

State First?

An Empirical Interrogation of the Sequencing Argument

Abstract

Literature on the proper sequencing between state and democracy generally lack systematic investigations that can scrutinize the multifaceted nature of the relationship. As the first of its kind, this paper specifies and examines twelve versions of the “state first”-argument, connecting three aspects of the state – legitimate authority, fiscal capacity, and bureaucratic quality – with democratic survival and deepening, respectively. It also examines the level effects of these state aspects from the democratic transition moment and during the democratic spell. By employing the V-Dem and Historical V-Dem datasets with disaggregate indicators of the state and democracy from 1789 to 2016, the analysis spans the entire era of modern democracy. This includes both West European and postcolonial democracies, where we have adverse presumptions about “state first”-arguments. We find consistent support for only one of the twelve versions showing that low levels of bureaucratic quality in the transition year raise the risk of democratic breakdown. This implies that the status of the state at the transition is indeed important for democratic survival but the effect is limited to bureaucratic quality and we must consider the possibility that democratic contestation and bureaucratic quality are at the same time mutually re-inforcing.

Introduction

Is an established state generally needed for democracies to thrive? Based on the state-building and democratization experiences in Europe, numerous studies propose that a capable and legitimate state is essential for democratic rule to succeed (e.g. Huntington 1968; Rustow 1970; Shefter 1977; Tilly 1992; Fein 1995; Linz and Stepan 1996; Rose and Shin 2001; Fukuyama 2005; Mansfield and Snyder 2007; Møller and Skaaning 2011; Fortin 2012; Andersen et al. 2014; Ziblatt 2017). On the other hand, a number of studies, mostly based on postcolonial countries, have proclaimed that the opposite is true, namely that democratic rule has helped improve state capacities, reduced violence, and thus contributed to its own success (e.g. Lijphart 1977; Bratton and Chang 2006; Carothers 2007; Bäck and Hadenius 2008; Charron and Lapuente 2010; Stepan, Linz, and Yadav 2011; Carbone and Memoli 2015; Bartusevicius and Skaaning 2018; see also Mazzuca and Munck 2014). There is therefore no established, general finding on the so-called “sequencing” question, i.e. whether or not certain state aspects need to be in place for democracy to thrive (Mazzuca and Munck 2014).

One source of disagreement is that the theoretical understanding of the “state first”-argument varies widely. Large-n and small-n studies, classic and more recent, analyze and conflate different aspects of the state (Andersen, Møller, and Skaaning 2014; Mazzuca and Munck 2014). There is also a wide range of different understandings of the causal process that connects state and democracy and the proper counterfactual (Gjerlow et al. 2018). Some studies propose that the state yields a long-term effect (e.g. Tilly 1975); others that the effect takes hold at the moment of the democratic transition (e.g. Rustow 1970; Linz and Stepan 1996); and still others that the effect is continuous across the democratic spell (e.g. Bratton and Chang 2006; Fortin 2012). The state first-literature thus poses a number of fundamental questions about causes and effects. What aspect of the state drives the effects – is it, for instance, the state as a symbol of national unity or its capacity to deliver public goods? What type of outcome do we expect the state to precondition – democratic survival or deepening or both? What type of process do we expect to see – that the state determines democracy’s course of development already at the transition moment or that its effect kicks in only later?

We argue that it is time to answer these questions systematically in one large-n study. Extant large-n studies of the state-democracy nexus have been scarce and typically focused on recent developments or specific regions due to measures that are temporally and spatially limited

(Andersen, Møller, and Skaaning 2014; Andersen et al. 2014).¹ However, the new V-Dem and Historical V-Dem datasets (Coppedge et al. 2017) make us able to mitigate many of the shortcomings as they include disaggregate indicators of the state and democracy with a global coverage that generally goes back to 1789. This means that we may cover the entire era of modern democracy, include the disparate European and post-colonial case universes, and construct better tests of different state effects, regime outcomes, and temporal dynamics.

We thus specify and examine, based on the V-Dem and Historical V-Dem data, twelve versions of the state first-argument, connecting three aspects of the state – legitimate authority, fiscal capacity, and bureaucratic quality – with democratic survival and deepening, respectively. We also examine the level effects of these state aspects starting at the democratic transition moment and running through the democratic episode.

For sure, we do not offer a comprehensive examination of the state-democracy nexus. Our focus is on the state first-part of the sequencing debate. The counterpart of “democracy first” is a reaction that to some extent acknowledges the basic validity of the state first-argument (see e.g. Mazzuca and Munck 2014; Carbone and Memoli 2015). Thus, our analyses do not definitively determine which is more important for democratic success, a capable and legitimate state or democratic legacies. Yet, taking issue with the core claim of the sequencing debate enables us to go beyond the dichotomous nature of the debate and study the complexity of state-democracy interactions, such as the conditions under which state and democracy become mutually reinforcing (see Mazzuca and Munck 2014; Carbone and Memoli 2015).

The paper is organized as follows. First, we present the state first-literature and formulate hypotheses based on the twelve versions of the argument. Second, we present our research design, measures, and statistical models. Third, we examine all twelve hypotheses and present the results from various robustness tests. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the results in light of the sequencing question.

Theory

Just as the general state-democracy nexus may take many forms, there are numerous versions of the more specific “state first”-argument (Andersen, Møller, and Skaaning 2014; Mazzuca and Munck

¹ Many studies (e.g. Bäck and Hadenius 2008; Charron and Lapuente 2010; Andersen et al. 2014) rely on indicators from the International Country Risk Guide and the World Bank that have been criticized heavily for low validity (see Hanson and Sigman 2013). These indicators and other frequently employed ones like those from the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (e.g. Møller and Skaaning 2011) only cover recent decades.

2014). In the following order, this section addresses three issues that underlie the current theoretical confusion: the multitude of regime outcomes affected by the state, lack of attention to the different types of processes connecting state and democracy, and the conflated or isolated treatment of different aspects of the state.

Democracy as outcome

As a first step in dissecting how the state may precondition democracy, we need to clarify what state-democracy researchers mean by “democracy.” Modern, liberal democracy is a multidimensional concept consisting of popular, free and fair, regular elections for executive offices as well as everyday civil and political liberties and the rule of law. By far the most studies presenting a state first-argument focus on the electoral core of democracy, claiming that the state preconditions the holding of well-organized and peaceful elections. This particular argument comes in two versions. One is that democracy breaks down in the absence of a state, i.e. elections will be entirely abandoned or lose meaning as device for competitive selection of political leaders (e.g. Huntington 1968; Rustow 1970; Tilly 1975; Andersen et al. 2014). Another, more frequent, version emphasizes how levels of democracy cannot rise beyond a core of minimally competitive elections to include more demanding aspects of democracy (e.g. Shefter 1977; Zakaria 2003; Møller and Skaaning 2011). As Rose and Shin (2001) presents the so-called “democratization backwards” thesis, it concerns the gap between electoral and liberal democracy and how failing states have difficulties “deepening democracy beyond its electoral form” (Rose and Shin 2001: 331-332).

To provide a comprehensive evaluation of state first-arguments, we thus at least need to examine the survival of competitive elections and the deepening of democracy from competitive elections to the rule of law. While we account for both survival as well as deepening, we hold that the inclusion of the rule of law on any side of the equation runs the risk of tautological reasoning. Indeed, as much research suggests (e.g. O’Donnell 2010; Mazzuca 2010), the rule of law is a highly abstract notion that rises in the close interaction between state and regime. Thus, we exclude the rule of law from our empirical investigations and merely treat it theoretically as an outcome rather than a constituent part of state or democracy.

For much the same reason, it makes sense to stay within the boundaries of the post-1789 period when examining state first-arguments, at least in their current form. A few studies evaluate sequencing arguments based on the pre-1789 period. For instance, Møller (2015) shows that executive-constraining parliaments and judicial systems preceded state-building by centuries in

early modern Europe, thus testifying to the relevance of a (revised) democracy-first perspective. However, the bulk of state first-arguments trace effects of the state on regime outcomes after the French Revolution (see e.g. Shefter 1977; Tilly 1992). State-first arguments thus primarily apply to modern democracies by focusing on the granting of civil and political liberties and contested elections beyond a narrow political elite that followed the revolution. In other words, the causes and consequences of medieval accountability institutions is a related but slightly different research agenda.

