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What is This?

Size, Islandness, and Democracy: A Global Comparison

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Abstract. The aim of this global study is to assess the impact of physical variables (size and islandness) on the degree of democracy. The study is conducted at three points in time: 1972, 1985, and 2005. The following variables are controlled for: socioeconomic development, ethnic or linguistic heterogeneity, British or American colonial heritage, and dominant religion. The results show that size per se contains little explanatory value. Findings indicate that religion is becoming a key determinant of democracy during the "fourth wave" of democratization. Furthermore, the success of democracy in non-Christian settings does not depend on the level of socioeconomic development. Instead, results show that as democracy tries to gain a foothold in non-Christian settings, insularity smoothes the transition to popular government. The impact of islandness on democracy within this particular context is increasing over time.

Keywords: • Size • Democracy • Modernization • Religion

Size and Democracy

A classic question which involves physical characteristics, dealt with for the first time in ancient Greece by Plato and Aristotle, concerns the relation between size and democracy. The present work falls explicitly within this tradition in that it aims to assess the strength of association between the size of countries and their corresponding levels of democracy at three points in time. It is, no doubt, of interest to note that there is theoretical support both for an assumption that links smallness to democracy as well as for a counter-assumption which states that largeness is conducive to a democratic form of government. The first view was advocated by Plato and Aristotle, both of whom argued that in a small unit people share a common base of interest and also, by necessity, a common destiny. The Greek philosophers went as far as pointing out the critical size limit above which

a democratic form of government could no longer prevail. Plato (cited in Bratt, 1951: 17) claimed that the unit ought to be small enough to generate a feeling of interdependence among its citizens, whereas Aristotle (1991: 282), for his part, emphasized that the people had to be able to get together in a space small enough to render possible political debates between all the citizens.

The arguments of Plato and Aristotle were subsequently brought up in the Age of Enlightenment by Montesquieu and Rousseau. Montesquieu argued that a republic (be it democratic or aristocratic) could only persist in a small area. "In a large republic, the common good is sacrificed to a thousand considerations; it is subordinated to various exceptions; it depends on accidents. In a small republic, the public good is more strongly felt, better known, and closer to each citizen" (Montesquieu, cited in Dahl and Tufte, 1973: 7). For Rousseau, of course, size was essential since he argued in favor of a direct form of democracy. Following Aristotle, Rousseau maintained that the small city-state was essential for popular participation. His laconic conclusion, when discussing the importance of size for democracy, was that "plus l'Etat s'aggrandit, plus la liberté diminue" (Rousseau, 1900: Bk. 1, 64). In modern times, Arend Lijphart has emphasized the importance of small size for the consociational form of democracy. According to Lijphart (1977: 65), small size "directly enhances a spirit of cooperativeness and accommodation, and it indirectly increases the chances of consociational democracy by reducing the burdens of decision-making and thus rendering the country easier to govern."

The assumption that smallness is a virtue and largeness is a vice if a democratic form of government is desired does not stand unchallenged, however. In *The Federalist Papers*, James Madison turned the above-mentioned arguments upside down, claiming that small units posed an inherent threat to democracy. According to Madison, small units were vulnerable to a tyranny of the majority. The emergence of an inconsiderate, perpetual majority, ruling exclusively and, if worst came to worst, ruthlessly, in its own interest, was more likely in small states. However, if a political unit was large, it would also be heterogeneous, incorporating a wide variety of interests. Accordingly, different issues will generate different coalitions, and in some cases certain people will win and in other cases the same people will lose. The important thing, however, is that no identifiable group of people has any manifest motive for calling the legitimacy of the democratic system into question (Hamilton et al., 1961: 82–4).

There are, then, theoretical arguments for a negative as well as a positive link between size and democracy. The seminal work in this field of research is, of course, Dahl and Tufte's *Size and Democracy* (1973). From the centuries-old debates on the relation between size and democracy, the authors list several areas where size can be expected to influence democracy, namely on citizen participation, on security and order, on unity and diversity, on the common interest, on loyalties, on emotional life, on rationality, and on control of leaders (Dahl and Tufte, 1973: 13–15).

