

**FIRCed TO BE FREE:
FOREIGN-IMPOSED REGIME CHANGE AND DEMOCRATIZATION**

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ABSTRACT

Scholars and policymakers are increasingly interested in the question of whether sustainable democratic institutions can be imposed through military intervention, but appear to be arriving at opposite conclusions. The Bush administration, for example, cited the successful precedents of Germany and Japan after World War II in making the case for democratizing Afghanistan and Iraq. Leading academic studies of the effect of military intervention on democracy, by contrast, find that such interventions on average do little to enhance democracy. Some scholars argue that this is no accident because democratic leaders have few incentives to install democratic systems in other countries, preferring instead to impose a dictator who is responsive to the external intervener's interests rather than the whims of his domestic public. Existing studies, however, define intervention too broadly. If the key question is whether sustainable democratic institutions can be imposed by military means, then the theoretically appropriate cases are those in which an intervener uses force to change the ruler and/or political institutions of the target state. In this paper, therefore, we examine the effect of one hundred instances of foreign-imposed regime change (FIRC) on the ensuing level of democracy in targets between 1816 and 2008. Our findings corroborate and extend those of previous studies: FIRC by democracies on average leaves the Polity scores of targets unchanged, even after accounting for selection effects in where states choose to intervene via matching techniques. Targets of democratic FIRCs remain firmly entrenched in the autocratic camp. Foreign-imposed regime change by democracies, however, does have a positive effect on democratization in states that are relatively wealthy or ethnically homogeneous; it has a negative effect on poor or heterogeneous states.

INTRODUCTION

The question of whether democratic states can effectively promote democracy abroad has given rise to an interesting empirical puzzle, as well as a growing gap between the policies and pronouncements of democratic leaders and the findings of scholarly studies. The number of democracies in the world has reached an all time high, and recent history reveals a wave of military interventions by democracies intended to impose democratic institutions in other states, including Grenada (1983), Panama (1989), Haiti (1994), Bosnia (1995-), Kosovo (1999-), Afghanistan (2001-), and Iraq (2003-). There has also been no shortage of pronouncements by democratic statesmen from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush professing their desire to bring the virtues of democracy to people across the globe. This triumphalist rhetoric grew especially frequent in the post-Cold War world, but may have reached its apogee in the words of Bush, who declared in his 2002 National Security Strategy that “freedom, democracy, and free enterprise” constituted the “single, sustainable model for national success,” a formula that is “right and true for every person in every society.” Bush also committed the power of the United States to the mission of helping people in other societies throw off the yoke of tyranny, asserting that “the United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world.”¹ In his second inaugural address in 2005, Bush declared “it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.”²

¹ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2002).

² George W. Bush, “Second Inaugural Address,” January 20, 2005, available at The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=58745>.

Is intervention an effective means of spreading democracy? Despite these recent pro-democratic interventions and policy pronouncements, there is no consensus answer to this question. Many criticize military interventions aimed at democratization on the grounds that they appear to produce few democratic gains. While some success cases stand out, such as the U.S. occupations of West Germany and Japan following World War II, these are seen as outliers from a more general pattern of failure typified by cases such as Iraq, Afghanistan, or the series of U.S. interventions in Caribbean states in the early twentieth century. However, overall the empirical evidence supporting this conclusion is mixed. Some academic studies have found support for the link between military intervention and democratization.³ Other have found little basis for optimism, and argue that intervention has either no effect or even a negative effect on a state's subsequent democratic trajectory.⁴

One prominent recent study, by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George Downs, found that democratic interventions led to merely cosmetic improvements in the target state: such states became slightly more democratic on average, but remained firmly entrenched in the autocratic range of the combined Polity index, a commonly used measure of democratic institutions.⁵ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs argued that this failure to impart democracy was no fluke, but

³ James Meernik, "United States Military Intervention and the Promotion of Democracy," *Journal of Peace Research* 33, no. 4 (November 1996): 391-402; Margaret G. Hermann and Charles W. Kegley, Jr., "The U.S. Use of Military Intervention to Promote Democracy: Evaluating the Record," *International Interactions* 24, no. 2 (June 1998): 91-114; Mark Peceny, *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); and Jeffrey Pickering and Mark Peceny, "Forging Democracy at Gunpoint," *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006): 539-560.

⁴ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs, "Intervention and Democracy," *International Organization* 60, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 627-49. See also William Easterly, Shanker Satyanath, and Daniel Berger, "Superpower Interventions and their Consequences for Democracy: An Empirical Inquiry," Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 2008; Nils Gleditsch, Lene Siljeholm Christiansen, and Havard Hegre, "Democratic Jihad? Military Intervention and Democracy," *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4242* (June 2007); and Christopher Coyne, *After War: The Political Economy of Exporting Democracy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008). Others have reached similar conclusions drawing on more qualitative historical evidence; see, for example, Laurence Whitehead, "The Imposition of Democracy: The Caribbean," in Whitehead, ed., *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 59-92.

⁵ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, "Intervention and Democracy."

rather the product of deliberate policy choices by democratic interveners. Drawing on a broader theory of domestic political institutions and the incentives facing leaders, they argue that democratic leaders care foremost about succeeding in their foreign adventures, because policy success is what keeps them in office. Installing a pliant and predictable dictator who will implement the intervener's policies is thus a better bet than empowering a democrat, who must respond to the whims of his own domestic audience, which may very well clash with the intervener's wishes. It is thus no accident, according to Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, that democratic interventions fail to promote democracy: doing so does not maximize the likelihood of remaining in office for the intervening state's leader. This analysis advanced the debate over the consequences of intervention both by developing a theory derived from a broader model of the incentives facing political leaders and testing this theory on a broad range of cases.

However, this line of research has been undermined by three problems. First, previous studies have struggled to define the appropriate universe of cases to measure the impact of imposed regime change on democratization. The definition of intervention used by Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, for example, is very broad. Many of the cases they code as instances of intervention did not result in armed hostilities, much less an incursion by one state into the territory of another. In other cases included in their data, the object in dispute between two countries had nothing to do with the composition of their respective governments. Their analysis thus likely includes many irrelevant observations, which may skew the results. Other studies use overly restrictive sets of cases, looking only at instances of external nation-building or occupation, but ignoring other instances in which democracies used less intrusive means to impose new regimes on foreign states.

Second, previous attempts to estimate the consequences of foreign intervention suffer from a selection bias problem. As others have recognized, the key problem in estimating the effect of interventions that result in regime change on the subsequent level of democracy is that interventions are not randomly assigned.⁶ If states that are targeted for intervention systematically differ from states that are not in terms of their potential to democratize, then the results from studies that do not correct for this tendency will be biased. This problem might run in either direction: states that initiate interventions may choose the easiest cases, or may resort to costly military interventions only after other options have failed, and thus choose the most difficult cases. Studies that look only at cases in which intervention occurred, or do not account for the fact that interventions are more likely to be attempted in certain types of states, will not be able to judge their effects on democratization accurately.

Third, although Bueno de Mesquita and Downs's causal argument no doubt fits some democratic interventions, it ignores substantial evidence that democratic states have attempted to purvey democracy in at least some of their overseas interventions. There are undoubtedly many cases that fit their description: the United States, for example, has interceded in the politics of its Latin American and Caribbean neighbors on numerous occasions to empower friendly strongmen willing to implement policies favorable to American interests. On other occasions, however, democracies have actually committed blood and treasure to try to set up democratic systems in other countries. These efforts sometimes succeed, as in West Germany and Japan after World War II, or Grenada and Panama in the 1980s. Other times these efforts fail to establish sustainable democratic institutions, unable to overcome unfavorable local conditions

⁶ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, "Intervention and Democracy." For efforts to resolve a similar selection problem in the context of research on the effectiveness of U.N. peacekeeping, see Virginia Fortna, "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace after Civil War," *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (June 2004): 269-292; and Michael Gilligan and Ernest Sergenti, "Do UN Interventions Cause Peace: Using Matching to Improve Causal Inference," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 3, no. 2 (July 2008): 89-122.

such as extreme poverty, ethnic or religious hostilities among the population, or corruption. The failure of intervention to spur democratization in such cases, however, does not provide evidence for a theory that argues that democracies discourage liberalization by design.

In this paper, we therefore conduct a new analysis of intervention and democratization. Our measure of intervention is whether a state experienced a foreign-imposed regime change (FIRC), defined as the removal of the leader or regime of state at the instigation of another state. We argue that this definition provides the most direct and policy-relevant method of measuring the success of this strategy, although it misses some cases where states intervened to facilitate or enforce a settlement within or between states rather than impose a new government (such as the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia). Specifically, we look at the effect of FIRC by democracies on the subsequent level of democracy in target states over the period 1816 to 2008.

Based on this universe of cases, we find that—on average—states that experience FIRC at the hands of democracies receive no democratic benefit over the ensuing twenty years. The average target of FIRC by a democracy remains solidly autocratic. This result holds whether the intervener was the United States or another democracy, or whether the intervener intended to foster liberalization in the target society. As noted above, however, there are also some exceptions of states that experience successful democratic transitions following a FIRC. We thus go beyond existing research by exploring the sources of post-FIRC democratization success and failure. We find that states that are relatively wealthy or ethnically homogeneous experience significant democratic gains after experiencing a FIRC by a democratic intervener, whereas states that are relatively poor or heterogeneous become less democratic. Finally, to adjust for the possibility that states may select the easiest (or most difficult) cases to intervene in, we use a matching strategy to identify states that did and did not experience FIRC but were similar on a

set of variables likely correlated with the propensity to democratize. Here, we find no evidence of selection bias: the effect of democratic FIRC's on subsequent democratization is negative but statistically indistinguishable from zero.

The paper unfolds as follows. First, we elaborate on the puzzle and the current literature on intervention and democracy. Second, we define foreign-imposed regime change, our measure of intervention. Third, we discuss the research design, variables, and methodology employed. Fourth, we discuss the statistical results, and then conclude by discussing the implications of the findings and questions for future research.

THE DEBATE ABOUT INTERVENTION AND THE SPREAD OF DEMOCRACY

The debate over whether countries can be forcibly democratized from the outside-in is divided between optimists, pessimists, and those who make conditional arguments.⁷ Many policy makers fall into the optimist camp, arguing that democracy is transferrable to any society or culture. Others argue that if a nation-building operation is given sufficient resources and commitment, sustainable democratic regimes can take root despite obstacles such as poverty, ethnic divisions, or the absence of any prior experience with democracy. Some leading academics, however, cast doubt on these assertions, and even question whether democratic statesmen—despite their

⁷ This debate can be placed in the context of a broader research literature on the different policy tools used by international actors to spur democratic development in undemocratic states, such as foreign aid, membership in an international organization, economic sanctions, civil society assistance, and policy diffusion. For recent research on this issue, see Jon C. Pevehouse, *Democracy from Above? Regional Organizations and Democratization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Steven E. Finkel, Anibal Pérez-Liñán, and Mitchell A. Seligson, “The Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building, 1990-2003,” *World Politics* 59, no. 3 (April 2007): 404-439; Michael McFaul, “Ukraine Imports Democracy: External Influences on the Orange Revolution,” *International Security* 32, no. 2 (2007): 45-83; and Beth A. Simmons, Frank Dobbin, and Geoffrey Garrett, “Introduction: The International Diffusion of Liberalism,” *International Organization* 60, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 781-810. For a recent overview of these methods, see Larry Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World* (New York: Times Books, 2008). See also Whitehead, ed., *International Dimensions of Democratization*.

rhetoric—actually want to implant democracy in countries where they intervene. This section outlines the main positions in this debate.

INTERVENTION OPTIMISTS

Although international democracy promotion has historically been a central aspect of U.S. foreign policy, since the end of the Cold War U.S. presidents have taken to repeating the U.S.'s belief in spreading democracy like a mantra.⁸ Early in the 1990s, Bill Clinton pushed “democratic enlargement” as the centerpiece of his administration’s post-Cold War foreign policy vision, and touted NATO expansion into Eastern Europe as a means to lock in democratization in former Soviet satellite states.⁹ For George W. Bush, spreading democracy took on added importance as a means to combat the terrorist threat that he and others argued emanated from the authoritarian states of the Middle East. One of the principal justifications put forward for invading Iraq and toppling Saddam Hussein was that democratizing Iraq would initiate a wave of liberalization in surrounding Arab countries, removing repressive regimes and with them one of the main grievances fueling international terrorism.¹⁰

The belief in the Bush administration that the United States could build a democratic state in Iraq was based in part on a set of neoconservative ideas about regime change through the use of force. Several elements define this approach.¹¹ First, one of the principal tenets of

⁸ See, for example, Tony Smith, *America’s Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), chap. 11. This commitment to democracy has not always been iron-clad. See David F. Schmitz, *Thank God They’re on Our Side: The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1921-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

⁹ Douglas Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine,” *Foreign Policy* no. 106 (Spring 1997): 110-127; and Dan Reiter, “Why NATO Expansion Will Not Spread Democracy,” *International Security* 25, no. 4 (Spring 2001): 41-67.

