{\gamma} - \til{\gamma}^H)}{A(1 - F(\til{\gamma}))} + \frac{\til{\gamma}^H G(\delta D_m)f(\til{\gamma})/A}{A} - \delta(1 - H)$$

$$+ \frac{-\delta \gamma G(\delta D_m)f(\til{\gamma})/A}{A} + \frac{1}{A}$$

$$= \frac{(1 - \delta) \gamma G(\delta D_m)f(\til{\gamma})}{A} - \frac{\delta(1 - H)}{A} + \frac{1}{A}$$

$$\geq \frac{1 - \delta(1 - H)}{A} > 0.$$
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Notes
1. Even the Soviet Union had arguably its most stable patron-client relationship with a democracy. Finland was able to “protect its people [and] preserve its institutions . . . through cautious consideration of the legitimate security interests of the Soviet Union” (Petersen 1991, 63-64). For Soviet troubles with its authoritarian clients, see Bunce (1985).
2. In reality, the patron is not guaranteed to be pivotal. However, assuming there is no backlash from the autocrat, the patron will favor increasing the likelihood of the more beneficial regime type.
3. Model results are unaffected by allowing some probability that the autocratic old guard retains power (as in South Korea in 1987).
5. We assume both distributions are strictly monotonic over their support, have finite means, and are uncorrelated. Further, there is a nonzero probability that \( \gamma \) is above 1 \((F(1) < 1)\), but \( \gamma \) has a finite upper limit \((F(k) = 1 \text{ for finite } k)\). Finally, there is a nonzero probability that \( \beta \) is less than the movement’s discounted benefit from Democracy \((G(\delta D_m) > 0)\).
6. \( e^* = 0 \) for some \( D_p \) if and only if \( G(\delta D_m)E[\gamma] > C(1 - \delta)/A \). This follows from the proof of Proposition 2, using the fact that if \( e^* = 0 \) for some \( D_p \), then \( e^* = 0 \) as \( D_p \) gets arbitrarily close to \( A - C(1 - \delta) \).
7. As an interesting model extension, patron support may also result from a signal at flat cost \( S > D_m \), whereas nearly all adverse selection solutions use signal costs that vary by type (Fearon 1997). Types that cannot engender permanent patron support will only receive \( D_m \) by sending a false signal.
8. In contrast, US support for (non-democratic) regime change in Cuba in 1959 and Nicaragua in 1979 without pull-back options resulted in almost immediate client defection (Pastor 1987). We thank an anonymous reviewer for this point.
9. The only exception is Argentina, which experienced a sharp diplomatic break with the United States surrounding its instigation of the Falklands War.

11. These predictions are whether the probit model estimates US support or opposition as more likely. The three outliers are Honduras (1971), Argentina (1973), and Brazil (1977).


13. A factor not captured in our model is that the incumbent may foster opposition radicalism to maintain patron support.

14. If $f(\gamma)$ is the density function corresponding to $F(\gamma)$, then $\gamma^H = (\int_{\gamma}^{\infty} f(\gamma) d\gamma) / (\int_{\gamma}^{\infty} f(\gamma) d\gamma)$.

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