It should be strongly emphasized that the expected causal relation between size and democracy is not unidirectional in any of the above-mentioned areas. As shown above, both unity and diversity have been assumed to enhance democracy, and loyalties to a single community can thus be a virtue or a vice for democratic qualities (Dahl and Tufte, 1973: 13–14). Differences in emotional life are also

thought to have positive as well as negative consequences for democracy. Accordingly, loss of a sense of community is more likely in large units (Dahl and Tufte, 1973: 15), but this should be weighed against the difference in the nature of conflicts in small and large units. In small units, group conflicts tend to be rare, but when they arise they are intense, personal, polarizing, and dangerous since "New organizations arise [and n]ew leaders, inexperienced in managing conflict, confront one another" (Dahl and Tufte, 1973: 94). In large units, on the other hand, conflicts emerge between organizations, and the processes for dealing with organized group conflicts are institutionalized, that is, handled through interest organizations and political parties.

The intimacy of small units makes communication between leaders and citizens reciprocal. In small units, leaders should be informed about the preferences of the citizens "by direct observation and communication" (Dahl and Tufte, 1973: 87). Small units, then, should be characterized by symmetrical relationships, and large units by asymmetrical ones. On the other hand, in large units, citizens have better opportunities to develop specialized skills, which, of course, is essential for rational decision-making (Dahl and Tufte, 1973: 66–88).

In small communities, it is presumably easier for citizens to agree upon a common interest, but this also means that there is little need for a strong opposition. Thus, power is concentrated in the hands of a single, dominant political organization (Dahl and Tufte, 1973: 94–7). This, in turn, enhances the position of the leader of the executive branch, at the expense of the legislature and the parties, particularly since politics in small units is believed to be highly personalized (Ott, 2000: 101; Peters, 1992: 24). On the other hand, it is also worthwhile stressing that elite behavior patterns should differ markedly in small and large units. Since persons who are forced to interact with each other are likely to minimize open confrontations, the political elite in small countries are likely to strive for consensual relations, whereas this should not be the case in large units (Ott, 2000: 98). This striving for consensus is likely to enhance democracy since it would minimize "the acrimonious conflict that often threatens the political stability of a state" (Ott, 2000: 98).

Dahl and Tufte (1973: 41–4) further note that smallness can be assumed to enhance citizen participation, since the likelihood that one particular vote is decisive decreases with increasing size. However, smallness is also assumed to generate attitudinal homogeneity and less competitive elections, which, in turn, would decrease incentives for electoral participation. Finally, regarding security and order, Dahl and Tufte (1973: 110–22) maintain that although the homogeneity of small units could reduce the need for state coercion, large units would be far better at handling external threats.

This brief exposition of Dahl and Tufte's work shows that democracy can be positively influenced both by small size as well as by big size. The emphasis of their work is on theory; the few empirical studies undertaken in their work show no unequivocal pattern between size and democracy. Other authors, however, have paid some attention to empirical evidence of the link between size and democracy. Axel Hadenius measured, among other things, the association between size and democracy in 132 developing countries. Although Hadenius (1992: 126–7) found that population size and area were linked to democracy in bivariate analyses, he further noted that the explanatory power of size disappeared when he controlled for the impact of other variables in multiple regression analyses. Larry Diamond

(1999: 117–19), for his part, noted that population size was related to the level of democracy when all the countries of the world were included in the analysis. However, it is worth noting that except for an Anglo-American colonial heritage, Diamond did not control for external variation.

In her impressive study of 222 nations, Ott (2000: 115–21) found a positive association between smallness (in terms of population size) and democracy. This relation persisted when controlling for different income levels. However, although the bulk of the empirical evidence thus supports the assumption of a link between smallness and democracy, it is worth pointing out that a contradictory result was obtained by Barro (1999: 167), who detected a weak, but significant positive association between population size and democracy.

Size encompasses two dimensions: population and area. Dahl and Tufte were primarily concerned with effects of population size, although they occasionally touched upon the relation between area and democracy as well. Within the framework of the present article, size is operationalized as population size as well as area.

Islandness and Democracy

When discussing the effects of size on democracy, it is necessary also to pay attention to another physical characteristic, namely whether countries are island states. There is some empirical support for a direct association between islandness and democracy. Having established that size was associated with democracy in binary analyses, Hadenius (1992: 126) further noted that "the effect of the size variables is drastically curtailed when an island state (or not) is simultaneously included in the regression." Ott (2000: 128), for her part, noted that "Islands are found to be significantly associated with every measure of political democracy." A similar conclusion was reached by Clague et al. (2001), who noted in their study of 146 countries that small size in itself was not conducive to a democratic form of government, but that there was an association between island status and democracy.