“State first” as a process

We consider the nature of the process connecting the state and democracy, most notably the period over which it unfolds and the proper counterfactual of the state first-argument (see Gjerlow et al. 2018). This is pertinent for two reasons: First, state-democracy researchers tend to state their propositions in rather ambiguous terms that invite several theoretical interpretations (Andersen, Møller, and Skaaning 2014). Some accounts read almost as punctuated equilibria theories where the level of a given state aspect – such as low or high state capacity – at the inauguration of a democratic regime freezes and determines that regime’s chances of survival. One of the most notable examples is the often-cited *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* by Linz and Stepan (1996), which places a contested state as a key problem that structures the transition phase and democracy’s post-transitional development. Classic studies in historical sociology constitute slightly different versions that trace post-1789 democracy levels to pre-1789 legacies of state- and nation-building in medieval Europe (e.g. Rokkan 1975; Tilly 1975; Shefter 1977; Downing 1992; Ertman 1997; see also Hariri 2012). Yet, the analytical logic is basically the same, namely that the mode and success of a country’s state-building form more or less deep legacies that affect its level of democracy many years or even whole centuries down the road.

Other theories propose that state effects play out in a much shorter time span, at most a few decades or, more frequently, a few years (e.g. Bratton and Chang 2006; Møller and Skaaning 2011; Fortin 2012; Andersen et al. 2014). Here, the analytical assumption is that state capacities and structures of state legitimacy may change over the very short term, and that even relatively small changes can have significant and immediate impact on a country’s democratic development.

Taken as a whole, the literature gives the impression that there is no unified state-democracy theory. This sometimes leads to misleading interpretations of the state first-argument. For instance, Gjerlow et al. (2018) contends that a key assumption is that “autocratic leaders are

both capable and willing to develop strong and capable state institutions” (Gjerlow et al. 2018: 8). However, this conflicts with a core that all state-first accounts share at least implicitly, namely that the effect of the state is a (close to) necessary condition for democratic success. Indeed, the argument in the most influential studies is that “no modern polity can become democratically consolidated unless it is first a state” (Linz and Stepan 1996: 7), “the vast majority of citizens in a democracy-to-be must have no doubts or mental reservations as to which political community they belong to” (Rustow 1970), and “Before you can have democracy [...], you have to have a state” (Fukuyama 2005). The point is that the state-first argument in this sense do not make claims about autocracies but only regime developments in democracies. The argument is merely that democracies will run into major problems if they have to build state capacity or legitimacy from a rock bottom.

In sum, evaluating the state first-argument means comparing democracies’ stability and deepening based on different levels of state aspects at the transition moment or from year to year through the democratic episode. Comparing to autocracies would go beyond the premises of the argument. If anything, we should compare democracies on their state legacies from earlier regime episodes, democratic or autocratic.

Aspects of the state

What should we put on the state side of the equation? How do state-democracy researchers define “the state”? Scholars typically share a relatively similar understanding of the state as an organization that embodies national cohesion, territorial control, or administrative wit. However, recent reviews of the state-democracy literature (see e.g. Andersen, Møller, and Skaaning 2014; Mazzuca and Munck 2014) have documented a tendency to conflate conceptually different aspects of the state or analyze them in isolation without comparing their relative effects. In the following, we present the effects of the three state aspects that are most often highlighted in the literature. We term the three aspects “legitimate authority”, “fiscal capacity”, and “bureaucratic quality.”

Legitimate authority captures Linz and Stepan’s (1996) groundbreaking notion of stateness as “profound differences about the territorial boundaries of the political community’s state and profound differences as to who has the right of citizenship in the state” (Linz and Stepan 1996: 16). As is clear from this definition, and most other conceptualizations of the state, a strong state subsumes some form of territorial control and integrity. In other words, Linz and Stepan’s and most other notions of the state owe their core features to Max Weber’s and Charles Tilly’s state

definitions (see also Linz and Stepan 1996: 17). Yet, in contrast to Weber, Linz and Stepan emphasize a common national identity and attachment to the state as their key source of authority rather than a bureaucratic organization. In other words, legitimate authority embodies what Andersen, Møller, and Skaaning (2014: 1208-1210) term “monopoly on violence” and “citizenship agreement” combined.

By far the most studies that enlist the state’s legitimate authority over its population as a key factor emphasize its importance for democratic survival. This thesis is closely connected with research on the impact of democratization on domestic conflict (see Fein 1995; Mansfield and Snyder 2007; Cederman, Hug, and Krebs 2010). This literature points out that democratizing countries or hybrid regimes more than established autocracies and democracies are prone to civil conflict. Political liberalization and the enfranchisement of the masses tend to open conflicts of national identity by politicizing ethnic divisions that were suppressed under the previous autocratic rule. The breakup of Yugoslavia and its subsequent civil wars in the 1990s infamously illustrate these dynamics (Mansfield and Snyder 1995: 27). By contrast, Bartusevicius and Skaaning (2018) find that electoral contestation is connected with less violence than any other regime type.

Although there are fewer proponents of the view, legitimate authority likely also affects the potential for democratic deepening. Mansfield and Snyder (1995), for instance, note that ethnic divisions in the former Soviet Republics hindered the Russian democracy in the 1990s from joining the group of liberal democracies. It remained a “poorly institutionalized, partial democracy” (Mansfield and Snyder 1995: 6). Møller and Skaaning (2014: 10) provide one of the most direct tests of this proposition and find that stateness (a product of monopoly on violence and citizenship agreement in their measurement) preconditions all features of democracy, but social rights and the rule of law to a larger extent than political liberties and electoral rights. The literature on hybrid regimes likewise indicates that regimes may uphold basically competitive elections for decades but never safely institutionalize features of liberal democracy (Zakaria 2003; Levitsky and Way 2010).

The state’s fiscal capacity captures the total means of the state’s territorial control from its military, police, security services, courts, and civil services. It resembles the typical understanding of state capacity, defined as the capacities to “penetrate society, regulate social relations, extract resources, and appropriate or use resources in determined ways” (Migdal 1988: 4). In this way, fiscal capacity is probably best understood as a mix of Michael Mann’s categories of despotic and infrastructural power. Yet, fiscal capacity merely concerns the penetration into

people's lives of the state's bureaucratic organizations. In our use of the term, it is not about consent given upwards but a sophisticated use of force or social control applied downwards.

Fiscal capacity facilitates democratic survival through control of anti-systemic movements. Secessionists or political extremists have easier access to the mainstream political system where states lack the ability to disseminate power to the outskirts of their territories. This has often been at the core of democratic problems in Asian and African postcolonial societies (Herbst 2000; Slater and Fenner 2011: 18-19).

Moreover, fiscal capacity improves tax revenues and thus enables the delivery of public goods (see Haggard and Kaufman 2016: 227-229). Effective and efficient transport and communication from center to periphery decreases transaction costs, enable the protection of property rights, and make private businesses more profitable (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001). Studies from post-communist Europe (Fortin 2012), postcolonial Africa (Herbst 2000), and Latin America (Centeno 2002) in particular support that the dissemination of state infrastructures creates short-term growth and preconditions long-term economic development and the provision of social services. In turn, fiscal capacity legitimizes the democratic regime as a promise of prosperity and redistribution from rich to poor. This may have a direct impact on the likelihood of democratic survival (see Bernhard, Reenock, and Nordstrom 2003). Strained fiscal capacity may also hinder minimalist democracy from growing into a more institutionalized polyarchy with guaranteed political and civil liberties. Indeed, regulated, civilized contestation rises more often in economically developed countries (Ansell and Samuels 2014) and where political society is less polarized (Stepan, Linz, and Yadav 2011).

Finally, bureaucratic quality more recently entered state-democracy research with the Quality of Government and Good Governance agendas (see e.g. Rothstein 2011). Nevertheless, the idea that bureaucratic performance affects regime outcomes is based on the classic writings of Weber. Beyond the state's coercive capacity, the state affects citizens' lives through the quality by which it implements policies. This quality is determined by the organizational characteristics of the bureaucracy. Here, the important distinction is between civil service systems that practice recruitment in accordance with merit criteria or, by contrast, personal, social, or political connections. Bureaucratic quality – what is typically understood as the diligence and impartiality of implementation (see Dahlström and Lapuente 2017) – rises more easily in meritocratic systems (Rauch and Evans 2000; Dahlström and Lapuente 2017).