¹⁰ Andrew J. Enterline and J. Michael Greig, “Beacons of Hope? The Impact of Imposed Democracy on Regional Peace, Democracy, and Prosperity,” *Journal of Politics* 67, no. 4 (November 2005): 1075-98.

¹¹ On the development of neoconservative ideas towards democracy promotion since its emergence as an intellectual movement in the 1970s, see Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the*

neoconservatism is that the United States has not only a moral imperative but also a strategic interest in promoting democracy because democracies do not fight one another.¹² Second, neoconservatives have typically been optimistic about the possibility that military force can be an effective means to accomplish this goal. Power is seen as a central aspect of international affairs, and thus the application of force is often required to overcome a dictator or an entrenched illiberal regime.¹³ As Michael Ledeen put it, “The best democracy program ever invented is the U.S. army.”¹⁴ Third, neoconservative optimism about regime change is based on the belief that democracy is transferrable to all cultures, regardless of obstacles such as poverty, social divisions, religious affiliation, or lack of experience with democratic institutions. Bush administration officials used this idea to build public support for the Iraq war in 2002 and 2003.

As Bush stated in February 2003:

America has made and kept this kind of commitment before—in the peace that followed a world war. After defeating enemies, we did not leave behind occupying armies, we left constitutions and parliaments. . . In societies that once bred fascism and militarism, liberty found a permanent home. There was a time when many said that the cultures of Japan and Germany were incapable of sustaining democratic values. Well, they were wrong. Some say the same of Iraq today. They are mistaken.¹⁵

The view that outsiders can democratize other countries through military force has found some empirical support in the academic research literature. Some democratization scholars

Neoconservative Legacy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush Cabinet* (New York: Viking, 2004); and John Ehrman *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1994* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

¹² Condoleezza Rice, “The Promise of Democratic Peace: Why Promoting Freedom Is the Only Realistic Path to Security,” *Washington Post*, December 11, 2005; Bush, “Second Inaugural Address”; and Charles Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World,” 2004 Irving Kristol Lecture, American Enterprise Institute, February 10, 2004. For an alternative neoconservative strategic rationale for spreading democracy, see Jonathan D. Caverley, “Power and Democratic Weakness: Neoconservatism and Neoclassical Realism,” *Millennium* 38, no. 3 (May 2010): 593-614.

¹³ Jeffrey Kopstein, “The Transatlantic Divide over Democracy Promotion,” *Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 85-98; and Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism.”

¹⁴ Quoted in Claudia Rosett, “One Down, Dozens More to Go,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 16, 2003, D10.

¹⁵ George W. Bush, “President Discusses Future of Iraq,” White House Press Release, February 26, 2003. For a critique of the comparison between the U.S. occupations of Iraq in 2003 and Japan and Germany in 1945, see John W. Dower, “A Warning from History: Don’t Expect Democracy in Iraq,” *Boston Review* 28, no. 1 (February/March 2003); and Francis Fukuyama, *State Building: Order and Governance in the Twenty-first Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 39-41.

suggest that outside intervention is often necessary to remove abusive political and military institutions, or that military defeat can discredit ruling elites or lead to new elite bargains that favor democracy.¹⁶ Several studies from the 1990s argued that U.S. military interventions exert a positive effect on democratization, but only when the objective of these interventions was explicitly to liberalize the target state. In an examination of twenty-seven U.S. interventions from 1950 to 1990, James Meernik found that intervention by itself had little discernible impact on subsequent levels of democracy in target states. When “the U.S. president declared democracy was a goal of the intervention,” however, these operations resulted in positive democratic change.¹⁷ Similarly, Mark Peceny’s study of twentieth century U.S. military interventions concluded that although pro-liberalization interventions were relatively rare—constituting only one-third of all interventions—when the U.S. sought to promote democracy “at the point of bayonets,” it generally succeeded, as targets of pro-democracy interventions were significantly more likely to become consolidated democracies afterwards.¹⁸ Hermann and Kegley, looking at American interventions since 1945, also found evidence that interventions intended to promote democracy led to an improvement in the target’s Polity score, whereas “American interventions that were not focused on governmental reform...resulted in the target state becoming more autocratic.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Nancy Bermeo, “What the Democratization Literature Says—Or Doesn’t Say—About Postwar Democratization,” *Global Governance* 9, no. 2 (April-June 2003): 162; Alfred Stepan, “Paths Toward Redemocratization: Theoretical and Comparative Considerations,” in Guillermo O’Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 64-84; and Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

¹⁷ Meernik, “United States Military Intervention and the Promotion of Democracy,” 399.

¹⁸ Peceny, *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets*, chap. 7.

¹⁹ Hermann and Kegley, “The U.S. Use of Military Intervention to Promote Democracy,” 98.

INTERVENTION AND DEMOCRACY: THE SKEPTICS

More recent studies that attempt systematically to determine the impact of intervention on subsequent democratization have undercut the idea that democratic intervention can spur political liberalization. These scholars highlight the rarity of success, and argue not only that intervention is unlikely to result in substantial democratic improvement, but that it might be counterproductive as well.

Possibly the most rigorous attempt to examine this question to date is Bueno de Mesquita and Downs's 2006 study of military intervention and democracy. This study compares the subsequent level of democracy in states that did and did not experience military intervention by a democracy between 1946 and 2001. The results are striking: whether the intervener is the UN, the United States, or some other democracy, targets of intervention experience no meaningful increase in level of democracy between ten and twenty years following the intervention. The authors note that in the states targeted for intervention, "the achieved level of democracy does not reach or exceed the commonly used and relatively weak threshold for defining democracy, let alone the upper bound that signifies a genuine, full-fledged democratic polity."²⁰

Bueno de Mesquita and Downs attribute this result to the strategic incentives that democratic institutions provide for elected leaders in the intervening state. This argument is derived from a theory of the "selectorate" developed elsewhere by Bueno de Mesquita and colleagues. In this model, political institutions are differentiated by the size of the selectorate (S)—the number of people who participate in selecting the national leader—and the winning coalition (W)—the proportion of the selectorate whose support propels the leader into office and

²⁰ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, "Intervention and Democracy," 647.

keeps him there.²¹ In highly participatory states like modern democracies, S approximates the adult population of the country and W —depending on the particular type of institutions that characterize the state—is a majority or plurality of S . Given the large size of W in democracies, leaders cannot compensate supporters with private benefits; rather they must rely on the quality and success of their public policies to retain supporters. By contrast, in states where W is small, policy success matters little because leaders can reward the small number of individuals whose support is necessary to keep them in office with private goods. Because policy success is the key to retaining office in democracies, leaders are cautious to avoid foreign policy imbroglios and try hard to ensure that ventures they do undertake yield the benefits promised.

According to their argument, these incentives related to the nature of a leader's selectorate can have consequences for the outcomes of foreign interventions. Democratic leaders care most about their own political survival, and institutionalizing a democratic system in another state after an intervention does not serve this goal. From the perspective of a democratic leader in an intervening state, democracy induces uncertainty because "there is no guarantee that a candidate sympathetic to the policy goals of the intervener will even be running much less be victorious." It is thus "safer and less costly" to empower a dictator because autocratic leaders do not have to cater to the whims of their population, they can undertake policies that benefit the intervener.²² As long as democratic leaders face these incentives, military intervention is unlikely to be a reliable mechanism for exporting democracy.

²¹ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (December 1999): 791-807; and Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003).

²² Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, "Intervention and Democracy," 631-32; 632.

BETWEEN OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM: CONDITIONAL ARGUMENTS

A third group of analysts eschews categorical judgments in favor of identifying the factors associated with better or worse democratic outcomes among countries that suffer intervention. Perhaps the leading explanation for variation in the success or failure of interventions concerns the level of effort put forward by the intervening state(s). This argument has emerged most prominently from the recent literature on nation-building, typically defined as “a deliberate process of democratization administered through foreign intervention.”²³ A study of U.S. nation-building operations led by James Dobbins at RAND, for example, argues that although a number of factors contribute to nation-building success, the single most important variable “is the level of effort the United States and the international community put into their democratic transformations....This higher level of input accounts in significant measure for the higher level of output measured in the development of democratic institutions and economic growth.”²⁴ Dobbins and his colleagues show that Germany, one of the clearest success stories, had by far the highest number of U.S. occupation troops per capita of any U.S. nation-building effort in the last sixty years. Germany also received the largest total amount of aid of all cases in the first two years of its occupation, although not the largest in per capita terms. Two cases that the RAND team considers to be partial successes—Kosovo and Bosnia—had the second and third largest number of occupying troops per capita, respectively, and were also the top two recipients of aid per capita and as a percentage of gross domestic product. Haiti, by contrast—a clear failure of nation-building—had one of the smallest numbers of troops and lowest levels of monetary aid per capita.

²³ Jason Brownlee, “Can America Nation-Build?” *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (January 2007): 316.

²⁴ James Dobbins et al., *America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Washington, D.C.: RAND, 2003), xix. For another statement of this argument, see Minxin Pei, Samia Amin, and Seth Garz, “Building Nations: The American Experience,” in *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, ed. Francis Fukuyama (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 81-82.

A second group of arguments identifies conditions in the target state as the key variables influencing the success or failure of military interventions in producing democratic change. This view draws on the comparative politics literature on democratization. This literature seeks to identify the factors associated with democratic transition, consolidation, and breakdown, such as a state's level of wealth, the extent of ethnic or social divisions in a society, whether a state has any prior experience with democracy, or a state's level of external and internal security threat.²⁵

Several scholars argue that these factors also strongly influence the likelihood that foreign intervention will result in sustainable democratic change. Andrew Enterline and Michael Greig examine the survival of imposed democracies, defined as “democratic governments installed by a foreign power in which the foreign power plays an important role in the establishment, promotion, and maintenance of the institutions of government.”²⁶ Such governments may be brought to power by a departing colonial power, or by overt or covert military intervention in an already independent state. Enterline and Greig find that several variables influence the length of time that imposed democracies survive. After a rocky first decade, “strong” democracies—those with a combined Polity score greater than 6—tend to be more durable than “weak” democracies (which score between 0 and 6). According to Enterline and Greig, “While 55% of strong democracies survive at least 52 years after their imposition, only 16% of weak democracies survive during this interval.”²⁷ In these cases, the level of wealth in an imposed democracy, as well as the degree of ethnic or religious fractionalization, also

²⁵ For an overview of this literature, see Barbara Geddes, “What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 115-44. Leading works in this literature are Seymour M. Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959): 69-105; Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Huntington, *Third Wave*.

²⁶ Andrew J. Enterline and J. Michael Greig, “Against All Odds? The History of Imposed Democracy and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 4 (October 2008): 323.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 330-31.

affects the survival of these regimes: only 40 percent of imposed democracies with high levels of ethnic fractionalization survive their first decade, and only one-quarter of the poorest such states last for twenty years.²⁸

CRITICAL EVALUATION

The evidence behind each of the views has important weaknesses. For democratization optimists, the difficulty is the historical rarity of success stories. One study of nation-building, for example, counts only four successful cases of democratization out of sixteen attempts, a success rate of 25 percent.²⁹ Aside from West Germany and Japan after World War II, there are few positive outcomes to point to, and hardly any in less-developed countries.

More generally, democratization optimists have produced few sophisticated studies to counter Bueno de Mesquita and Downs' evidence that democratic interventions produce essentially nothing in terms of democratization. Meernik's study, for example, is limited to a small sample of U.S. interventions and tracks democratic change for only three years afterwards.³⁰ Peceny's work includes more interventions and covers a longer time period, but is still limited to American interventions.³¹ Both studies also acknowledge that pro-liberalization interventions are a minority of all interventions.