Why, then, should islandness be related to democracy? A careful examination of the relevant literature indicates that there are three possible causal patterns:

1. Islandness affects democracy independently of other factors,
2. Islandness affects democracy in connection with smallness, and
3. Islandness affects democracy through intervening variables (British colonial heritage or Christianity, or both).

The theoretical foundation for a direct link between islandness and democracy (pattern 1) is far less developed than the one that links size to democracy. The key is remoteness, which, it has been argued, enhances cohesion. In an island state, all people share the particular problems that are caused by remoteness and isolation. Often these problems are of greater importance than internal cleavages based on ideology, ethnicity, and so on. Accordingly, the fact that the political unit is remote becomes a unifying factor for the population and decision-making mechanisms are likely to reflect a spirit of solidarity and mutual understanding (Anckar, 2002: 386; Anckar and Anckar, 1995).

Another plausible direct causal mechanism between islandness and democracy has been suggested by Clague et al. (2001: 22–3), who argue that the natural

boundary of an island state, namely the water, puts a limit on the possibility of a ruler expanding his domain and also reduces external threat. Consequently, the position of the military is relatively weak, a fact that "decentralizes power among the contenders and makes it likely that an agreement on rules of contestation will emerge" (Clague et al., 2001: 23).

The second pattern (2) departs from the view that the combination of smallness and islandness is crucial for democracy. In Newitt's terms, "the problem of 'smallness' is given an added dimension in the case of an island, and insular isolation can be considerably intensified if you are also small" (1992: 16). Many of the theoretical arguments that linked smallness to democracy are indeed valid for island states as well. The cohesion that smallness is thought to bring about is further strengthened in an island state where "people live at a distance from the outside world [and] share a feeling that they are, so to speak, alone in the world" (Anckar, 2002: 386; see also Anckar, 2003: 380; Lowenthal, 1987: 29). We have seen that smallness is thought to shorten the distance between those who govern and those governed. This is probably accentuated if the units are island states, as both parts share the frame of reference created by remoteness (Anckar, 2002: 387). Baldacchino (2005: 35–6), for his part, has stressed the fact that the unitarism of islands, especially small ones, is also fostered by role diffusion ("individuals ... work beyond their job description"), role enlargement ("individuals have more space for innovation ... because of leaner hierarchies"), and role multiplicity ("individuals wear many hats and practice polyvalency").

The third line of reasoning emanates from the view that the empirical observations of a link between islandness and democracy in fact can be attributed to two intervening variables, namely a British colonial heritage and Christianity. Islands can be assumed to be democratic because, in the cases observed, islandness goes hand in hand with a British colonial past, which, in turn, is regarded as conducive to a democratic form of government (for example, Srebrnik, 2004: 333). Another possible explanation for the association between islandness and democracy could be that Christianity (and Protestantism in particular) has a dominant position in many island states (Hadenius, 1992: 126–7).

In the present article, my ambition is to assess the validity of each of the three patterns. This is done by means of isolating the effects of smallness, islandness, and other intervening variables from each other, but also by paying special attention to how the combination of smallness and islandness affects the level of democracy.

Defining and Measuring Democracy

Definitions of democracy are abundant in the literature. A first category is made up of authors who, following Schumpeter (1947), advocate a minimal definition of democracy (for example, Przeworski et al., 1996; Riker, 1982; Vanhanen, 1990). For an advocate of the minimalist approach, elections are the essential feature of democracy, and for Schumpeter (1947: 269), democracy is, accordingly, simply a system "for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."

A second category consists of authors who argue that in addition to the electoral dimension, attention should also be directed to civil liberties. If the people are to exercise meaningful control of their representatives and formulate alternative

policy proposals, the power holders should not have the possibility of infringing on crucial political freedoms such as the freedoms of expression, organization, or opinion (for example, Hadenius, 1992: 28–32; Sartori, 1987: 86–130).