From surveying the literature, bureaucratic quality should be particularly closely connected with democratic deepening. As its effects run through the performance legitimacy of democracy, i.e. the trust in democracy as delivering sustainable and fairly distributed economic development (Rothstein 2011: Ch. 4), it is perhaps less consequential for democratic stability in the short term. Rather, bureaucratic quality probably better explains democratic deepening as it makes the process of extending rights to new groups and protecting minorities much smoother.

When civil servants value their own expertise and professional norms, they are less inclined to bias implementation and cover up facts to further the interests of a political patron (Cornell and Lapuente 2014; Dahlström and Lapuente 2017). It also makes management of economic crises more prudent and impartial, thus diminishing the risk that the poor come out as relative losers (Evans and Rauch 1999; Henderson et al. 2007; Andersen and Krishnarajan 2018). If, in turn, bureaucracy proves its ability to administrate public resources impartially, it is more likely that initial in-groups will accept the inclusion of new groups and increase competition for political power. Discriminatory administration is, by contrast, one of the main problems of poor governance and political inequality in Latin America (O'Donnell 2010).

However, bureaucratic quality may also affect democratic survival. As has been the case in Latin America in particular, low levels of bureaucratic quality have spurred incumbent takeovers and military coups d'état when the political loyalty of civil servants becomes the object of brutal fighting between incumbent and opposition (Cornell and Lapuente 2014).

Although there are good reasons why bureaucratic quality affects democratic success, we should note that this state-first argument in particular is vulnerable to claims of reversed causality. Much research indicates that electoral contestation and the granting of political liberties improves bureaucratic quality. Indeed, it may be easier to establish and protect an autonomous and impartial bureaucracy when incumbents are regularly monitored and controlled (see e.g. Charron and Lapuente 2010; Carbone and Memoli 2015).

Based on this survey of the state first-literature, Table 1 summarizes twelve different arguments and their proponents. While most arguments regard democratic survival, we can expect positive effects of all three state aspects on democratic survival as well as deepening. As indicated, we also must consider these effects as stemming from the transition moment and as running impacts. Whether some or all versions can be supported empirically is an open question that we deal with next.

Table 1: Twelve versions of the state first-argument

Outcome (type of effect) State aspect	Survival (level at transition)	Survival (level, running impact)	Deepening (level at transition)	Deepening (level, running impact)
Legitimate authority	E.g. Huntington (1968); Rustow (1970); Fein (1995); Linz and Stepan (1996); Mansfield and Snyder (2007)	E.g. Fein (1995); Stepan, Linz, and Yadav (2011); Mansfield and Snyder (2007); Andersen et al. (2014)	E.g. Stepan, Linz, and Yadav (2011)	E.g. Møller and Skaaning (2011)
Fiscal capacity	E.g. Huntington (1968); Migdal (1988); Herbst (2000); Fukuyama (2005); Fortin (2012)	E.g. Tilly (1992); Fukuyama (2005); Fortin (2012); Andersen et al. (2014)	E.g. Migdal (1988); Herbst (2000); Rose and Shin (2001)	E.g. Bratton and Chang (2006); Fortin (2012)
Bureaucratic quality	E.g. Lapuente and Rothstein 2013; Cornell and Lapuente (2014); Ziblatt (2017)	E.g. Cornell and Lapuente (2014); Andersen et al. (2014)	E.g. Shefter (1977); Rose and Shin (2001); Ziblatt (2017)	E.g. Bratton and Chang (2006); O'Donnell (2010); Mazucca (2010)

Research design

As our interest is in the impact of the state on democratic survival or deepening, we restrict our sample to democratic country-years and years where a democratic breakdown occurred in the level at transition models. Two different dependent variables are employed. The first is tied to the democratic survival arguments and equal 1 in country-years where a democracy has broken down. The second is an interval-scaled indicator of a country's level of democratization, related to the deepening arguments. In addition, we propose that each aspect of the state should be measured in either of two ways: as its level at a country's first transition to democracy or as its running (year-to-year) level.

To examine the different versions of the "state-first" argument, we use varieties of the following specification

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{Democratic breakdown/deepening}_{i,t} \\
 & = \alpha + \beta \text{Stateness}_{i,t-1} + \delta_i + \gamma T_t + \theta D_{i,t} + \rho X_{i,t-1} + \epsilon_{i,t}
 \end{aligned}$$

where the dependent variable *Democratic breakdown/deepening* $_{i,t}$ is either *Breakdown* $_{i,t}$, a binary indicator for whether a democratic county i has broken down in year t ; or *Democracy* $_{i,t}$, a measure of the level of democratization in country i in year t . β is the quantity of interest, as it gives the impact of a given state measure on the likelihood that a democracy survives or deepens. δ_i are either regional-fixed-effects² or country-fixed-effects. Region-fixed-effects are used in models that employ the level at transition as explanatory variable, as there is no within-country variation on this measure. Because waves of democratization and de-democratization often move in unison, \mathbf{T} is a vector of time polynomials: t , t^2 and t^3 , which flexibly control for common trends. We also add polynomials, \mathbf{D} , of regime duration (see Carter and Signorino 2010). Finally, \mathbf{X} is a vector of time- or country-variant controls that predict both levels on the state measures and democratic breakdown/deepening. These will be described in detail below. All models use standard errors clustered at the country level. The models predicting breakdown are estimated using logistical regression. The models predicting deepening are estimated using Ordinary Least Squares regression.

A core problem is that democratization may also cause state development. However, in the level at transition models that focus on a country's state legacy before its first democratization this is less of a problem since it is highly implausible that this legacy is a consequence of a country's democratic history. For the running impact models, we lag our state measures by a year to mitigate this problem. In all models, we address potential omitted variable bias by the described fixed-effects and by controlling for core alternative explanations taken from the state-democracy literature (see e.g. Andersen et al. 2014).

Outcome

To measure democratic breakdown, we employ two dichotomous measures of democracy that map unto conceptions of democracy that share an exclusive focus on electoral contestation but differ slightly on the specific demands for contestation. The first is the competitive elections indicator from the Lexical Scale of Electoral Democracy index (henceforth LIED, Skaaning et al. 2015), which corresponds to a minimalist understanding of democracy as access to power via elections characterized by uncertainty. The second is the Boix, Miller and Rosato indicator (henceforth BMR,

² We use the *politico-geographic* regions from (QOG 2013): Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, The Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Western Europe and North America, East Asia, South-East Asia, South Asia, The Pacific, and the Caribbean.

Boix et al. 2013), corresponding to a more maximalist definition that requires elections to be free and fair. Using two measures alleviates the risk of unstable findings due to measurement error, which is a common problem in comparative studies (see Lueders and Lust 2018). Both variables are coded 1 in years where a country shifts away from democracy to autocracy and 0 otherwise. The correlation between the two measures is relatively high but not perfect (Pearson's R of 0.70).

To measure democratic deepening, we employ two different measures of improvements in the level of democracy. First, we use the electoral democracy index from Coppedge et al. (2017). It measures the extent to which elections are free and fair, political and civil organization can operate freely, and elections affect the composition of rulers.³ Second, we use the legislative constraints on the executive index from Coppedge et al. (2017), indicating the extent to which the legislature is capable of questioning and exercising oversight over the executive. Both measures are scaled from 0 to 1 with higher values indicating higher levels of democracy.

Main explanatory variables

In the level at transition models, we operationalize a legacy of the state aspects by using a country's score on the relevant state variable in the year preceding its first democratization. In the running impact models, we simply measure the state aspects on a running basis lagged one year. To capture legitimate authority, fiscal capacity, and bureaucratic quality, we rely on two indicators from the V-Dem and Historical V-Dem datasets (Coppedge et al. 2017), and one indicator from the Information Capacity dataset (Brambor et al. 2018). Both datasets have data from 1789 to the present, although with varying degrees of spatial coverage. Legitimate authority is measured using the *state authority over territory* (*v2svsterr*) variable. It judges over what percentage of the territory a state has effective authority. This captures disparities between a country's formal boundaries and the symbolic and physical boundaries of the political community governed by the state. The variable is scaled from 0 to 1, with, for example, a score of 0.7 indicating that the state controls 70% of its territory.