²⁸ Ibid., 335-39. For other studies that make conditional arguments regarding intervention outcomes, see Minxin Pei and Sara Kasper, *Lessons from the Past: The American Record on Nation-Building* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003); Brownlee, "Can America Nation-Build?"; Eva Bellin, "The Iraqi Intervention and Democracy in Comparative Historical Perspective," *Political Science Quarterly* 119, no. 4 (Winter 2004-05): 595-608; Daniel Byman, "Constructing a Democratic Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities," *International Security* 28, no. 1 (Summer 2003): 48-78; and Arthur A. Goldsmith, "Making the World Safe for Partial Democracy? Questioning the Premises of Democracy Promotion," *International Security* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 120-147.

²⁹ Pei and Kasper, *Lessons from the Past*.

³⁰ Meernik, "United States Military Intervention and the Promotion of Democracy."

³¹ Peceny, *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets*.

Democratization pessimists initially appear to be on firmer ground, yet some questions remain. Bueno de Mesquita and Downs advance an elegant theory and there are obvious cases where democracies have imposed in other countries autocratic strongmen eager to play ball. Yet there are also enough cases of democracies intervening and setting up democratic systems by force to raise questions about whether Bueno de Mesquita and Downs's theory is valid. It is well known, for example, that Great Britain, upon entering World War I, made the removal of the Prussian military class and the democratization of Germany one of its war objectives.³² In World War II, Britain and the United States demanded the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers, and supervised the thorough-going transformation of Italy, Japan, and the western half of Germany into democracies. For Japan, the terms of surrender agreed to by the allies at the Potsdam conference in July 1945 included the demand that "The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people."³³ More recently, the United States turned out Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega and facilitated his replacement by a democratic system; negotiated the Dayton Peace Agreement that installed democratic institutions (however dysfunctional) in Bosnia; and overturned repressive regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq and brought representative government to those countries. Although the jury is still out on the democratic transformations in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the intentions of U.S. policy makers in these cases seem to defy Bueno de Mesquita and Downs's logic. Because they argue that democratic leaders intentionally empower autocrats after interventions, the failure of certain countries to democratize successfully supports their theory only if the intervening democracy purposefully empowered non-democratic elites. If

³² Lorna S. Jaffe, *The Decision to Disarm Germany: British Policy Towards Postwar German Disarmament, 1914-1919* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1985), chap. 1; and Eric Labs, "Beyond Victory: Offensive Realism and the Expansion of War Aims," *Security Studies* 6, no. 4 (Summer 1997): 1-49.

³³ "Proclamation Defining Terms for Japanese Surrender," Issued at Potsdam, July 26, 1945, available at <http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/c06.html>.

democracy failed to take root in spite of the interveners' intentions to facilitate democracy, that does not constitute evidence for Bueno de Mesquita and Downs's argument, but rather for arguments about the conditions under which imposed democracy succeeds or fails.

A second issue with the democratization pessimists' position concerns the appropriateness of their research designs. The principal problem with these studies is that the independent variable—intervention—is loosely operationalized. Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, for example, in addition to using data on UN intervention and countries that intervened in civil wars—drawn from studies by Fortna and Regan, respectively—code as interveners “any state with a Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) hostility level score above 1; that is, any state that actively participated in a militarized dispute provided it is not coded as the initiator in the MIDs data.”³⁴ The MID hostility-level variable ranges from 1 to 5; only levels 4 and 5 involve the actual use of military force. Levels 2 and 3 are defined respectively as “threat to use force” and “display of force.” Threats of force, by definition, are threats, not actual uses of force. Displays of force include actions like alerts, mobilization of forces, fortification of borders, and border violations.³⁵ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs give no justification for including these cases as instances of intervention where their theory could apply, and closer examination shows their inclusion to be unwarranted. Of the 1,456 countries in the MID data with a hostility level of 2 or 3, only 23 of them (1.6 percent) experienced any fatalities; 18 of these (78 percent) fall in the 1-25 fatality range. Only one state—Zaire in a 1977 dispute with Angola (assisted by Cuban troops)—suffered in excess of 100 deaths. Even when force is used, as with hostility level 4, 71

³⁴ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, “Intervention and Democracy,” 637. See also Virginia Page Fortna, *Peace Time: Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); and Patrick Regan, *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Outside Intervention in Intrastate Conflict* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

³⁵ Faten Ghosn and Glenn Palmer, “Codebook for the Militarized Interstate Dispute Data, Version 3.0,” April 14, 2003, available at <http://correlatesofwar.org/>.

percent of the nearly 1,900 observations for which data are available have zero deaths.³⁶ A total of only three countries incurred greater than 1,000 battle deaths. In short, the vast majority of MIDs below hostility level 5 (war) consist of minor clashes involving few if any fatalities, hardly the kind of cases where an intervener can be expected to have imposed a new government on an adversary. The Regan data used by Bueno de Mesquita and Downs also include conflicts in which no regime change occurred. For example, this data includes the 1991 U.S.-Iraq war, despite the fact that President George H. W. Bush specifically chose to end the ground war before overthrowing the Saddam Hussein regime, over the objections of many of his advisors.³⁷ The Bueno de Mesquita and Downs study is thus likely filled with many false cases of intervention.³⁸

Finally, studies that make conditional arguments regarding post-intervention democratization encounter several problems. Studies of nation-building, for example, have the opposite problem of the democratization pessimists outlined above: they define the independent variable so narrowly that they tend to have a very small number of cases (less than twenty in many studies), making it hard to draw definitive conclusions or evaluate alternative explanations. These conclusions also rest on case study evidence from states in which nation-building occurred; there is no comparative analysis of the democratic development of similar states that did not experience foreign occupation. Furthermore, the evidence for the expenditure-of-effort argument is far from clear-cut.³⁹ Japan, for example, is an anomaly for the argument, as it was garrisoned by low levels of troops and received a small amount of aid in relation to the size of its

³⁶ Data on fatalities are missing for 514 countries.

³⁷ Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995).

³⁸ For a study with similar issues, see James D. Morrow, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith, "Selection Institutions and War Aims," *Economics of Governance* 7, no. 1 (January 2006): 31-52.

³⁹ Dobbins et al., *America's Role in Nation-Building*.

population, yet emerged as one of the few unqualified successes. Even Germany—the other big success—obtained far less aid per capita than did Bosnia and Kosovo, and only marginally more than Haiti, the biggest failure.⁴⁰ The classification of the two Balkan states as successes (even partial ones) is also rather dubious; Edelstein, by contrast, remarks that the missions in these places “have largely stagnated with hardened ethnic divisions remaining in place.”⁴¹ According to a 2006 report by the Congressional Research Service, Iraq has received comparable levels of aid to Germany and twice the amount of aid as Japan received from 1946 to 1952, and was the largest recipient of U.S. official development assistance from 2004-2008.⁴² The evidence that investment of time and effort is the key to nation-building success is thus more mixed than Dobbins and company indicate.

Studies of imposed democracy, on the other hand, lump together two types of imposed polities that are actually quite different: former colonies where an independent government is put in place for the first time, and previously independent states where one government is forcibly replaced by another. From a current policy perspective, the interesting question is whether outsiders can successfully remove one set of rulers or institutions and install another in a state that otherwise remains independent. Although the democratic trajectory of imposed regimes in former colonies is interesting (as is the more general question of the influence of colonial legacies on the institutions and development of post-colonial states),⁴³ it is less relevant to contemporary policymakers contemplating regime change as a solution to enduring conflicts with other states. Eighty-six percent of the states in Enterline and Greig’s analysis are former

⁴⁰ Ibid., 150-158.

⁴¹ Edelstein, *Occupational Hazards*, 167. See also *ibid.*, 17, 52.

⁴² Nina Serafino, Curt Tarnoff, and Dick K. Nanto, “U.S. Occupation Assistance: Iraq, Germany and Japan Compared,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, March 23, 2006.

⁴³ See, for example, Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation,” *American Economic Review* 91, no. 5 (December 2001): 1369-1401.

colonies; only six of the forty-three cases of imposed democracy they identify occurred in states that were already independent.⁴⁴

DEFINING FOREIGN-IMPOSED REGIME CHANGE

The measure of intervention that we propose in this paper is foreign-imposed regime change, which is the removal of the leader of one state—which remains nominally sovereign afterward—at the instigation of the government of another state, usually by force or the threat of force. This definition includes five important elements. First, an external actor must be primarily responsible for deposing the ruler of the state. As the wording of the definition implies, however, the individuals who perform the act of overthrowing a leader need not be citizens of the foreign, intervening state. External governments have several means at their disposal to bring down and replace foreign leaders. They may, for example, launch an invasion with their own military forces, such as the United States did in late 1989 to apprehend Panamanian President Manuel Noriega.⁴⁵ An impending attack of this sort is sometimes sufficient to prompt a regime to step aside: the resignation of the Haitian junta led by Gen. Raoul Cedras in 1994, with U.S. Marines floating offshore, is an example.⁴⁶ Finally, external actors may support, bankroll, and arm domestic opponents seeking to overthrow the targeted regime. This last category can be ambiguous regarding the extent to which the resulting change of regime can be attributed to external versus domestic actors. For a change of government to qualify as a FIRC in these circumstances, we require evidence that the foreign government officially made removing the target regime its objective, and that the extent of the aid that outsiders provided to the rebels be

⁴⁴ Enterline and Greig, “Against All Odds?” 326.

⁴⁵ Russell Crandall, *Gunboat Democracy: U.S. Interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 171-224.

⁴⁶ Bob Shacochis, *The Immaculate Invasion* (New York: Viking, 1999).

of such a magnitude that regime change would have been very unlikely to succeed absent that support.⁴⁷ Carlos Castillo Armas, for example, stood little chance of overthrowing Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala without U.S.-provided airpower, as well as the Guatemalan officer corps' knowledge that the United States would likely intervene directly if the army repelled Castillo Armas's rag-tag invasion force.⁴⁸ The Brazilian Army, by contrast, received no U.S. aid when it toppled President João Goulart in 1964. President Lyndon Johnson wanted Goulart removed, members of his administration discussed this preference with Brazilian officers, and Johnson ordered a U.S. naval task force to head for Brazil, but the Brazilians needed little encouragement, received no U.S. weapons, and the coup occurred before any U.S. ships arrived in the vicinity.⁴⁹

Second, for a case to constitute an instance of foreign-imposed regime change, the target must be an independent, sovereign state. We do not consider the imposition of regimes on newly-independent states by their former colonial masters, for example, to constitute FIRC.⁵⁰ Although these are indeed imposed polities, as the term foreign-imposed regime change implies, we are interested in cases where the target was already an independent state rather than a colony because we want to understand the efficacy of removing one set of leaders and bringing others to power rather than setting up a set of institutions and/or installing a leader in the first instance.

Third, just as the targets of FIRC must be sovereign states, states that experience FIRC must retain at least nominal independence after regime change occurs. This stipulation disqualifies outright conquest and annexation—either to the metropole or an empire—from the

⁴⁷ Although regime change must be officially adopted as the objective, this goal need not be stated publicly.

⁴⁸ Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 246, 338.

⁴⁹ Michael Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions: Pursuing Regime Change in the Cold War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 77-79. According to Grow, however, "Johnson had been fully prepared to carry out a large-scale U.S. military intervention." *Ibid.*, 79.

⁵⁰ As noted above, the majority of the cases in studies of "imposed democracy" or "imposed polities" are former colonies. See Enterline and Greig, "Beacons of Hope?" and "Against All Odds?," as well as Enterline and Greig, "Perfect Storms? Political Instability in Imposed Polities and the Future of Iraq and Afghanistan," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 6 (December 2008): 880-915.

universe of FIRC. The rulers and governing structures of states that are conquered and absorbed by others are changed as a matter of course, but these changes are simply a by-product of conquest rather than an effort to establish a new regime in an independent state. Conquest and annexation—what Tanisha Fazal terms “state death”—is not the same thing as FIRC, although, as Fazal argues, the two may be substitutes, with FIRC becoming more common after World War II when norms proscribing conquest have grown stronger.⁵¹ On the other hand, interventions that result in the removal of the indigenous leader and which are followed by military occupation, such as the U.S. occupations of Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24), we do count as cases of FIRC since the intention to leave is part of what defines an occupation.⁵² The more difficult cases are wartime occupations; we code such cases as FIRCs if the intervener removed the target state’s government and annexation was not the initial objective (most Western European countries plus Yugoslavia and Greece during World War II).