A third category, finally, consists of authors who incorporate indicators of democratic output into their definition. In other words, the quality of democracy can be assessed in terms of the goods it produces. Such definitions, however, are easily rejected on the ground that governments that have not been popularly elected, but provide, say, high levels of GDP per capita, could, in principle, be regarded as democratic. In general, all definitions within this category make the mistake of including (possible) effects of democracy into the defining characteristics of the phenomenon (Anckar, 2007: 10–12; Sartori, 1987: 182).

Within the framework of the present article, I proceed from a definition of democracy in which attention is paid to elections and political freedoms. This decision is based on two reasons. First, I find Hadenius's (1992: 30) notion that "popular government without liberties is only a sham democracy" hard to refute. In other words, simply focusing on the electoral element without paying attention to the environment in which parties and voters function is clearly insufficient. Second, even if we acknowledged the fact that the term "democracy" is conceptually vague and not definable in an objective sense, it would nevertheless be fruitful to ask which aspects of democracy are likely to be most sensitive to variations in size and islandness. As we have seen, in Dahl and Tufte's (1973) view, size and islandness were thought to affect democratic quality rather than democratic form. Accordingly, the operationalization of democracy should take into account indicators pertaining to the working and meaningfulness of elections as well as to political freedoms.

The most widely used source in which these measures of democratic quality are assessed is no doubt Freedom House's annually conducted survey on political rights and civil liberties. On each scale, countries receive values ranging from 1 to 7. For some strange reason, low values indicate a high level of rights and liberties. Values on the two scales can easily be added and we then obtain an index of democracy, ranging from 2 to 14.

Three Points in Time

The study is conducted at three points in time, namely 1972, 1985, and 2005. The underlying logic behind this diachronic study is an assumption that democracy can be promoted by different factors in different periods of time. The first point in time is chosen both for theoretical and for practical reasons. In 1972, the "third wave of democracy" (Huntington, 1991) had not yet begun. Also, this is the first year for which Freedom House's data on political rights and civil liberties is available.

Regarding size, the difference between 1972 and 1985 is particularly interesting. There is one major factor that speaks in favor of an increasing role for size as a determinant of democracy during this period, namely the fact that the bulk of really small states emerged between these years. In 1972, the number of small independent states was very limited. Consequently, the lack of associations between size and democracy in Dahl and Tufte's (1973) study could well be attributed to the fact that they were studying what we today would refer to as medium-sized states (Srebrnik, 2004: 330). If the assumption of both Plato and Aristotle that

smallness is linked to democracy only in very small units is true, the empirical evidence should be much more convincing when there are many units of analysis exhibiting this characteristic. Thus, if extreme smallness enhances democracy, the relationship should be more clearly visible as we move along the time axis.

The choice of the last point in time is mainly motivated by the fact that recent studies have shown that factors previously considered as powerful explanations of democracy perform quite badly in explaining democracy during what McFaul (2002) has referred to as the "fourth wave" of democracy (Doorenspleet, 2002; Lindberg, 2002). Indeed, the period between 1985 and 2005 is especially interesting, since it coincides with a fundamental change in the general view of the legitimacy of different political systems. It is probably not too venturesome to state that during the past two decades, democracy has gained the status of the only legitimate form of government. Many countries are now under severe pressure to abandon their autocratic forms of government and introduce democratic ones, and it is evident that a number of countries that otherwise would not have chosen a democratic form of government have done so due to external pressure (for example, Barkan, 1997; Diamond, 1997). In other words, democracy has not emerged as a consequence of a "natural" process, but by persuasion, threats, and in some instances, by force. If this is indeed the case, it is quite possible that the weakening effect of previously strong determinants of democracy also applies to size and islandness. In other words, the physical variables should be less strongly associated with democracy in 2005 than in 1985, since the external pressure to introduce democracy was weaker in 1985 than in 2005. This is particularly the case since the number of small states does not vary much between the two points in time.