Fiscal capacity is captured using the *informational capacity* variable from (Brambor et al. 2018). It measures the extent to which states are capable of collecting reliable censuses, introducing civil registers, and processing such information. Since reliable information on the location and earnings of citizens are vital to make and enforce rules, we use this as an indicator for

³ The original electoral index also consists of a variable measuring the capacity of the electoral management body. As this may also proxy aspects of the state, we have excluded it from the index used in our analysis.

fiscal capacity. The variable covers 85 countries from 1789 until today. We rescale it to 0-1, with higher values indicating a greater extent of informational capacity.

We measure bureaucratic quality using the *rigorous and impartial public administration* (v2clrspcy) variable. It is scaled from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating higher values of rigorous and impartial administration of laws set by public officials. To ensure its validity as a measure of bureaucratic quality, we compare it to two other indicators of bureaucratic quality, which we do not use in our analysis due to their limited spatial and temporal coverage. These are the World Bank's control of corruption and government effectiveness indicators and the TI perception of corruption index (WB 2018; TI 2018). The V-Dem measure for bureaucratic quality has a Pearson's R correlation above 0.86 with all of the extant indicators. Thus, all three seem to tap into the same overarching concept.

Figure 1: The development of three state aspects in democracies

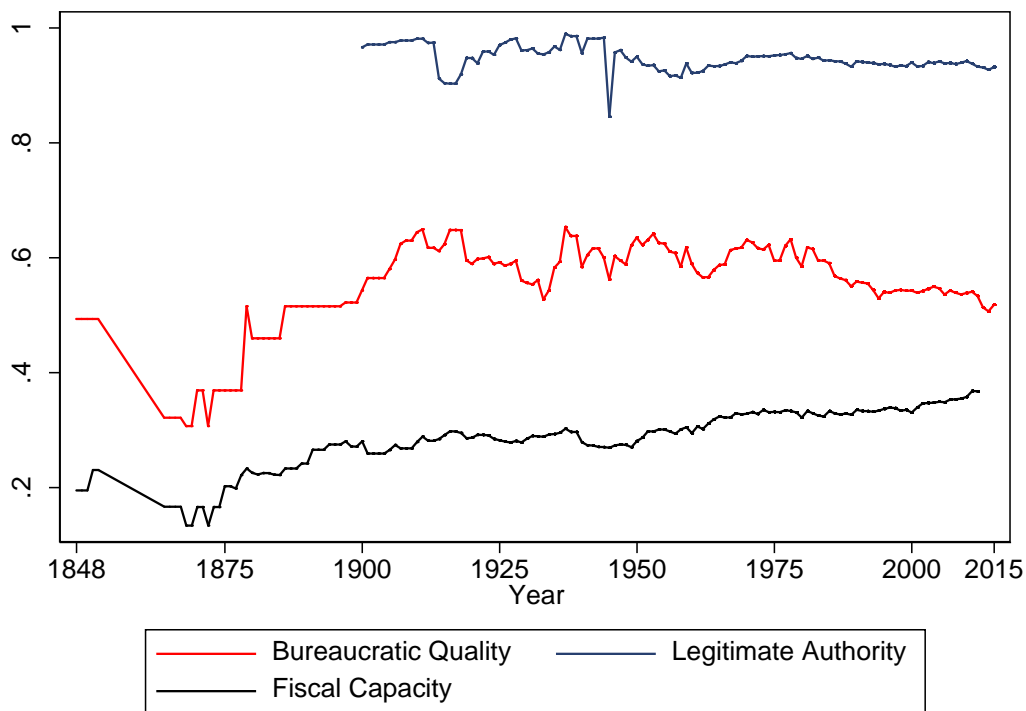


Figure 1 presents the development in average levels of our three state measures in democracies over time. The first country that registers as a democracy, according to the LIED indicator, is France in 1848. Its state development is captured by both the Bureaucratic quality and the Fiscal capacity measures. Unfortunately, the legitimate authority measure has no coverage before 1900. Nevertheless, only 2.3% of democracy-years occur before 1900, so the loss of these observations is unlikely to be problematic. The figure shows that the average degree of legitimate authority is high and relatively stable over time, including in the postcolonial democracies that emerged after World War II. Nevertheless, the two World Wars are clear in the data, as two large dips in legitimate authority coincide with the wars. Looking at the degree of fiscal capacity and bureaucratic quality, we see that these aspects of the state generally increased until World War I. After the wars, there are no clear trends in quality. Moreover, the average level of fiscal capacity seems to increase during this period. However, as the number of countries is not stable over time, this may also reflect stateness in late-coming countries. In the appendix, we also present histograms of our three explanatory variables.

Controls

We use two baseline sets of controls, one for the level at transition models and one for the running impact models. To avoid post-treatment bias (see Rosenbaum 1984; Imai et al. 2011), all time-variant controls are measured in the year prior to a country's first democratization in the level at transition models. For the running impact models, they are measured at $t-1$ for the same reason. All level at transition models control for colonial legacies by including two dummy variables indicating if a country was *ever colonized* and if it was a *British colony* (from Miller 2015). We also account for previous regime experience using a stock measure, which sums previous years being a democracy with a score of one per previous democratic year and sums previous year of being non-democratic regime with a score of minus one per year. Economic development is measured using GDP per capita. Another predictor of regime strength is oil dependence, measured as the revenue from oil as a proportion of GDP (oil data from Miller 2015; GDP data from Maddison 2013). In the running impact models, we also control for GDP growth by the annual percentage change in GDP per capita. To account for democratic diffusion, we use the average number of democracies in the region (excluding the country in question). In the level at transition models, this is picked up by the region fixed-effects. Finally, in the running impact models we control for war and civil war using

two dummies from Clio-infra (2018). In Table 1, we provide an overview of the controls employed in the different models. Descriptive statistics for all variables are presented in the appendix.

Table 1: Overview of controls

Included in all models (CS 1+2)	Level at transition models (CS 1)	Running impact models (CS 2)
Time polynomials; t , t^2 , and t^3	Region-fixed-effects	Country-fixed-effects
Regime duration: d , d^2 , and d^3	Ever colonized	GDP/capita _{t-1}
	British colony	GDP growth _{t-1}
	GDP/capita _{transition}	Oil dependence _{t-1}
	Oil dependence _{transition}	Regime stock _{t-1}
	Regime stock _{transition}	Regional-democracy _{t-1}
		War _{t-1}
		Civil war _{t-1}

Besides the variables presented above, we employ additional controls to ensure that our results are not driven by reverse causality. We use the level of democracy before the first democratization in the level at transition models and the level of democracy in the preceding year for the running impact models. We use the electoral index variable from Coppedge et al. (2017) as described above. To distinguish between the impact of changes in the state measures pre- and post-democratization in our level at transition models, we also include a measure for the change in levels of the state measures after democratization. Since this post-democratization measurement might induce post-treatment bias, we do not include it in the main models.

Democratic Breakdown

Level at transition models

We begin by investigating the arguments that democratic survival is secured by higher degrees of the state aspects at the moment of transition to democracy. The results are presented in Table 2.

Using both the LIED and BMR measures of democracy, we find that a legacy of legitimacy authority has no discernable impact on the risk of a democratic breakdown. The result is the same if

we control for the level of democracy before democratization. When we account for changes in legitimate authority after democratization, we do find that increased legitimate authority is correlated with a smaller risk of a democratic breakdown in Model 6 using BMR as dependent variable. Nevertheless, the estimate is still insignificant when using the LIED measure of democracy. Overall, there is therefore little support for the argument that legitimate authority at transition protects democracy from breakdown.