Fourth, interveners may impose entirely new institutions on a target state in the process of changing its regime, but all that is necessary for a case to constitute FIRC is that an intervener change the leader of the target government. Enterline and Greig, by contrast, define an imposed polity as involving “not merely encouraging or facilitating leadership change, but rather a complete restructuring of the domestic political system in the target state. In doing so, the existing political structure in the target state is dismantled and remade by an intervening state, and new political leaders are installed to head these institutions.”⁵³ Foreign-imposed regime change is thus more minimalist than an imposed polity: only the effective ruler must be changed. As noted, interveners may also replace the governing institutions of the target, but this choice is

⁵¹ Tanisha M. Fazal, *State Death: The Politics and Geography of Conquest, Occupation, and Annexation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 171-175. Fazal, however, greatly underestimates the number of FIRCs that have occurred since 1816.

⁵² Edelstein, *Occupational Hazards*, 3.

⁵³ Enterline and Greig, “Perfect Storms?”, 883.

not built into the definition. Nor is it necessary for the intervener to promote its own set of institutions or leader type when engaging in FIRC.⁵⁴

Finally, for a change of regime to be considered foreign-imposed, external actors must at a minimum be responsible for overthrowing the old ruler, and at a maximum also determine his or her successor. In most cases of FIRC, the intervener not only wants to get rid of the current leader, but also has someone in mind as a preferred replacement. When the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia on Christmas Day, 1978, for example, their “intent was to strike a quick and fatal blow to the Khmer Rouge leadership ... and place their man, Heng Samrin, at the head of a puppet government.”⁵⁵ Similarly, in one of a half-dozen FIRCs to afflict Honduras in the nineteenth century, Honduran President Domingo Vasquez (a conservative) warned the new liberal leader of Nicaragua, José Santos Zelaya, in 1893 to stop harboring dissident Honduran liberals. Zelaya responded by allying with one such dissident—Policarpo Bonilla—and attempting to oust Vasquez from power. The combined forces of Nicaragua and the Honduran liberals defeated Vasquez’s army in two battles at Choluteca and laid siege to Tegucigalpa from January 24 to February 22, 1894. Vasquez then fled to El Salvador and Bonilla was installed as president.⁵⁶ These “removal and replacement” FIRCs contrast with the “removal-only” FIRC that resulted from the British invasion of Afghanistan in 1878, when Amir Sher Ali placed his son Yakub Khan in power and fled Kabul for Russian Turkestan, hoping to persuade the tsar to save him only to be rebuffed and die in despair.⁵⁷ A year later—in another removal-only FIRC—British forces under Gen. Frederick Roberts deposed Yakub Khan but could not “find a puppet

⁵⁴ For this concept, see John M. Owen, “The Foreign Promotion of Domestic Institutions,” *International Organization* 56, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 375-409.

⁵⁵ Steven J. Hood, *Dragons Entangled: Indochina and the China-Vietnam War* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 50.

⁵⁶ Robert L. Scheina, *Latin America’s Wars*, Vol. 1: *The Age of the Caudillo, 1791-1899* (Washington: Brassey’s, 2003), pp. 258-59. Nicaragua’s Zelaya would eventually be deposed by the United States in 1909.

⁵⁷ See, for example, D. S. Richards, *The Savage Frontier: A History of the Anglo-Afghan Wars* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 77-82.

for the Afghan throne,” which remained vacant for nine months.⁵⁸ The British eventually agreed to allow Abdur Rahman, a grandson of former Afghan Amir Dost Mohammed who had spent many years in exile in Russia, to take power.⁵⁹

Why should FIRC cases like these be included? One reason is that excluding removal-only cases would mean forsaking the opportunity to compare whether cases where the intervener installs a replacement of its choosing have different consequences than those where the external actor does not designate a successor. A second reason is that omitting removal-only FIRC cases would also preclude the ability to examine cases of imposed democracy. In most such cases, interveners put in place a set of institutions rather than a particular individual. The institutions—often after a lengthy occupation—then produce a leader that is not hand-picked (in theory, at least) by the external actor. For these reasons, we prefer to cast a relatively wide net, including all cases where a leader was removed by an external actor. According to this definition, there were one hundred cases of FIRC between 1816 and 2008. These cases are shown in Table 1.

[Table 1 about here]

RESEARCH DESIGN

To test the effect of foreign-imposed regime change on democratization, we have assembled a country-year dataset that begins in 1816 and ends in 2008. The dependent variable is each state’s score on the combined Polity index of democratic institutions lagged by ten years. For example, the dependent variable for Uganda in 1985 is its Polity score in 1995. The Polity index is a

⁵⁸ Arnold Fletcher, *Afghanistan: Highway of Conquest* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), 135.

⁵⁹ Removal-only FIRC cases resemble assassination or the strategic bombing strategy known as decapitation. Had U.S. smart bombs succeeded in killing Saddam Hussein during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, for example, this would have been a successful instance of decapitation as well as a removal-only case of FIRC. In all likelihood, one of Saddam’s sons (Uday or Qusay) would have taken over. Decapitation seeks to kill an existing leader in the hope that whoever assumes power in his stead will be more accommodating, but does nothing to determine who the next leader will be. See Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

widely used measure of the level of democracy in a political system. The index is made up of several components that take into account how political leaders are recruited, whether there are institutionalized constraints on executive power, and the degree of political competition. States are ranked on a twenty-one point scale ranging from -10 (the most autocratic) to +10 (the most democratic). For ease of interpretation, we transform the index to make it strictly positive by adding eleven; the resulting variable ranges from 1 to 21. The lagged structure in this empirical strategy takes into account the fact that the effects of a traumatic event like FIRC on a state's political institutions are likely to be felt over an extended period of time.⁶⁰

The primary independent variable is foreign-imposed regime change as defined above. To account for the extended effects of FIRC, we code each instance of FIRC as one in the year it occurred and also for the next ten years. In the example of Nicaragua's overthrow of Honduran President Domingo Vasquez in 1894 discussed in the previous section, Honduras is coded one in 1894 but also for each succeeding year through 1904. Combined with the ten year lag in the dependent variable, this design captures the effect of FIRC between ten and twenty years after the year of FIRC. In practice, this lag structure omits very recent FIRCs (Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003) and several cases where a FIRC occurred shortly before a state exited the international system (Tuscany, Parma, and Modena 1859; Korea 1907; and Montenegro 1916). Combined with the fact that a few states suffered multiple FIRCs in a single year (Afghanistan 1879; Peru 1881; Guatemala 1954; and Czechoslovakia 1968), the number of FIRCs in our analysis is 87, and the number of FIRC10 years is 778.

To examine the effect of foreign-imposed regime change by democracies on subsequent levels of democracy in targets of intervention, we code the Polity scores of states that carried out FIRC in the year of intervention. We code interveners that score 17 or higher on the Polity index

⁶⁰ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, "Intervention and Democracy," 638.

as democracies, and assign them a value of one on a dummy variable for intervener democracy, which we label DEMFIRC.⁶¹ Interveners with Polity scores less than 17 are coded as autocratic interveners (AUTFIRC). Like the FIRC variable, each of these variables is also coded one for the year of intervention plus the next ten years. In cases where a second FIRC occurs before the initial ten-year period has elapsed, a new ten-year period is coded as beginning in the year of the second FIRC and the dummies are re-coded according to the regime type of the second intervener.

Although assessing the effect of FIRCs by the United States is not our primary concern, we recognize that readers may be interested in the democratizing effect of U.S. interventions. Determining this effect requires three dummy variables: a dummy for FIRCs by the United States (USFIRC), a dummy for FIRCs by other democracies (OTHERDEMFIRC), and a dummy for FIRCs by autocracies (AUTFIRC).

Finally, we code a dummy variable denoting whether the intervening democracy enacted FIRC with the aim of liberalizing the target's government. As noted above, some studies have found that democratic interventions purvey democracy only when specifically intended for this purpose. It is obviously important to code this variable based on objectives specified for an intervention by leaders beforehand rather than on the positive or negative consequences for democracy in the target. For many of our U.S. cases we relied on Peceny's coding of whether U.S. leaders adopted proliberalization or nonliberalization policies.⁶² Other cases were coded based on our reading of the secondary literature or government documents. Democratic FIRCs that sought to foster democracy in targets were coded one on the dummy variable

⁶¹ Seventeen (corresponding to +6 on the -10 to +10 version of the Polity index) is the typical threshold used to indicate a fully institutionalized democracy. Democracies account for 30 percent of FIRCs and FIRC-years.

⁶² Peceny, *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets*, 21.

PRODEMFIROC; democratic FIRC that did not seek this goal received a one on NONDEMFIROC.

It is obviously important to control for other determinants of democracy. We include variables to capture the effects of the following factors shown to be correlated with democracy in other studies:

- *Economic Development*: As noted, many democratization scholars posit a strong relationship between levels of societal wealth and democratic institutions. The usual indicator of wealth is gross domestic product per capita, but obtaining data for all countries is problematic given our extended time period. One proxy that others have used that is available for most states from 1816 to the present is the sum of states' iron and steel production and energy consumption.⁶³ These data, measured in the year prior to the year of observation, summed, and then logged, are taken from the Correlates of War National Material Capabilities data.⁶⁴ As a check on these data we also employ new historical GDP data from Carles Boix's study of economic inequality and civil war.⁶⁵
- *Time*: There is also a strong secular trend towards greater democracy over time. To account for this effect, we include a year counter for each country, starting at zero in the year it enters the dataset.⁶⁶

⁶³ Enterline and Greig, "Perfect Storms?"

⁶⁴ Available at <http://www.correlatesofwar.org>. When only iron and steel production or energy consumption is available, we use that figure.

⁶⁵ Carles Boix, "Economic Roots of Civil Wars and Revolutions in the Contemporary World," *World Politics* 60, no. 3 (April 2008): 390-437. Boix uses two different measures of GDP: one takes actual GDP figures from the post-World War II era and interpolates them backwards; the other takes GDP figures for selected countries extending back into the nineteenth century and assigns them to neighboring countries. Although neither procedure is optimal, both yield highly similar results, and these results are also similar to the COW measure described above.

⁶⁶ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, "Intervention and Democracy."

- *Previous Experience with Democracy*: States that have had democratic institutions at some point in the past may be more likely to transition to democracy in the future for a variety of reasons. Previous democratic regimes may have laid an institutional foundation, such that states can make use of structures that already exist rather than build entirely new institutions. Populations that have had a taste of democracy previously may yearn for it again and be more likely to overthrow despotic rulers who deny them popular sovereignty. Capturing this effect empirically is not straightforward, since coding a dummy variable if a state passes a certain threshold for democracy will mostly tell us the effect of states that are already democratic. We follow Pickering and Peceny by coding a variable that counts the number of years since the state last equaled or exceeded 17 on the Polity index, the assumption being that the more time that has elapsed since a country experienced democracy, the more difficult it will be to effect a transition.⁶⁷
- *British Colony*: Great Britain frequently bequeathed its former colonies with democratic institutions upon decolonization. One might expect, therefore, that such countries would have higher levels of democracy. We include a dummy variable to indicate countries that are former British colonies.⁶⁸
- *Ethnic Fractionalization*: Democracy may be more difficult to sustain in countries that are more diverse in terms of ethnicity and religion. We include the ethnolinguistic fractionalization index to detect any negative effect of social

⁶⁷ Pickering and Peceny, "Forging Democracy at Gunpoint," 547-48.

⁶⁸ Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development*. This variable is also coded one for states that Britain administered under a League of Nations mandate, such as Israel and Iraq.

heterogeneity on democracy. These figures are available for a limited time period.⁶⁹

- *Initial Level of Democracy*: Finally, because states' regime types exhibit a fair degree of inertia, we also control for each state's Polity score in the year of observation.
- *Interactive Effects*: To assess whether FIRC carried out by democracies are contingent on the target state's level of economic development or ethnic heterogeneity, we generate interaction terms by multiplying our measures of these factors by DEMFIRC.