Size and Democracy: Bivariate Findings

Table 1 shows results of bivariate regression analyses between population, area, islandness, and democracy at the three points in time. The results are quite discouraging in the sense that there is very little support for the assumption of a link between size and democracy. The strongest internal association found is the one between area and democracy in 2005, but the variance explained is a meager 10 percent. The direction of the association between size and democracy is positive, meaning that the degree of democracy is higher in smaller countries than in larger ones. Perhaps surprisingly, area seems to be more strongly connected with democracy than population size. This finding suggests that the area dimension has been neglected in the literature on size and democracy. Furthermore, we note that island states have a higher degree of democracy than landlocked states (island states are coded "1" and landlocked states "0"). The "good news" is that the assumption of the increasing explanatory power of size receives some support. In 1972, population size had no impact whatsoever on the degree of democracy. In 2005, on the other hand, the explanatory power of population size is almost equal to that of area. For islandness, however, the trend is reversed, indicating that the effect of islandness on the degree of democracy is weakening over time.

Let us reflect on these findings for a moment. As indicated above, it is quite possible not only that the impact of size on democracy is nonlinear (a certain degree of nonlinearity is expected and population and area are consequently logarithmized), but that extreme threshold effects need to be considered as well.

TABLE 1. *Size, Islandness and Democracy in 1972, 1985 and 2005. Bivariate Regressions*

Independent variable	Constant	B	SE	t-value	R-square	N
1972						
Population (log)	4.053	.302	.174	1.738	.021	145
Area (log)	3.455	.446	.129	3.468**	.078	145
Island (dummy)	9.303	−3.264	.851	−3.837**	.093	145
1985						
Population (log)	2.819	.367	.145	2.527*	.037	168
Area (log)	3.773	.408	.111	3.660**	.075	168
Island (dummy)	9.136	−2.834	.718	−3.948**	.086	168
2005						
Population (log)	−1.795	.534	.125	4.270**	.088	192
Area (log)	1.460	.443	.097	4.560**	.099	192
Island (dummy)	7.041	−2.424	.640	−3.788**	.070	192

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (two-tailed)

Hadenius (1992: 125–6) noted that very small states, with a population of less than 100,000, had "surprisingly high values for democracy." For states larger than that, however, no tendency of a relation between size and democracy was detectable. Diamond, for his part, found that the relation between size and democracy persisted at higher size levels as well, but based on his results (1999: 118–19), a threshold seems to operate at a population size of 1 million.

It is therefore necessary to consider the possibility of the existence of threshold effects in the relation between size and democracy. Tables 2 and 3 return mean and median values on the degree of democracy for six different size categories at the three points in time. The results clearly show that there is indeed a threshold effect. The smallest countries have a much higher degree of democracy than larger ones. However, when the population size surpasses 500,000 individuals, there are no longer any associations between size and democracy (for 1972, the threshold is slightly higher, operating at the level of 1 million inhabitants). A similar trend is discernible for area in 1972 and 2005. In 1985, on the other hand, the association follows a more linear pattern.

Contesting Variables

So far, the analyses have shown that there is indeed some evidence of a link between size and democracy. However, in addition to size, a number of other plausible determinants of democracy have been put forward in the literature. Many of these factors have been empirically linked to democracy and it is therefore necessary to determine if and how these variables affect the relation between size and democracy. The following factors will be considered: socioeconomic development, religion, ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity, and colonial heritage. I have also considered a number of other potential explanatory variables that have been put forward in the literature, but have chosen to exclude them from the analysis.[1]

TABLE 2. *Degree of Democracy in Six Categories of Countries by Population Size, at Three Points in Time*

Population size (1000)	1972				1985				2005			
<100	5.20	6.00	(1.10)	N 5	4.83	4.00	(2.82)	N 12	2.54	2.00	(1.20)	N 13
100– <500	6.64	6.00	(4.11)	N 11	7.71	7.00	(4.31)	N 21	4.50	3.00	(3.47)	N 20
500– <1,000	6.70	5.00	(3.34)	N 10	8.43	10.00	(3.78)	N 7	7.50	7.50	(2.93)	N 8
1,000– <5,000	9.52	10.50	(4.10)	N 44	8.64	10.00	(4.11)	N 39	6.48	6.00	(3.69)	N 40
5,000– <10,000	9.14	11.00	(4.47)	N 22	8.71	10.00	(4.67)	N 28	7.41	6.50	(4.09)	N 32
≥10,000	9.02	10.00	(4.00)	N 53	9.07	10.00	(4.13)	N 61	7.08	6.00	(4.04)	N 79
Total	8.72	10.00	(4.11)	N 145	8.42	10.00	(4.22)	N 168	6.45	6.00	(3.95)	N 192
Eta-squared (sig. 2-tailed)	.077	(.047)			.065	(.052)			.166	(.000)		

Note: mean values are listed first, followed by median values. Standard deviations are in brackets.