Table 2: Legacies of state aspects and democratic breakdown

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	LIED	LIED	LIED	BMR	BMR	BMR
Aut. over ter (legacy)	-0.709 (0.434)	-0.758 (0.514)	-0.493 (0.441)	-0.682 (0.540)	-0.725 (0.609)	-1.369** (0.546)
Obs.	3420	3420	3302	3459	3302	3459
Countries	89	89	89	87	87	87
Breakdowns	70	70	65	66	66	65
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	LIED	LIED	LIED	BMR	BMR	BMR
Informational cap. (legacy)	-1.20 (0.874)	-1.15 (0.845)	-0.709 (1.139)	-1.516* (0.785)	-1.504* (0.787)	-1.574* (0.931)
Obs.	2548	2548	2507	2862	2862	2810
Countries	49	49	49	49	49	49
Breakdowns	48	48	48	45	45	45
	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
	LIED	LIED	LIED	BMR	BMR	BMR
Impartial adm. (legacy)	-2.769*** (0.748)	-5.402*** (0.979)	-3.037*** (1.149)	-2.993*** (0.869)	-6.046*** (1.046)	-3.783*** (1.135)
Obs.	3414	3414	3414	3689	3689	3689
Countries	89	89	89	87	87	87
Breakdowns	70	70	70	66	66	66
Regional FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duration Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1
Electoral Index _{transition}	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Δ stateness	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Logistical regression. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Models 7-12 show the impact of fiscal capacity on democratic breakdown. Using the LIED indicator for democracy, there is no considerable difference in the risk of a breakdown in countries with a higher transition level of informational capacity. This is also true when controlling for the level of democracy at democratization and when accounting for subsequent changes in informational capacity. Conversely, in our models using the BMR measure of democracy we do find that fiscal capacity fosters democratic survival. However, this association disappears when computing marginal effects. Therefore, we find little evidence that a legacy of fiscal capacity matters for democratic breakdown.

Next, we turn to bureaucratic quality. We find that having greater bureaucratic quality at the transition moment is a strong predictor of subsequent democratic survival. Across both outcome variables and all specifications, we see that a higher level of bureaucratic quality reduces the risk of a democratic breakdown. Specifically, a country that transitions to democracy with a level of bureaucratic quality equal to 0.32 (the 10th percentile) has a 3.3% risk of a democratic breakdown. Conversely, a country that transitions with a quality of 0.86 (the 90th percentile) has a 0.008% risk of a breakdown.⁴ The relationship between bureaucratic quality and democratic survival is thus substantial. These estimates are largely unaffected by controlling for pre-transition levels of democracy and post-transition changes in bureaucratic quality.

We conduct a series of robustness tests to test the validity of the effect of bureaucratic quality. The first set of tests uses the time-variant control set. The second set adds controls for income inequality (from UNI-WIDER 2008), population size, and state authority over territory to the baseline model. The third set adds a control for a medieval legacy of constitutionalism, which has been argued to predict both state capacity and democratic stability (see Møller 2015). We capture this legacy by controlling for the level of judicial constraints on the executive in 1789 using *V2x_jucon* from the V-Dem data (Coppedge et al. 2017). We also consider cross-sectional models where we use the proportion of democratic spells that broke down and the average duration of a country's democratic spells as our outcomes. A deeper historical legacy of stateness is also considered by re-running our cross-sectional models with the *state antiquity index* from Chanda and Putterman (2007) included.⁵

The estimates remain substantially similar when using time-variant controls, accounting for population size, inequality and authority over territory, and when controlling for judicial constraints in 1789. In addition, when using cross-sectional models our results indicate that increasing a country's bureaucratic quality by a standard deviation (0.201) decreases the proportion of democratic spells that break down by 0.11 (0.33 σ), and increases the average duration of a democratic spell by 8.6 years. These estimates are unchanged when controlling for a history of stateness, which has no separate impact on stability. To summarize, these findings strongly suggest that a country's levels of bureaucratic quality at the transition moment protects democracy from breakdown.

⁴ The marginal probabilities are calculated using the observed value approach based on Model 13. The difference is significant.

⁵ Specifically, we use an ancestry adjusted stock variable with a 2% yearly depreciation rate.

Running impact models

We now turn to the second theoretical interpretation of the process connecting state and democracy, namely that the strength of a given state aspect determines the likelihood of democratic breakdown on a year-to-year basis. Table 3 shows the running impact of the different aspects of the state on the likelihood of a democratic breakdown in the preceding year.

Table 3: The running impact of state aspects on democratic breakdown

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	LIED	LIED	LIED	BMR	BMR	BMR
Aut. over ter. _{t-1}	-0.004 (0.699)	8.68*** (3.089)	9.60*** (3.23)	-0.2943 (0.557)	5.42** (0.716)	6.09** (2.68)
Obs.	2719	1016	1016	2897	1150	1150
Countries	91	39	39	88	39	39
Breakdowns	56	56	56	60	60	60
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	LIED	LIED	LIED	BMR	BMR	BMR
Informational cap. _{t-1}	-0.191 (0.985)	2.37 (1.56)	2.42 (1.55)	0.094 (0.784)	7.49*** (2.06)	6.31*** (2.08)
Obs.	2122	925	925	2413	995	995
Countries	48	26	26	46	25	25
Breakdowns	42	42	42	42	42	42
	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
	LIED	LIED	LIED	BMR	BMR	BMR
Impartiality. _{t-1}	-3.39*** (0.697)	-6.72*** (1.59)	-6.77*** (1.74)	-3.12*** (0.629)	-5.70*** (1.40)	-5.67*** (1.64)
Obs.	2828	1140	1140	3103	1220	1220
Countries	91	40	40	88	39	39
Breakdown	61	61	61	61	61	61
Region FE	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Country FE	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Year Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duration Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	CS 2	CS 2	CS 2	CS 2	CS 2	CS 2
Polyarchy _{t-1}	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Conditional logistical regression. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

The relationship between the running impact of legitimate authority and democratic breakdown does not appear to be robust. The baseline estimates are close to zero using both the LIED and BMR measures of democratic breakdown. Furthermore, when we use country fixed-effects the coefficients turn positive, indicating that a higher degree of legitimate authority might even increase the risk of a breakdown. Thus, the legitimate authority argument does not seem to be supported empirically.

Next, we investigate the association between informational capacity and the stability of democracy. Looking at Models 7-12, there seems to be no substantial correlation between the running level of informational capacity and democratic breakdown. The region fixed-effects estimates are close to zero and non-significant. Using country fixed-effects, a higher level of fiscal capacity is correlated with a higher risk of a democratic breakdown. However, the coefficient is only distinguishable from zero in the models that use the BMR democracy measure. Consequently, fiscal capacity does not seem to protect democracies.

By contrast, Models 13-18 show a strong negative correlation between bureaucratic quality and the risk of democratic breakdown. Across all models, we find a significant and negative association. Specifically, we find that increasing the level of bureaucratic quality by 0.5 is estimated to reduce the risk of a breakdown by 3.9-5.5%-points. Controlling for state authority, income inequality, and population size yields comparable estimates. To summarize, it seems that both the transition level of bureaucratic quality and its subsequent level changes are associated with democratic survival.

Spatial and temporal dependence of the state aspects?

In this section, we consider if our results may be bounded spatially or temporally. Models 1, 7, and 13 in Table 2 are used as a baseline. In the spatially restricted models, we do not use region fixed-effects. In addition, year polynomials are excluded from the temporally restricted models. First, we consider if the effects of the state aspects vary across colonies and non-colonies (see Bernhard et al. 2004). Next, we consider if these effects are present in post-communist and Latin American democracies after 1974, i.e. considering a subset of third wave democracies. We also address the literature on state building in Sub-Saharan Africa (see Englebert 2000) by probing the impact of the state aspects for these countries in isolation. Finally, as the most direct test contrasting the European “state-first” narrative with the post-colonial “democracy-first” narrative, we consider the effect of the state aspects in Western European democracies versus post-WWII democracies.