The method of analysis we employ is cross-sectional time-series regression with fixed effects to control for unmeasured features of states that remain constant over time.⁷⁰ We check for robustness by estimating random effects models as well.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As a first approach to assessing the effect of foreign-imposed regime change on subsequent levels of democracy in countries that are targets of such intervention, Table 2 shows the average Polity scores of FIRC targets by whether the intervening state was a democracy or an autocracy over four time periods: up to two years post-FIRC; FIRC plus five years; FIRC plus ten years; and between ten and twenty years post-FIRC. The first column provides average democracy scores in the year prior to FIRC as a reference. Recall that we code Polity scores on a scale from

⁶⁹ Commonly employed in studies of civil war after 1945, ELF is actually measured twice, in 1961 and 1985. Countries for which data are available thus have at most two values on ELF. We extend the earlier measure of ELF back to 1920 under the assumption that ethnic composition changes slowly. For a precedent for this, see Enterline and Greig, "Against All Odds?" Data are from Philip G. Roeder, "Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization Indices, 1961 and 1985," February 16, 2001, <http://weber.ucsd.edu/~proeder/elf.htm>.

⁷⁰ Bueno de Mesquita and Downs, "Intervention and Democracy," 639. Because of this feature, we omit the variable for British colonial legacy—which is a constant for each state—from the initial set of regressions.

1 to 21, and thus 11 represents 0 on the original Polity scale (-10 to +10). It is important to note at the outset that there is a selection effect in where intervention occurs: the mean Polity score for states targeted for FIRC in the year before FIRC occurs (7.95) is 11 percent lower than the average Polity score for states that did not experience intervention (10.28).⁷¹ As shown in Table 2, this bias is more pronounced for targets of autocratic FIRCs; average Polity scores for victims of democratic FIRCs are one point higher than states targeted by autocracies.⁷² States that experience FIRC, in other words, are less democratic on average before-hand compared to countries that do not suffer FIRC, a finding which lends credence to the view that states tend to intervene in places with poor prospects for democratization. The average target of a democratic FIRC, for example, scores less than 9 on the 21-point Polity index.

[Table 2 about here]

As the numbers in Table 2 illustrate, foreign-imposed regime change by democracies results in small increases in the level of democracy in target states; these increases are relatively minor in the immediate aftermath of FIRC but grow larger over time. Two years after a democracy undertakes a FIRC, for example, the Polity scores of targets rise on average by 1.8 points—about 9 percent—over the mean Polity score of these countries in the year before intervention. This gap opens to 2.3 points after five years and 2.45 points after ten years; by twenty years post-FIRC the difference in average Polity scores reaches 3.3, an increase of over 15 percent. By way of comparison, states that are targeted for FIRC by an autocracy experience hardly any change in level of democracy in the twenty years that follow, hovering between 7.5 and 8 on the Polity index. T-tests for differences in means show that the level of post-FIRC

⁷¹ A t-test for difference in means shows this difference to be statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

⁷² T-tests reveal that average Polity scores for targets of autocratic FIRCs are significantly different from Polity scores of states that experience no intervention. The differences between democratic FIRCs and autocratic FIRCs, and between democratic FIRCs and states without intervention, are not significant.

democratization achieved in interventions by democracies is always significantly greater than when autocracies undertake FIRC. Moreover, at each interval measured, the average Polity score of states that experience democratic FIRCs is significantly greater than the mean pre-FIRC Polity scores in these cases. Compared to states that do not experience FIRC, however, these gains are less impressive: at two and five years post-FIRC, the difference between states where democracies intervened and states where no intervention occurred is not significant.⁷³ The difference between the two groups is significant after ten and twenty years, but the percentage increase in Polity score—4 and 7 percent, respectively—is relatively minor.⁷⁴ Victims of autocratic FIRCs, by contrast, have significantly lower Polity scores than non-FIRC states at every interval measured.

These simple tests indicate that although targets of FIRC by democracies enjoy a statistically significant liberalizing benefit from these interventions, the overall effect is modest: targets on average gain at most about 15 percent over pre-FIRC levels of democracy, and about 7 percent compared to states that experience no intervention. Moreover, even after incorporating these gains, targets of democratic FIRCs remain solidly autocratic: the maximum gain in democracy places these states just below 12 on the Polity scale.⁷⁵ These bivariate tests suggest that the effect of democratic FIRCs is positive but not substantively large. They also suggest that democratic interveners target relatively hard cases for democratization, which supports our decision to address selection bias via matching below.

Let us now turn to the multivariate analysis where we are able to control for several important determinants of democratization. Before examining the differential effects of FIRC by democracies versus autocracies, let us first observe the impact of FIRC on its own. Model 1 in

⁷³ At FIRC plus two years, the p-value for difference in means is 0.77; at five years it is 0.21.

⁷⁴ P-values for differences in means are 0.04 at ten years post-FIRC, and < 0.001 at twenty years.

⁷⁵ This corresponds to +1 on the -10 to +10 version of the index.

Table 3 shows that states that experience FIRC drop on average about three-tenths of point on the Polity index in the period ten to twenty years afterward, although the significance of this effect is borderline ($p = 0.063$). Holding the other variables in the model constant at their mean values, shifting FIRC from zero to one lowers the predicted value of the dependent variable from 10.44 to 10.16, a small decrease of 1.3 percent on the 21-point scale. As shown in Figure 1, the other variables in the model perform as expected: the longer a state has been in existence, for example, the more democratic it is. An increase in the year counter variable from one to fifty raises the predicted level of democracy nearly one point, an increase of 4.6 percent. A shift in our measure of economic development from one standard deviation below to one standard deviation above the mean results in an increase of 2.78 points on Polity, a 13 percent improvement in level of democracy. The more distant temporally a state becomes from any previous experience with democracy, the less democratic it is likely to be in the future. An increase from one year to fifty years on this variable results in a 2.4 percent decline in target democracy. Finally, a state's level of democracy at time $t-1$ is strongly and positively associated with its Polity score at time $t+10$: each one-point increase is associated with a further 2 percent increase ten years later.

[Table 3 and Figure 1 about here]

Model 2 turns to the main question addressed in this paper: what is the effect of foreign-imposed regime change by democracies on the subsequent development of democracy in targets of intervention? The coefficients on the two variables of interest take opposite signs: AUTFIRC is negative and significant, lowering targets' Polity scores 2.3 percent from 10.44 to 9.96 (see Figure 1). The effect of DEMFIRC is positive but does not approach significance. States that experience a FIRC at the hands of a democracy on average register a barely perceptible gain in their own level of democracy of less than 1 percent from 10.44 to 10.61. In other words, targets

of democratic FIRC are firmly autocratic when they undergo intervention, and experiencing FIRC at the hands of a democracy hardly changes that status.

This basic result is robust to different coding procedures, estimation techniques, lag structures, and the inclusion of additional variables. On coding procedures, a slightly different approach would be to use a continuous measure of intervener democracy rather than a dichotomous one. Model 3 shows the results for a specification that includes a dummy for FIRC from t_0 to $t+10$ and a variable that captures the intervener's Polity score, also coded for the year of FIRC and the following ten years. This approach yields substantively similar results. The predicted value of the target state's level of democracy with these two variables of interest set to zero (and the other variables at their means) is 10.44. Shifting the variable for FIRC to one and setting intervener democracy to one lowers the predicted value to 9.78, a drop of about 3 percent. This is the substantive effect of FIRC by the most autocratic states. Shifting FIRC from zero to one and intervener democracy from 1 to 21—which captures the effect of FIRC by the most democratic states—increases targets' mean level of democracy to 10.59. In other words, states that experience a FIRC at the hands of a fully consolidated democracy receive almost no democratic benefit compared to states that do not experience intervention.⁷⁶ This result is virtually the same as that produced above with dummy variables.

In terms of estimation techniques, the results reported above are not dependent on assuming fixed effects rather than random effects. The substantive impact of FIRC generated from random effects models is nearly identical to that produced by the models with fixed effects. For example, in model 4, estimated with random effects, the predicted Polity score of a state that does not experience FIRC ten to twenty years later is 10.39. Experiencing a FIRC by a

⁷⁶ The gain is seven-tenths of one percent.

democracy nudges this figure up to 10.57, a change that is not significant. The assumption of fixed effects thus does not drive the results.⁷⁷

We also experimented with alternative time lags for the dependent variable. For example, we lagged states' Polity scores five years rather than ten, and employed five-year dummies for DEMFIRC and AUTFIRC, which jointly capture the effect of FIRC on democracy between five and ten years later. This analysis hardly altered the basic results, yielding a coefficient for DEMFIRC of 0.09 ($pr = 0.68$).

Finally, the results are not sensitive to the inclusion of additional variables. Two common factors often included in studies of democracy are whether the country in question was a British colony, and the degree of ethnic or religious heterogeneity of the population. Because data on heterogeneity is available for a restricted time period, we first add a variable denoting whether a country was ever a colony of Britain. Because this variable is a constant for each country it is necessary to dispense with fixed effects; models 5 and 6 thus employ random effects. Model 5 shows that contrary to expectations, British rule is not associated with a significant increase in democracy for countries that experienced it. In terms of post-FIRC democratization, the inclusion of the variable for British colonies has essentially no impact on the coefficients or the magnitude of the effect. When ethno-linguistic fractionalization is included in model 6, this variable significantly depresses democratization: shifting this variable from one standard deviation below to one above the mean reduces target Polity scores 3.1 percent. Interestingly, the coefficient for British colony rises sharply and becomes a positive and significant predictor of democratization in model 6. This may be because the ELF indicator is coded only from 1920 onward, and roughly 95 percent of the state-years of British colonies occur in this period.

⁷⁷ Experiencing a FIRC by a nondemocracy lowers targets' Polity scores on average to 9.83, a (significant) drop of nearly 3 percent.

Shedding the previous one hundred years reveals the positive democratic legacy of British rule.⁷⁸ The effect of democratic FIRC also becomes positive and significant in model 6. The predicted level of democracy—with control variables set at their means and modes and the two FIRC-related variables held at zero—is higher after 1920 at 11.55. FIRC by an autocratic state lowers this number to 10.80, while intervention by a full democracy raises it to 12.40. Although this substantive effect is somewhat larger, the nondemocratic result of democratic intervention is wholly consistent with earlier estimates.⁷⁹

U.S. VERSUS OTHER DEMOCRATIC FIRCS

As an empirical matter, it would be interesting for students of U.S. foreign policy to know what the historical record demonstrates regarding the democratization impact of U.S. interventions as opposed to interventions by other democracies. The United States has been the leading practitioner of FIRC since 1816, toppling twenty-one leaders in nineteen separate cases, compared to nine by other democracies.⁸⁰ To answer this question, we recoded DEMFIRC into two separate variables: USFIRC and OTHERDEMFIRC, each coded one in the year of FIRC and for the following ten years. Along with AUTFIRC, these variables are inserted into our base equation; results are shown in model 7 of Table 3. As should be evident from the table, FIRCS by neither the U.S. nor by other democracies exert much of an effect on target democracy: both coefficients are small and insignificant. Only autocratic FIRCS exert a significant effect, reducing the target's Polity score by half a point. FIRCS by the United States, in short, are not much

⁷⁸ That said, British colony is also positive and significant if the sample is restricted to the years *before* 1920. The reason it is not significant in the whole sample is thus unclear.

⁷⁹ This is also true if the sample is restricted to post-1945, where democratic FIRCS increase targets' Polity scores on average from 11.71 to 12.64.

⁸⁰ In Guatemala in 1954, the United States is coded as removing three leaders in quick succession: Jacobo Arbenz, Carlos Enrique Diaz, and Elfegio Monzon.

different from democratic FIRC's generally: they do no harm on average to targets' level of democracy, but they don't do much good either. States that experience FIRC's at the hands of democracies remain solidly autocratic.

DEMOCRATIZING FIRC'S

Some scholars have suggested that FIRC's undertaken by democracies with the specific intent to liberalize target governments have the capability to effect positive democratic change. We evaluated this argument by dividing democratic FIRC's into two types based on whether they intended to foster democratization in the target. Results are shown in model 8 and do not offer much support for the hypothesis. Although PRODEM FIRC on average increases the Polity scores of targets roughly two-thirds of a point in the ensuing years (from 10.44 to 11.10), this effect fails to obtain significance at the 10 percent level. Interventions by democracies without specific liberalizing intent exert a slight, insignificant, negative effect.

CONDITIONAL EFFECTS

Is the effect of foreign-imposed regime change on democratization conditional on factors like economic development and ethnic heterogeneity? To test for the possibility that democratic FIRC's are more likely to lead to liberalization in wealthier states, we generated an interaction term, multiplying DEM FIRC by the log of iron and steel production and energy consumption. The results are shown in model 9 of Table 3. Because the substantive effect and statistical significance of interaction terms are not easily discerned by examining coefficients and standard

errors, we use graphs to evaluate these terms.⁸¹ Figure 2 shows the marginal effect of democratic FIRC on target states' ensuing levels of democracy as targets become more economically developed over the range of this variable for targets of democratic interventions. The solid line indicates the marginal effect of DEMFIRC; the dotted lines graph the 95 percent confidence interval. The effect is significant when these dotted lines are each above (or below) zero. If the hypothesis that FIRC leads to better democratization outcomes in more developed states were correct, the line in Figure 2 should be upward-sloping. As is evident from the figure, however, contrary to expectations the marginal effect of DEMFIRC decreases as targets become wealthier. This effect is small and is never significant, though, so we cannot conclude that FIRCs by democracies actually increase the level of democracy in poor targets and reduce it in rich states.

[Figure 2 about here]

Evidence from a different indicator for economic development suggests that the effect of democratic FIRCs does indeed depend on the level of wealth in target states in the hypothesized direction. Figure 3 shows the marginal effect of DEMFIRC as GDP per capita increases. Needless to say, it paints a radically different picture of the relationship between post-FIRC liberalization and intervener democracy than we saw using iron and steel production and energy consumption as our metric of economic development. Figure 3 shows that states with per capita income of less than \$1,100 to \$1,200 per year—like Haiti in 1915 and 1994—suffer a statistically significant reduction in level of democracy in the years following a FIRC by a democratic intervener. States at the bottom of the income spectrum—roughly \$400 per year—can on average experience a democratic loss of nearly 2.3 points on the Polity index, a drop of 11 percent. Once targets exceed roughly \$2,500 in GDP per capita, however, a reversal occurs and

⁸¹ Thomas Brambor, William Roberts Clark, and Matt Golder, "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses," *Political Analysis* 14, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 66-69; and Bear F. Braumoeller, "Hypothesis Testing and Multiplicative Interaction Terms," *International Organization* 58, no. 4 (Fall 2004): 809.

FIRC by a democracy begins to significantly increase subsequent levels of democracy.⁸² In short, although the evidence is inconsistent, there is some support for the argument that FIRCs by democracies reduce democracy in poorer states but enhance democracy in wealthier states.⁸³

[Figure 3 about here]

The evidence is clearer with regard to the mediating effect of ethno-linguistic fractionalization (see model 10). Figure 4 graphs the marginal effect of DEMFIRC on democratization in the target as ethnic heterogeneity increases. The figure provides stark evidence that democratization outcomes are better when target state populations are highly homogeneous. States that are at or near zero on the ELF index (the most homogenous) improve on average about 2.7 points on the Polity index after experiencing a democratic FIRC, an increase of 13 percent.⁸⁴ This democratic benefit declines and becomes insignificant at about the midway point of ELF. As heterogeneity continues to increase, the effect of democratic FIRC becomes negative and eventually attains significance in the most heterogeneous states (0.96 and above).⁸⁵ States in this category drop more than 6 percent on the Polity index following a FIRC by a democracy. The evidence thus supports the conjecture that the liberalizing effects of FIRCs undertaken by democracies are contingent upon the ethnic diversity of targets.

[Figure 4 about here]

⁸² A different coding of GDP per capita, also taken from Boix, yields a similarly upward-sloping line, but the effect is never statistically significant. These results will be made available in the online appendix.

⁸³ We believe GDP per capita is a better indicator of what we are trying to measure, which favors placing more confidence in the second set of results. This must be discounted, however, by concerns about the quality of the data highlighted above.

⁸⁴ Japan's ELF score in 1945, for example, was 0.015.

⁸⁵ Targets of democratic FIRCs that are above the mean on ELF include Guatemala and Indonesia.

ACCOUNTING FOR SELECTION EFFECTS

One possibility that previous studies have neglected is that the democratizing effects (or lack thereof) of democratic interventions are tainted by selection bias. The key insight is that instances of FIRC are not randomly distributed. It may be that the countries where intervention is most likely to occur are experiencing some kind of distress, such as protest, armed rebellion, or defeat in war, that make democratization more difficult, or that they have fewer preconditions for democracy. In other words, democracies are likely to intervene in places where democratic reform is the most difficult, and thus the positive effects of democratic intervention may be masked by the inhospitable environment. If democratic FIRCs occurred disproportionately in the most difficult circumstances, estimates of the effect on subsequent democratization would be biased downward.

To deal with this possibility we adopt a matching strategy. Much observational research is highly model-dependent because the treated cases (in this study, those states that experience FIRC) are very different along several parameters than the control cases (states that did not experience FIRC). As Ho and colleagues put it, “the presence of control units far outside the range of the treated units” forces statistical models to extrapolate “over a range of data that do not include treated and control units,” making estimation “exquisitely sensitive to minor modifications in the statistical model.”⁸⁶ One way to address this issue without introducing bias is to select control cases based solely on how well they correspond to treated cases on other (pretreatment) independent variables associated with democratization.⁸⁷ “The idea,” as Gilligan and Sergenti write, “is to compare cases where all other causal variables are as similar as

⁸⁶ Daniel E. Ho, Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Elizabeth A. Stuart, “Matching as Nonparametric Preprocessing for Reducing Model Dependence in Parametric Causal Inference,” *Political Analysis* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 211.

⁸⁷ Using variables that are a consequence of the treatment introduces bias; all variables used for matching must be temporally prior to the treatment, in this case, FIRC.

possible so that any difference between the cases can be attributed to the treatment.”⁸⁸ Using this procedure, we construct a dataset in which the set of FIRC cases are matched with a set of cases that on the whole look very similar in terms of their preintervention values across a range of factors, except that these cases did not experience FIRC.⁸⁹ These factors include the number of years they have been in the dataset, economic development, time since previous experience with democracy, Polity score, population, region, ethnic heterogeneity, and British colonial legacy. This procedure yielded a dataset with highly similar distributions across treatment and control variables.

Three points about our matching procedure bear emphasizing. First, to avoid the possibility that non-FIRC years from states that experienced FIRC at some point in their history would show up in our control group, we dropped all such years prior to performing matching. Often the closest matches for state X in year Y come from state X in year Y-1, but if states that endure FIRC are systematically different than states that do not, including state-years from countries that undergo FIRC at some point could introduce bias into our control cases. Second, to avoid the potential for post-treatment bias, we use FIRC only in the year that it occurred as our treatment variable rather than FIRC, t0 – t10. Using the latter could introduce post-treatment bias if, for example, FIRC affected a state’s level of economic development. In that case, matching would be performed using a variable the values of which were (at least partially) a consequence of FIRC. To avoid this possibility we matched on the state-years in which FIRCs took place. After the matching procedure was completed, we added the ten years following each case of FIRC back to the dataset and did the same for each control case selected by the matching

⁸⁸ Gilligan and Sergenti, “Do UN Interventions Cause Peace?” 91.

⁸⁹ As with most applications, exact matches for most variables were not available in our data (but see our discussion of regional variables below). However, it is only necessary for the *distributions* of treatment and control cases to be matched very closely. Ho et al., “Matching as Nonparametric Preprocessing,” 212. Matching performed on our data yields very similar distributions, as shown below.

algorithm.⁹⁰ Third, we prioritized achieving exact matches on five dummy variables corresponding to different regional groupings.⁹¹ Finding regional matched pairs helps control for factors common to different regions that might be relevant to democratization, such as shared cultural characteristics. Of the various matching techniques we tried, only one-to-one genetic matching with replacement yielded perfect matches for these regional variables.⁹²

Table 4 shows the balance statistics for the matched dataset of 1,396 observations. Preprocessing clearly paid major dividends with these data: balance on every variable save two improved more than 73 percent, and the overall balance between treated and control cases improved nearly 93 percent.

[Table 4 about here]

Because matching is not exact, it is still necessary to run a multivariate regression model rather than rely on a difference-in-means test. Model 11 in Table 3 replicates model 2, which differentiates the effects of FIRC by democratic and nondemocratic interveners.⁹³ Model 11 clearly shows that selection effects are not suppressing the positive effect of FIRC by democracies: the coefficient is now negative but still statistically indistinguishable from zero, showing that democratic intervention has little effect on subsequent levels of democracy in

⁹⁰ In some cases it was not possible to add ten years following each control case, either because the algorithm selected years from the same state that were less than ten years apart, or because it chose a state-year close to 1998, the last year for which the dependent variable is coded. The number of control cases is thus not the same as the number of treatment cases.

⁹¹ The five regional groupings are Europe, North Africa/Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

⁹² Matching was performed using the *MatchIt* program. See Ho et al., “Matching as Nonparametric Preprocessing.” One-to-one nearest neighbor matching (without replacement) that discarded observations outside the common support of the propensity score actually yielded the best overall improvement in balance (99.9 percent). Examining the matched pairs, however, revealed that cases of FIRC were paired with control cases that were very distant both geographically and temporally (the Haitian FIRC of 1915, for example, was paired with Liberia in 1950, while Guatemala 1954 was matched with Nepal 1892). For this reason we decided to use the dataset generated by genetic matching, which produced slightly less impressive balance statistics but more plausible individual matches. Haiti in 1915 is matched with Venezuela 1943; Guatemala 1954 is paired with Bolivia 1935. The empirical results from dataset created by nearest neighbor matching also yield an insignificant estimate for DEMFIRC.

⁹³ It is necessary to use random effects models because FIRC is now essentially a country-level fixed effect because we excluded all non-FIRC years for states that experienced FIRC. Because we have matched on the other variables in the model, coefficients other than those for DEMFIRC10 and AUTFIRC10 should be disregarded.

targets.⁹⁴ Substantively, holding other variables constant at their means and modes, democratic FIRCs reduce the average predicted level of democracy in states that experience intervention from 9.84 to 9.41. Now that we have identified a set of control cases most similar to our treatment cases, autocratic FIRCs are no longer significant either. Other tests (not shown) reveal that U.S. FIRCs and FIRCs by other democracies are each insignificant. In an interesting development that warrants further investigation, however, FIRCs explicitly intended to liberalize targets exert a negative and significant effect on target democratization in the matched sample, reducing subsequent Polity scores from 9.84 to 8.18.⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this paper we highlighted the gap between optimistic policy pronouncements by democratic leaders regarding the possibility of spreading democracy and the rather pessimistic conclusions of scholarly studies of the reality of forceful democracy promotion. These studies, however, have tended to use inexact proxies of their independent variables. We therefore examine the effect of foreign-imposed regime change—specifically FIRC by democracies—on subsequent levels of democracy in states targeted for such intervention.

Our findings provide both support for, and add further nuance to, those of existing studies. In support of the pessimistic view, we find that on average, states that experience FIRCs at the hands of democracies remain firmly rooted in the authoritarian segment of the Polity index. Adjusting for possible selection bias in the states that are targeted for intervention, states that have their governments removed by a democracy gain no significant democratic benefit

⁹⁴ We also ran the same analysis described above using DEMFIRC as the treatment. This analysis yielded an insignificant result for DEMFIRC10. Details will be provided in the online appendix.

⁹⁵ Interventions where democratization is not a specific goal have no significant effect.

compared to similar states that do not experience intervention.⁹⁶ In support of the argument that success depends on a set of preconditions favorable to democracy, we show that the effect of democratic intervention changes depending on levels of economic development and ethnic heterogeneity in the target. One of our proxies for economic development suggests that states that are relatively poor lose ground on the Polity index following a democratic FIRC, whereas relatively wealthy countries receive a boost in their democratic trajectory. Similarly, FIRCs by democracies lead to better democratization outcomes in ethnically homogeneous states, while the opposite is true in more heterogeneous states.