Table 4 presents the results for the level at transition models for these different sub-samples. Looking at legitimate authority, we find a significant and negative association with democratic breakdown in non-colonies and in Western Europe – albeit only at the 0.1 level. However, it has no discernable relationship with democratic breakdown in the other sub-samples. Consequently, legitimate authority does not seem to matter for democratic survival in most spatial and temporal contexts. Its impact is bounded to Western European countries, typically first-wave

democracies, and non-colonies. Turning to fiscal capacity, there is no significant relationship in any sample. Thus, we can conclude that fiscal capacity does not matter for democratic survival no matter the period or region under study. Finally, we consider if the impact of bureaucratic quality is bounded. We consistently find a negative relationship with democratic breakdown, with the exception of the post-communist and post-1974 Latin American countries. Moreover, it seems that a legacy of bureaucratic quality has a particularly strong impact in Sub-Saharan Africa. Concerning temporal bounds, we find no substantive differences between the effects of bureaucratic quality in Western Europe and postcolonial democracies. The effect of bureaucratic quality is only spatially and temporally bounded to a very limited extent.

Table 4: Legacy of state aspects in different sub-samples

Sample	Legitimate authority	Fiscal capacity	Bureaucratic quality
Non-colonies	-1.66* (0.92) Obs. 1947	-3.66 (3.01) Obs. 1559	-2.62*** (0.73) Obs. 1947
Ex-colonies	-0.58 (0.42) Obs. 1563	-3.47 (2.76) Obs. 1003	-1.11** (0.51) Obs. 1563
Post-communist and Latin America (post-1974)	-0.01 (0.01) Obs. 639	-0.04 (0.03) Obs. 456	-0.32 (0.12) Obs. 639
Sub-Saharan Africa	-1.55 (2.12) Obs. 270	Not enough data	-5.04** (2.15) Obs. 270
Western Europe	-1.18* (0.69) Obs. 668	0.03 (0.09) Obs. 714	-2.13*** (0.71) Obs. 668
Post-1945	-0.73 (0.67) Obs. 2619	-0.15 (0.03) Obs. 1848	-1.41** (0.63) Obs. 2619

Logistical regression with region FE when possible (if inestimable, OLS was used). Time and duration polynomials (except for temporally bounded samples). Control: CS 1. The LIED measure of democracy is used. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 5 presents similar tests using the running impact models. The running impact of fiscal capacity and legitimate authority does not seem to matter for survival, as changes in the level of legitimate authority or fiscal capacity have no significant association with democratic breakdown in any sample. Conversely, the running impact of bureaucratic quality in former colonies and post-1945 country-years is significant and negative. In contrast to the level at transition models, post-democratization changes in the level of bureaucratic quality does not appear to matter generally.

Table 5: The running impact of state aspects in different sub-samples

Sample	Legitimate authority	Fiscal capacity	Bureaucratic quality
Non-colonies	0.183 (0.14) Obs. 1241	0.04 (0.03) Obs. 1356	-0.04 (0.04) Obs. 1648
Ex-colonies	-0.58 (0.42) Obs. 1563	0.03 (0.05) Obs. 835	-0.11*** (0.05) Obs. 1258
Post-communist and Latin America (post-1974)	-0.08 (0.12) Obs. 446	-0.08 (0.07) Obs. 334	-0.17 (0.123) Obs. 446
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.36 (0.91) Obs. 184	Not enough data	-.86 (.498) Obs. 184
Western Europe	0.05 (0.03) Obs. 598	-0.10 (0.13) Obs. 670	0.01 (0.13) Obs. 707
Post-1945	0.04 (0.06) Obs. 2199	0.02 (0.03) Obs. 1521	-0.13*** (0.04) Obs. 2199

OLS with country-FE, Time and duration polynomials. OLS is used, as conditional logit is inestimable in a majority of models. Controls: CS 2. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

In sum, legitimate authority and fiscal capacity are only weakly related to democratic breakdown whether as running impacts or level at transition effects. There is therefore little reason to suspect that they are important in determining whether a democracy survives or not. Conversely, a high level of bureaucratic quality at transition is persistently a good predictor of democratic

survival. With the exception of post-communist and Latin American democracies after 1974, we show that having an impartial and rigorous public administration at the time of transition substantially reduces the risk of reverting to an autocratic regime. In addition, post-democratization positive changes in bureaucratic quality also seem to foster survival during the post-World War II period and in former colonies. In turn, we find consistent support for one of the twelve versions of the state-first argument and limited or no support for the remaining eleven versions.

Democratic Deepening

Level at transition models

Table 6 considers the relationship between the three state aspects at transition and democratic deepening. In all models, we control for the initial level of either of the two outcome variables at the transition.

Table 6: Legacy of state aspects and democratic deepening

	(1)	(3)	(4)	(6)
	Δ Electoral	Δ Electoral	Δ Legislative constraints	Δ Legislative constraints
Aut. over ter.transition	0.043 (0.028)	0.218*** (0.048)	-0.022 (0.095)	0.167 (0.119)
Obs.	3392	3392	3329	3329
Countries	91	91	91	91
	(7)	(9)	(10)	(12)
	Δ Electoral	Δ Electoral	Δ Legislative constraints	Δ Legislative constraints
Informational cap.transition	0.017 (0.052)	0.076 (0.054)	0.160 (0.137)	0.279 (0.179)
Obs.	2562	2521	2514	2473
Countries	50	50	50	50
	(13)	(15)	(16)	(18)
	Δ Electoral	Δ Electoral	Δ Legislative constraints	Δ Legislative constraints
Impartial adm.transition	0.15*** (0.030)	0.25*** (0.029)	-0.001 (0.10)	0.149 (0.10)
Obs.	3504	3504	3441	3441
Countries	91	91	91	91
Regional FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duration Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1
Polyarchy/ConstraintTransition	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Δ stateness	No	Yes	No	Yes

OLS. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Looking across both measures of democratic deepening (Electoral democracy and Legislative constraints on the executive), we see that levels of legitimate authority and fiscal capacity at transition have weak, non-significant associations with post-transition improvements in

the level of democracy. The only exception is Model 3. Here, we find a positive impact of legitimate authority on democratic deepening. Similar to our breakdown models, the coefficients for bureaucratic quality indicate that higher transition levels of bureaucratic quality are positively and substantially correlated with post-democratization changes in the level of electoral democracy. For example, a standard deviation increase in bureaucratic quality (0.21) is estimated to increase a country's electoral democracy score by 0.03 (0.21 σ). However, an initially well-functioning bureaucracy does not appear to improve the extent of legislative controls with the executive. As a robustness test, we also run cross-sectional models using the average post-transition change in the level of democracy as our outcome. The results of this test is shown in Table G in the appendix. They return similar findings.

Running impact models

Table 7 reports the equivalent estimates from running impact models. No model shows a robust relationship between any state indicator and democratic deepening. For all aspects of the state, the coefficient turns insignificant when we include the lagged level of democracy as control. The state, no matter how it is conceived, has no consistent running impact on democratic deepening.

Table 7: The running impact of state aspects on democratic deepening

	(1) Δ Electoral	(3) Δ Electoral	(4) Δ Legislative constraints	(6) Δ Legislative constraints
Aut. over ter. _{t-1}	0.140*** (0.027)	-0.000 (0.024)	0.147 (0.089)	0.025 (0.037)
Obs.	2832	2832	2790	2776
Countries	94	94	94	94
	(7) Δ Electoral	(9) Δ Electoral	(10) Δ Legislative constraints	(12) Δ Legislative constraints
Informational cap. _{t-1}	-0.024 (0.02)	-0.018** (0.007)	-0.012 (0.027)	-0.016** (0.006)
Obs.	2191	2191	2154	2141
Countries	51	51	51	51
	(13) Δ Electoral	(15) Δ Electoral	(16) Δ Legislative constraints	(18) Δ Legislative constraints
Impartial adm. _{t-1}	0.128*** (0.028)	0.021 (0.012)	0.142*** (0.049)	0.010 (0.14)
Obs.	2941	2941	2899	2885
Countries	94	94	94	94
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duration Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	CS 2	CS 2	CS 2	CS 2
Polyarchy/Constraints _{t-1}	No	Yes	No	Yes
Δ stateness	No	Yes	No	Yes

OLS. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 8: Legacy of state aspects in different sub-samples