Our findings that democratization outcomes vary depending on wealth and population heterogeneity of target states also challenge the selectorate argument that democratic statesmen have no incentives to install democracy in countries where they intervene, and, as a rule, prefer to install autocrats. If democratic leaders uniformly preferred to empower unaccountable leaders, there would be little variation in subsequent democracy across states with different domestic preconditions. Clearly there are some cases when leaders of democracies find it in their interest (or their country's interest) to democratize other states. Our findings beg the question of under what circumstances do democratic leaders seek to impart democracy when they intervene? We readily agree that in many of the cases of FIRC by democracies, the intervener showed little interest in effecting real democratization in the target. Yet in many other cases, there was at least some effort put forth to liberalize the targeted country; sometimes an enormous effort was put forth. Our results indicate that these efforts were more likely to meet with success when the target was wealthy and ethnically homogeneous. These kinds of cases—where intervening democracies (at least officially) intend to promote democracy when they effect regime change—

⁹⁶ Our study is more optimistic than that of Easterly, Satyanath, and Berger, however, who conclude that intervention by both democracies and autocracies has a significant deleterious effect on target democracy. Easterly, Satyanath, and Berger, "Superpower Interventions and their Consequences for Democracy."

seem increasingly to be the norm. If democracy still fails to take root in places like Afghanistan and Iraq despite the good intentions of the intervener, such outcomes would support the poor preconditions argument over the selectorate argument.

Finally, these findings bear on several aspects of the debate over forcible regime change as a policy tool to promote democracy. First, evidence from past experience suggests that imposed regime change by democratic states is unlikely to be an effective means of spreading democracy. These regimes rarely become institutionalized democracies after ten years and exhibit no improvement when compared to similar regional states that did not experience intervention, although certain prior conditions may increase the odds of success. Second, the victims of intervention on average are likely to end up in the center of the Polity scale, containing elements of both democracy and autocracy (sometimes referred to as “anocracies”). Several scholars have argued that mixed regimes or partially democratized states may be more war-prone (both externally and internally) and destabilizing than fully autocratic states.⁹⁷ If so, no democratization may be preferable to partial democratization in many cases. Third, any democratic improvements in a state’s political system achieved through military intervention must be weighed against the costs. In Iraq, for example, the U.S. Department of Defense reports the number of Coalition military fatalities at 4,717 (of which 4,399 are American), while conservative estimates place the total number of Iraqi civilian deaths from violence since 2003 at around 96,000.⁹⁸ Stiglitz and Bilmes estimate the total financial cost of the war at \$4.5 trillion,

⁹⁷ See, for example, Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing To Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005). For a critique of the Mansfield and Snyder thesis, see Vipin Narang and Rebecca M. Nelson, “Who Are These Belligerent Democratizers? Reassessing the Impact of Democratization on War,” *International Organization* 63, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 357-379. On the civil war-proneness of mixed regimes, see Håvard Hegre, Tanja Ellingsen, Scott Gates, and Nils Petter Gleditsch, “Toward a Democratic Civil Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 1 (March 2001): 33-48.

⁹⁸ Data on Coalition fatalities are available at <http://icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx>. On Iraqi civilian fatalities, see <http://www.iraqbodycount.org>. For a recent analysis based on this data, see Madelyn Hsiao-Rei Hicks et al., “The

including the cost of funding military operations, interest payments on the debt incurred, and long-term medical care for injured veterans.⁹⁹ At the same time, according to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* survey, Iraq moved from a score of 7 in political rights in 2003 (the most oppressive) to a score of 6 in 2010. Even if democratic gains are possible under some circumstances, military intervention may not be worth the price.

Weapons That Kill Civilians — Deaths of Children and Noncombatants in Iraq, 2003–2008,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 360, no. 16 (April 2009): 1585-1588.

⁹⁹ Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes, *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2008).

Table 1. Cases Of Foreign-Imposed Regime Change, 1816-2008			
TARGET	INTERVENER	YEAR	LEADER REMOVED
Two Sicilies	Austria	1821	Revolutionaries
Spain	France	1823	Provisional Regency
Modena	Austria	1831	Pellegrino Nobili
Parma	Austria	1831	Conte Filippo Linati
Portugal	Quadruple Alliance	1834	Miguel I
Afghanistan	UK	1839	Dost Mohammed
Tuscany	Austria	1849	Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi
Saxony	Prussia	1849	Gustav Friedrich Held
Baden	Prussia	1849	Lorenz Peter Brentano
Roman Republic	France/Austria/Sicily/Spain	1849	Triumvirate
Argentina	Brazil	1852	Juan Manuel de Rosas
Honduras	Guatemala	1855	Trinidad Cabañas
Tuscany	Piedmont/France	1859	Leopoldo II
Parma	Piedmont/France	1859	Roberto I
Modena	Piedmont/France	1859	Francesco V
Mexico	France	1863	Benito Juarez
Honduras	Guatemala/Nicaragua	1863	José Francisco Montes
El Salvador	Guatemala	1863	Gerardo Barrios
Paraguay	Brazil	1869	Francisco Solano Lopez
France	Prussia	1870	Napoleon III
El Salvador	Honduras	1871	Francisco Dueñas
Honduras	El Salvador/Guatemala	1872	José Maria Medina
Honduras	El Salvador/Guatemala	1874	Celeo Arias
El Salvador	Guatemala	1876	Andres del Valle
Honduras	Guatemala	1876	Ponciano Leiva
Afghanistan	UK	1879	Sher Ali
Afghanistan	UK	1879	Yakub Khan
Peru	Chile	1881	Nicolas Pierola
Peru	Chile	1881	Francisco Garcia Calderon
Peru	Chile	1882	Lizardo Montero
Honduras	Nicaragua	1894	Domingo Vasquez
Honduras	Nicaragua	1907	Manuel Bonilla
Korea	Japan	1907	Yi Hyong
<i>Nicaragua</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1909</i>	<i>Zelaya</i>
<i>Nicaragua</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1910</i>	<i>Madriz</i>
<i>Honduras</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1911</i>	<i>Davila</i>
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1912</i>	<i>Eladio Victoria</i>
<i>Mexico</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>Huerta</i>
Belgium	Germany	1914	Charles, Baron de Broqueville
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1914</i>	<i>Jose Bordas Valdez</i>
<i>Haiti</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1915</i>	<i>Revolutionary Committee of Safety</i>
Serbia	Austria	1915	King Alexander
Albania	Italy	1916	Esat Pashe Toptani
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1916</i>	<i>Francisco Henriquez</i>
Montenegro	Austria	1916	Nikola I
<i>Greece</i>	<i>UK/France</i>	<i>1917</i>	<i>King Constantine I</i>
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>UK/France/U.S.</i>	<i>1918</i>	<i>Von Faulkenhausen</i>
Hungary	Romania	1919	Bela Kun
Mongolia	USSR	1925	Elbek-Dorzhi Rinchino
China	Japan	1928	Chang Tso-lin
Ethiopia	Italy	1936	Haile Selassie

TARGET	INTERVENER	YEAR	LEADER REMOVED
China	Japan	1937	Chiang Kai-shek
Albania	Italy	1939	King Zog
Norway	Germany	1940	Nygaardsvold
Luxembourg	Germany	1940	Dupong
Netherlands	Germany	1940	De Geer
Belgium	Germany	1940	Pierlot
<i>Ethiopia</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>King of Italy</i>
Yugoslavia	Germany	1941	King Peter II
Greece	Germany	1941	Tsouderos
Iran	UK/USSR	1941	Reza Khan
<i>Iraq</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>Rashid Ali</i>
Denmark	Germany	1943	Scavenius
<i>France</i>	<i>U.S./UK</i>	<i>1944</i>	<i>Laval</i>
Bulgaria	USSR	1944	Cyril
Hungary	USSR	1944	Miklós Horthy
Romania	USSR	1944	Ion Antonescu
Hungary	USSR	1945	Major Szalasi
<i>Norway</i>	<i>U.S./UK</i>	<i>1945</i>	<i>Vidkun Quisling</i>
Czechoslovakia	USSR	1945	Emil Hacha
<i>Germany</i>	<i>U.S./UK/USSR</i>	<i>1945</i>	<i>Admiral Doenitz</i>
<i>Japan</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1945</i>	<i>Suzuki Kantaro</i>
Romania	USSR	1947	King Michael
<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Netherlands</i>	<i>1948</i>	<i>Sukarno</i>
<i>Iran</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1953</i>	<i>Mohammed Mossadeq</i>
<i>Guatemala</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1954</i>	<i>Jacobo Arbenz</i>
<i>Guatemala</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1954</i>	<i>Carlos Enrique Diaz</i>
<i>Guatemala</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1954</i>	<i>Elfegio Monzon</i>
Hungary	USSR	1956	Imre Nagy
<i>Congo</i>	<i>Belgium</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>Patrice Lumumba</i>
<i>Republic of Vietnam</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1963</i>	<i>Ngo Dinh Diem</i>
Gabon	France	1964	Jean-Hilaire Aubaume
Czechoslovakia	USSR	1968	Alexander Dubček
Czechoslovakia	USSR	1968	Ludvik Svoboda
<i>Chile*</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>Salvador Allende</i>
Cambodia	Vietnam	1979	Pol Pot
Uganda	Tanzania	1979	Idi Amin
<i>Central African Republic</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>1979</i>	<i>Jean-Bedel Bokassa</i>
Afghanistan	USSR	1979	Hafizullah Amin
<i>Grenada</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1983</i>	<i>Hudson Austin</i>
Mongolia	USSR	1984	Yumzhagiin Tsendenbal
Afghanistan	USSR	1986	Babrak Karmal
<i>Panama</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>Manuel Noriega</i>
<i>Haiti</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>Raul Cedras</i>
<i>Comoros</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>Bob Denard</i>
Zaire/Congo	Rwanda/Uganda	1997	Joseph Mobutu
Sierra Leone	ECOWAS	1998	Jonny Koroma
<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>Mullah Omar</i>
<i>Iraq</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>Saddam Hussein</i>

NOTE: Cases denoted with an asterisk are unclear as to the extent of the foreign power's responsibility for regime change. Italics indicate FIRC's undertaken by democracies.

Table 2. Polity Scores for States that Experienced FIRC at Selected Intervals

		FIRC-1	FIRC+2	FIRC+5	FIRC+10	FIRC+20
Democratic Interveners	Average Polity Score	8.68	10.49*	10.99*	11.13*†	11.96*†
	Standard Deviation	4.63	5.56	5.97	6.39	7.27
	% Change (compared to FIRC-1)	-	8.62	11.00	11.67	15.62
	% Change (compared to no FIRC)	-7.62	0.90	3.14	3.71	6.95
	N	28	76	145	260	235
Non-Democratic Interveners	Average Polity Score	7.63†	7.48†	7.63†	7.88†	7.86†
	Standard Deviation	5.12	4.57	4.82	5.37	6.33
	% Change (compared to FIRC-1)	-	-0.70	0.00	1.19	1.10
	% Change (compared to no FIRC)	-12.62	-13.43	-12.86	-11.76	-12.57
	N	65	186	348	588	543
Average Polity Score, no FIRC		10.28	10.30	10.33	10.35	10.50

* = Average Polity score is significantly different (at or above the 95 percent level) from average Polity score before FIRC (FIRC-1).