Dependent variable: Δ Electoral			
Sample	Legitimate authority	Fiscal capacity	Bureaucratic quality
Non-colonies	-0.00 (0.03) Obs. 1849	-0.01 (0.06) Obs. 1559	0.14*** (0.05) Obs. 1941
Ex-colonies	0.91 (0.07) Obs. 1543	0.15 (0.11) Obs. 1003	0.13*** (0.04) Obs. 1563
Post-communist and Latin America (post-1974)	-0.02 (0.07) Obs. 638	0.09 (0.11) Obs. 456	0.14** (0.06) Obs. 639
Sub-Saharan Africa	-0.01 (0.07) Obs. 270	Not enough data	0.18*** (0.04) Obs. 270
Western Europe	0.054 (0.06) Obs. 664	0.06 (0.08) Obs. 714	0.12* (0.06) Obs. 795
Post-1945	0.05* (0.03) Obs. 2708	0.07 (0.06) Obs. 1848	0.14*** (0.03) Obs. 2709
Dependent variable: Δ Legislative constraints			
Sample	Legitimate authority	Fiscal capacity	Bureaucratic quality
Non-colonies	-0.08 (0.09) Obs. 1824	0.07 (0.11) Obs. 1536	0.17 (0.11) Obs. 1916
Ex-colonies	0.22 (0.18) Obs. 1505	0.37 (0.34) Obs. 978	-0.02 (0.13) Obs. 1525
Post-communist and Latin America (post-1974)	0.15 (0.20) Obs. 632	0.06 (0.20) Obs. 451	0.18 (0.16) Obs. 633
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.129 (0.14) Obs. 262	Not enough data	-0.09 (0.12) Obs. 262
Western Europe	0.28 (0.18) Obs. 661	0.17 (0.16) Obs. 692	-0.16 (0.13) Obs. 772
Post-1945	-0.02 (0.10) Obs. 2668	0.22 (0.15) Obs. 1822	0.02 (0.12) Obs. 2669

OLS with region FE when possible. Time and duration polynomials (except for temporally bounded samples). Control: CS 1. The LIED measure of democracy is used. In addition, all models include a control for the transition level of electoral democracy or legislative constraints. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Spatial and temporal dependence of the state aspects?

As before, we ask if our results are temporally or spatially bounded. Since there is no robust running impact of any state aspect on democratic deepening, we only examine the level at transition models. The results are shown in Table 8. Consistent with our baseline models, we find practically no discernable impact of legitimate authority and fiscal capacity on democratic deepening in any sub-sample. Also, a higher transition level of bureaucratic quality is associated with subsequent improvements in the level of electoral democracy across all samples when estimating deepening of electoral democracy. However, there are no significant impacts of bureaucratic quality on deepening of legislative constraints in any of the sub-samples. Overall, the impact of bureaucratic quality on democratic deepening does not seem to be temporally or spatially bounded but it only concerns electoral democracy and not legislative constraints.

Conclusion

This paper asked whether an established state is needed for democracies to thrive. While this question is rarely analyzed systematically in large-n analyses and often relies on crude understandings of the state and democracy, we have demonstrated its multifaceted nature. Because any such state-first effect could be driven by at least one of three different aspects of the state – legitimate authority, fiscal capacity, and bureaucratic quality – and regard either a level at transition or running impact on democratic survival or deepening, we found 12 possible versions of the overarching state-first argument in the literature.

Based on analyses spanning virtually the entire era of modern democracy until today and new indicators of state and democracy from the V-Dem and Historical V-Dem datasets, we examined the empirical viability of all 12 state-first versions. In short, we only found consistent support for one version. Yet, this result was indeed highly robust. Our analyses thus showed a significant and negative effect of bureaucratic quality levels at the moment of the democratic transition on the risk of democratic breakdown. This result held up when controlling for a standard set of confounders, legacies of democracy, region-specific effects, and across spatial and temporal contexts. While bureaucratic quality also showed some running impact on democratic survival and some level at transition impact on democratic deepening, these results only concerned electoral democracy and not legislative constraints. However, since the core of the dichotomous measures of democratic breakdown is also electoral, we might infer that bureaucratic quality affects the deepening and survival of electoral democracy.

The implication of these results is that we should reconsider substantially what we mean when we raise a state-first argument. There is indeed evidence that the state needs to precede democracy for democracy to survive post-transition but that this only concerns a very specific aspect of the state focused on bureaucratic quality rather than the standard arguments of state capacity and citizenship agreement popularized by Charles Tilly, Juan J. Linz, and Alfred Stepan. Instead, we need to pay close attention to the concept of Quality of Government, which is closely associated with the idea of impartial bureaucracy.

However, we also need to be critical of this finding exactly because the concept of impartiality in particular is so intimately connected with democratic governance. One may argue that bureaucratic impartiality is subsumed under the rule of law, which is part and parcel of liberal democracy. In any case, many intriguing arguments point out that bureaucratic quality is a particularly likely result of electoral contestation. While we have controlled for legacies of electoral contestation in our models, such controls are never perfect in particular in the absence of a good instrument for the effect of bureaucratic quality. We must therefore consider the possibility that bureaucratic quality and democratic contestation are mutually re-inforcing. This points to a more complex relationship between state and democracy than the sequencing debate will have us believe. It may thus be that low levels of bureaucratic quality at the democratic transition put strains on democracy's sustainability but that democratic contestation itself may remedy this over time.

Literature (incomplete)

- Lueders, Hans and Ellen Lust. 2018. "Multiple Measurements, Elusive Agreement, and Unstable Outcomes in the Study of Regime Change", *The Journal of Politics* 80(2): 736-741.
- Carter, David and Curtis Signorino. 2010. "Back to the future: modeling time dependence in binary data", *Political Analysis* 18(3): 271-292.
- Skaaning, Svend-Erik and John Gerring and Henrikas Bartusevicius. 2015. "A Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy", *Comparative Political Studies* 48(2): 1491-1525.
- Boix, Carles, and Michael Miller and Sebastian Rosato. 2013. "A Complete Data Set of Political Regimes, 1800-2007" *Comparative Political Studies* 46(2): 1523-1554.
- Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Staffan I. Lindberg, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jan Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, M. Steven Fish, Adam Glynn, Allen Hicken, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Kyle Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Farhad Miri, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Jeffrey Staton, Eitan Tzelgov, Yi-ting Wang, and Brigitte Zimmerman. 2017. "V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Date] Dataset v7." Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.
- Rosenbaum, Paul. 1984. "The Consequences of Adjustment for a Concomitant Variable That has Been Affected by the Treatment", *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A* 147(5): 656-666.
- Imai, Kosuke and Luke Keele and Dusting Tingley and Teppei Yamamoto. 2011. "Unpacking the Black Box of Causality: Learning About Causal Mechanisms from Experimental and Observational Studies", *American Political Science Review* 105(4): 765-789.
- Miller, Michael K. 2015. "Democratic Pieces: Autocratic Elections and Democratic Development since 1815" *British Journal of Political Science* 45(3): 501-530.
- Maddison Project Database. 2018. Bolt, Jutta, Robert Inklaar, Herman de Jong and Jan Luiten van Zanden (2018), "Rebasing 'Maddison': new income comparisons and the shape of long-run economic development", [Maddison Project Working paper 10](#)
- QOG. Teorell, Jan and Stefan Dahlberg and Sören Holmberg and Bo Rothstein and Natalia Pachon and Richard Svensson. 2018. "The Quality of Government Standard Dataset", University of Gothenburg: <https://qog.pol.gu.se/data/datadownloads/qogstandarddata>
- Clio-infra. 2018. "Historical Datasets". <https://www.clio-infra.eu/index.html#about>
- UNU-WIDER. 2008. "World Income Inequality Database, version 2".
- Møller, Jørgen. 2015. "The Medieval Roots of Democracy", *Journal of Democracy* 26(3): 110-123.