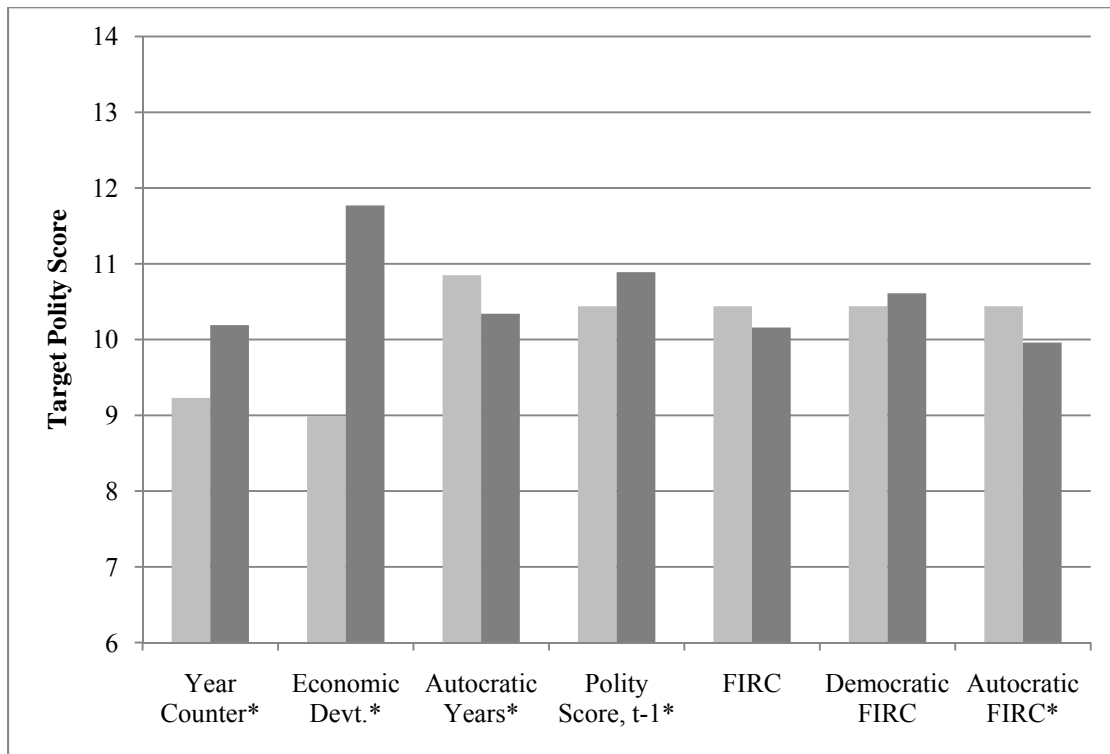
† = Average Polity score is significantly different (at or above the 95 percent level) from average Polity score for states that do not experience FIRC.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Year Counter	0.020*** (0.002)	0.019*** (0.002)	0.019*** (0.002)	0.018*** (0.001)	0.019*** (0.001)	0.039*** (0.002)	0.019*** (0.002)	0.019*** (0.002)	0.019*** (0.002)	0.082*** (0.004)	0.039*** (0.005)
Economic Development	0.337*** (0.022)	0.339*** (0.022)	0.339*** (0.022)	0.321*** (0.019)	0.316*** (0.020)	0.413*** (0.026)	0.339*** (0.022)	0.339*** (0.022)	0.341*** (0.022)	0.165*** (0.034)	0.452*** (0.101)
State Polity Score, t0	0.440*** (0.009)	0.440*** (0.009)	0.440*** (0.009)	0.485*** (0.009)	0.484*** (0.009)	0.391*** (0.012)	0.440*** (0.009)	0.440*** (0.009)	0.440*** (0.009)	0.286*** (0.012)	0.424*** (0.023)
Years since Previous Democracy	-0.010*** (0.001)	-0.010*** (0.001)	-0.010*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.008*** (0.002)	-0.010*** (0.001)	-0.010*** (0.001)	-0.011*** (0.001)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.004)
British Colony	-	-	-	-	0.476 (0.339)	1.387*** (0.352)	-	-	-	-	-
Ethnic Heterogeneity	-	-	-	-	-	-1.144* (0.489)	-	-	-	-9.292*** (1.226)	-
FIRC, t0 – t10	-0.279† (0.150)	-	-0.702** (0.247)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Democratic FIRC, t0 – t10	-	0.166 (0.263)	-	0.176 (0.264)	0.180 (0.264)	0.845** (0.318)	-	-	0.493 (0.463)	2.760*** (0.469)	-0.424 (0.628)
Autocratic FIRC, t0 – t10	-	-0.484** (0.180)	-	-0.563** (0.181)	-0.557** (0.181)	-0.756** (0.273)	-0.484** (0.180)	-0.486** (0.180)	-0.483** (0.180)	-0.233*** (0.265)	-0.450 (0.586)
FIRC × Intervener Polity Score, t0 – t10	-	-	0.041** (0.019)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U.S. FIRC, t0 – t10	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.208 (0.332)	-	-	-	-
Other Democratic FIRC, t0 – t10	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.096 (0.431)	-	-	-	-
Democratizing FIRC, t0 – t10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.656 (0.408)	-	-	-
Nondemocratizing FIRC, t0 – t10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.177 (0.342)	-	-	-
Democratic FIRC × Economic Development, t0 – t10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.054 (0.063)	-	-
Democratic FIRC × Ethnic Heterogeneity, t0 – t10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-4.284*** (1.002)	-
Constant	3.211*** (0.116)	3.216*** (0.116)	3.215*** (0.116)	2.864*** (0.186)	2.767*** (0.198)	2.112*** (0.337)	3.216*** (0.116)	3.220*** (0.116)	3.213*** (0.116)	4.761*** (0.529)	1.202† (0.706)
N	12,556	12,556	12,556	12,556	12,556	7,939	12,556	12,556	12,556	7,939	1,396
Number of Groups	178	178	178	178	178	167	178	178	178	167	85
F	1447.10***	1206.95***	1207.05***	-	-	-	1034.45***	1035.00***	1034.61***	388.38***	-
Wald Chi ²	-	-	-	8236.26***	8245.42***	3656.41***	-	-	-	-	1108.72***
R ²	0.624	0.624	0.624	0.634	0.634	0.540	0.624	0.624	0.624	0.262	0.560
Fixed or Random Effects	FE	FE	FE	RE	RE	RE	FE	FE	FE	FE	RE

Note: Cell entries are regression coefficients with panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses. † = p < 0.10; * = p < 0.05; ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001

Table 4. Summary of Balance Between Treatment and Control Cases Before and After Matching					
Variable	Mean Treated pre-and post-Matching	Mean Control pre-Matching	Mean Control post-Matching	Mean Difference post-Matching	Percent Improvement
Distance	0.028	0.012	0.027	0.001	92.77
Year Count	57.023	53.250	54.920	2.103	44.24
Economic Development	5.430	6.443	5.482	-0.051	94.93
Polity Score	8.471	10.447	8.057	0.414	79.06
Autocratic Years	40.920	32.524	43.172	-2.253	73.17
Population	8.328	8.805	8.254	0.075	84.28
ELF	0.515	0.524	0.528	-0.013	-37.62
British Colony	0.034	0.270	0.034	0.000	100.00
Europe	0.414	0.241	0.414	0.000	100.00
N. Africa/Middle East	0.034	0.146	0.034	0.000	100.00
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.103	0.200	0.103	0.000	100.00
Asia	0.138	0.181	0.138	0.000	100.00
Americas	0.310	0.231	0.310	0.000	100.00

Figure 1. Change in Target State's Predicted Polity Score Resulting from Changes in Independent Variables



NOTE: Light colored bars show the predicted value of the dependent variable with each independent variable at its low value; darker bars show the same with the independent variable at its high value. Asterisks indicate variables significant above the 95 percent level of confidence. Substantive effects for the first five variables are calculated from Table 3, model 1; the effects for democratic and autocratic FIRCs are from model 2. Dichotomous variables are shifted from zero to one. Among the continuous variables, economic development is shifted from one standard deviation below to one standard deviation above the mean; the two year-counter variables are changed from one to fifty; and Polity score is increased one point from its mean value (9.84).

Figure 2. Marginal Effect of Democratic FIRC as Target's Level of Economic Development Increases (Iron and Steel Production + Energy Consumption)

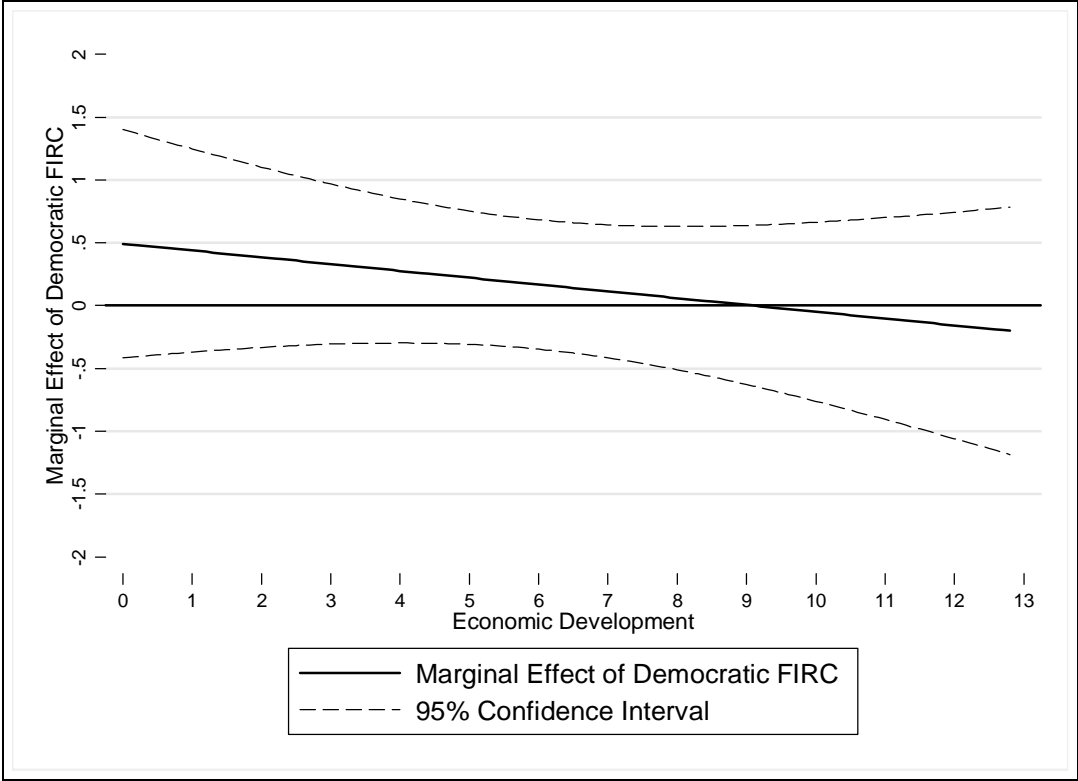


Figure 3. Marginal Effect of Democratic FIRC as Target's Level of Economic Development Increases (GDP Per Capita)

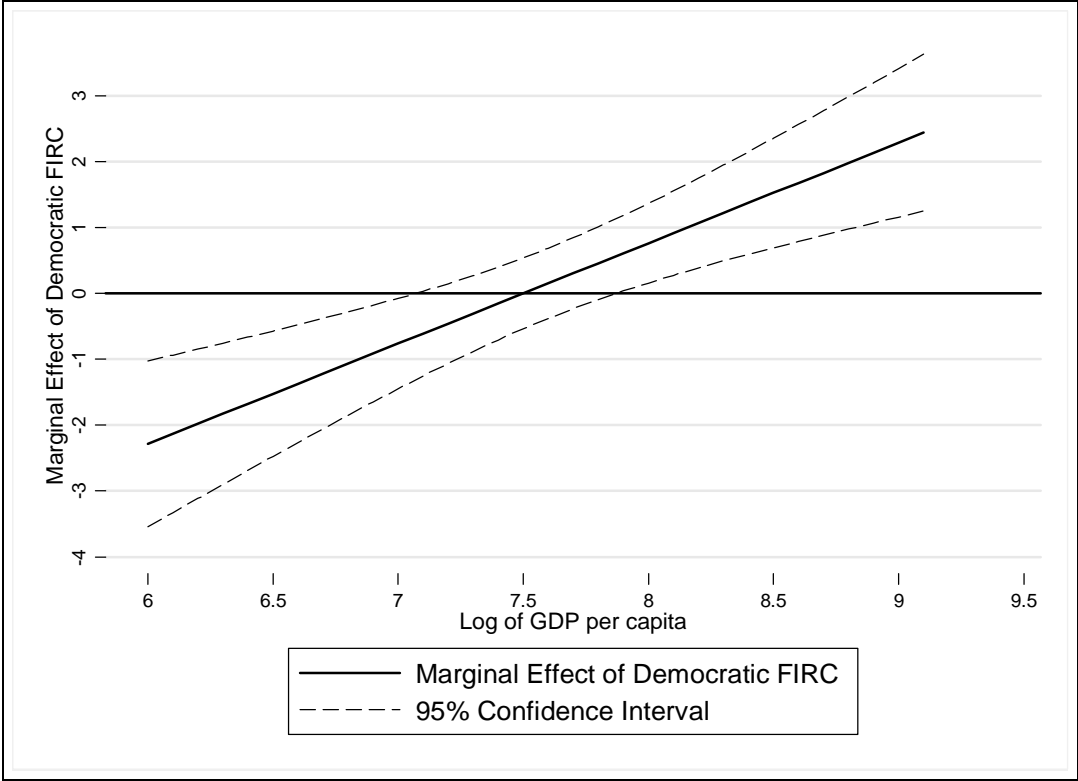


Figure 4. Marginal Effect of Democratic FIRC as Target's Level of Ethnic Heterogeneity Increases