- Bratton, Michael and Eric Chang. 2006. "State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa" *Comparative Political Studies* 39(9): 1059-1083.
- Tilly, Charles. 2006. *Coercion, Capital, and European States*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Downing, Brian. 1992. *The Military Revolution and Political Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ertman, Thomas. 1997. *Birth of the Leviathan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, Richard and Don Shin. 2001. "Democratization Backwards: The Problem of Third-Wave Democracies" *British Journal of Political Science* 31(2): 331-354.
- Bernhard, Michael and Christopher Reenock and Timothy Nordstrom. "The Legacy of Western Overseas Colonialism on Democratic Survival" *International Studies Quarterly* 48(1): 225-250.
- Brambor, Thomas and Agustin Goenaga and Johannes Lindvall and Jan Teorell. 2018. "The Lay of the Land: Information Capacity and the Modern State". Working Paper.
- Chanda, Areendam and Louis Putterman. 2007. "Early Starts, Reversals and Catch-up in the Process of Economic Development" *Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 19(2): 387-413.
- Transparency International (TI). 2018. Corruption Perceptions Index. Retrieved from: <https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi>
- World Bank (WB). 2018. The Worldwide Governance Indicators project. Retrieved from: <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home>

Appendix

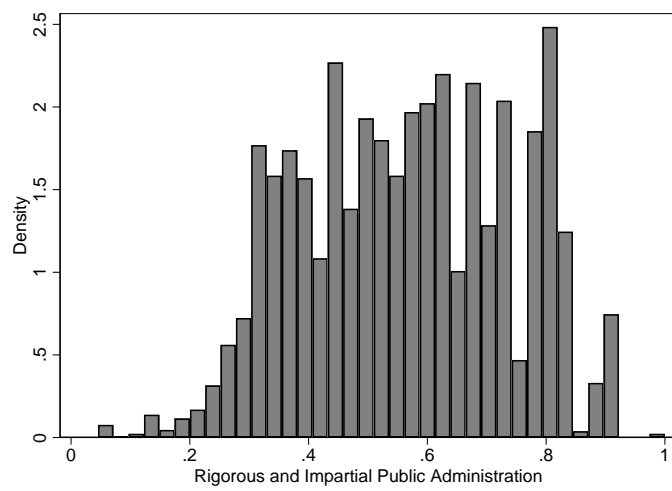
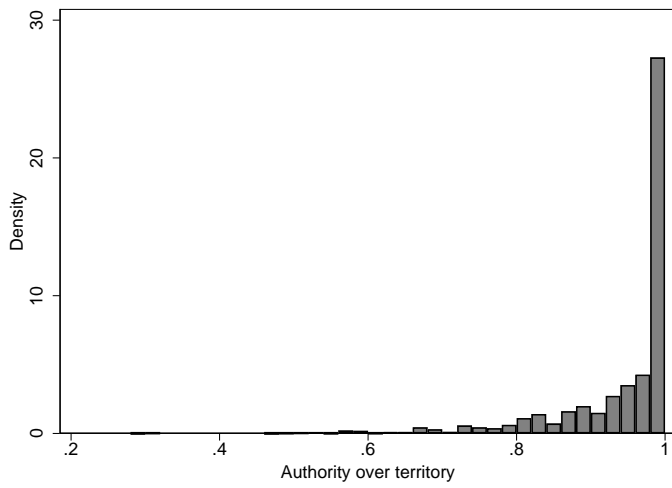
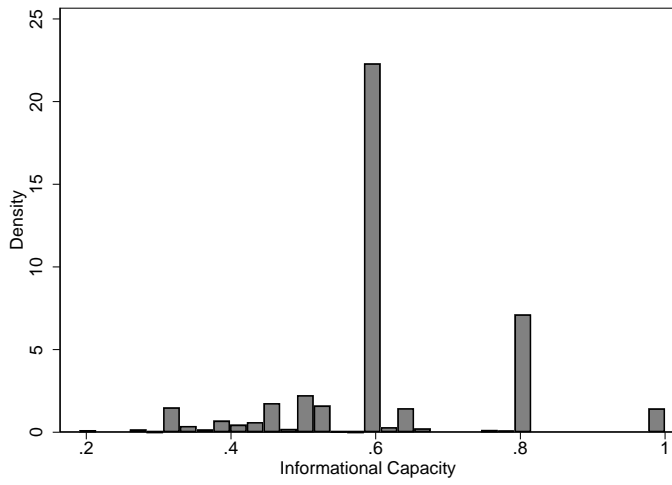


Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	CS nr.
<i>Outcome</i>						
Breakdown (BMR)	4963	0.017	0.131	0	1	
Breakdown (LIED)	5044	0.021	0.143	0	1	
Δ Electoral democracy index	5044	0.137	0.143	-0.407	0.715	
Δ Legislative constraints	4946	0.130	0.171	-0.565	0.800	
<i>Main variables</i>						
Aut. over territory (legacy)	4924	0.915	0.120	0.470	1	
Aut. over territory (level)	4924	0.921	0.121	0.027	1	
Informational capacity (legacy)	2925	0.633	0.132	0	1	
Informational capacity (level)	2925	0.497	0.144	0	1	
Impartial public adm. (legacy)	5038	0.582	0.207	0	1	
Impartial public adm. (level)	5038	0.564	0.178	0	1	
<i>Controls</i>						
GDP/capita (legacy)	4543	8.05	0.748	6.22	10.3	1
GDP/capita (level)	4543	8.99	1.01	6.09	11.3	2
GDP growth	4530	0.026	0.066	-0.57	1.31	2
Ever colonized	3797	0.496	0.499	0	1	1
British colony	3797	0.256	0.437	0	1	1
Regime Stock (legacy)	5044	-49.6	57.6	-183	12	1
Regime Stock (level)	5044	-30.1	64.7	-192	115	2
Regional Democracy level	5044	0.611	0.314	0	1	2
War	3422	0.077	0.266	0	1	2
Civil War	3422	0.090	0.286	0	1	2
Oil (legacy)	3502	0.005	0.028	0	0.23	1
Oil (level)	3502	0.011	0.042	0	0.48	2

Note: the descriptive statistics are based on the sample used with the LIED democracy indicator. CS nr. is the set of controls in which the variable is included.

Table T: Robustness test: a legacy of bureaucratic quality and democratic breakdowns

Y	(1) LIED	(2) LIED	(3) LIED
Impartial adm. (legacy)	-0.023*** (0.007)	-0.029** (0.012)	-3.037*** (1.149)
Aut. over ter. (legacy)	No	Yes	No
Judicial Constraint, 1789	No	No	Yes
Regional FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes
Duration Polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	CS 2	CS 1	CS 1
Ln(Pop. Size) and Inequality	No	Yes	No
Observations	3243	2757	1337

Logistical regression. Coefficients are average marginal effects calculated using *margins* in Stata. Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table P: Cross-sectional: A legacy of bureaucratic quality and democratic breakdowns

Y	(1) Prop. of dem. spell that broke down	(2) Avg. duration of dem. spell
Aut. over ter. (legacy)	-0.566*** (0.181)	44.67*** (11.27)
Observations	101	101
	(3) Prop. of dem. spell that broke down	(4) Avg. duration of dem. spell
State History Stock	-0.048 (0.289)	-11.4 (17.8)
Observations	92	92
	(5) Prop. of dem. spell that broke down	(6) Avg. duration of dem. spell
Aut. over ter. (legacy)	-0.484** (0.188)	43.2*** (6.98)
State History Stock	0.123 (0.271)	-11.4 (17.8)
Observations	92	92
Regional FE	Yes	Yes
Wave of Democratization	Yes	Yes
Controls	CS 1	CS 1

Table G: Legacies of Stateness and Democratic Deepening – Cross-Sectional I

Y	(1) Δ Electoral	(2) Δ Electoral	(3) Δ Electoral	(4) Δ Legislative constraints	(5) Δ Legislative constraints	(6) Δ Legislative constraints
Aut. over ter (legacy)	0.0473 (0.0406)			0.0561 (0.110)		
Inf. Cap. (legacy)		0.0923 (0.0724)			0.270** (0.128)	
Impartial pub. Adm. (legacy)			0.0976*** (0.0330)			0.0286 (0.0893)
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1	CS 1
Dem. at transition	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Obs.	91	50	91	91	50	91

OLS. Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table H: Legacies of Stateness and Democratic Deepening – Cross-Sectional II

Y	(1) Δ Electoral	(3) Δ Legislative constraints
Aut. over ter (legacy)	-0.0210 (0.0907)	0.193 (0.202)
Inf. Cap. (legacy)	0.0670 (0.0737)	0.213* (0.120)
Impartial pub. Adm. (legacy)	0.137** (0.0517)	0.00294 (0.155)
Region FE	Yes	Yes
Controls	CS 1	CS 1
Dem. at trans.	Yes	Yes
Observations	50	50

OLS. Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$