TABLE 3. *Degree of Democracy in Six Categories of Countries by Area, at Three Points in Time*

Area (Km²)	1972				1985				2005			
<500	4.29	4.00	(1.50)	N 7	5.08	4.00	(2.96)	N 13	3.13	2.00	(2.36)	N 16
500–3999	6.83	6.00	(3.06)	N 6	6.91	7.00	(4.04)	N 11	4.58	3.00	(3.20)	N 12
4000–19,999	5.56	5.00	(2.51)	N 9	7.23	7.00	(3.37)	N 13	6.71	6.50	(3.52)	N 14
20,000–99,999	8.30	11.00	(4.58)	N 27	7.61	9.00	(4.40)	N 31	5.63	5.00	(3.73)	N 46
100,000–499,999	9.56	11.00	(4.20)	N 52	9.26	10.00	(4.19)	N 54	7.50	8.00	(4.16)	N 54
≥500,000	9.59	11.00	(3.59)	N 44	9.59	11.00	(4.13)	N 46	7.50	6.50	(3.80)	N 50
Total	8.72	10.00	(4.11)	N 145	8.41	10.00	(4.23)	N 168	6.45	6.00	(3.94)	N 192
Eta-squared (sig. 2-tailed)	.133	(.001)			.103	(.003)			.123	(.000)		

Note: mean values are listed first, followed by median values. Standard deviations in brackets.

Socioeconomic Development

Throughout the years, a number of explanations for democracy have been put forward. However, without any doubt it is that Lipset's (1959) study, in which he related democratic stability to socioeconomic development, that is the most influential. The link between democracy and various measures of development has subsequently been retested a number of times in varying contexts (Barro, 1999; Bollen, 1979, 1983; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck, 1994; Cutright, 1963; Diamond, 1992; Hadenius, 1992; Olsen, 1968; Vanhanen, 1990). To cut a long story short, the empirical evidence tends to support Lipset's thesis, although his general theory has been qualified and improved in a number of respects. For instance, it has been argued that economic development enhances democratic stability, but does not in itself bring about a democratic form of government (Przeworski and Limongi, 1997), that the relation between economic development and democracy is of a nonlinear nature (Arat, 1988), and that it is not economic development per se, but rather an egalitarian income structure that is crucial for democracy (Muller, 1995).

The most widely used indicator of socioeconomic development is GNP per capita (or GDP per capita). However, other indices should be used as well. It should, for instance, be stressed that there is empirical evidence suggesting that measurements of social indicators carry more weight than purely economic indicators. Accordingly, Hadenius (1992: 91) found that "With reference to the development of democracy, [the proportion of literates] seems to be the central factor in the modernization process." Since Hadenius's study in particular showed that there was a difference in explanatory power between purely economic indicators and indicators of the quality of life, it makes sense also to include literacy among the measures of socioeconomic development. Another useful way to operationalize socioeconomic development is to use the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), which captures both the economic and the social dimension of development. The results of Diamond's (1992: 100–2) analysis, for instance, showed that HDI was a stronger determinant of democracy than GNP per capita. Here, I use all three measures as indicators of socioeconomic development.

Religion

There is substantial evidence of a link between religion and democracy. Christianity is said to be conducive to a democratic form of government, whereas Islam in particular is incompatible with democracy. The reason underlying this assumption is that Islam, as opposed to Christianity, is all-embracive, with strict rules for social, economic, cultural, political, and religious organizations. The fusion of the political sphere and the religious one, conceptualized in the term "*umma*," leaves no room for accountable government.

Christianity, on the other hand, does not aspire to control every aspect of political life and Jesus Christ was, for instance, never considered a political leader (Kateregga and Shenk, 1983: 82). Among Christian denominations, Protestantism in particular has been said to nurture democracy. The Weberian argument states that Protestantism enhances individuality and egalitarianism (Weber, 1978). Protestant denominations are characterized by egalitarian power structures and priests are not closer to their god than ordinary citizens (Weber, 1978: 55; see also Anderson, 2004: 194–5; Lundell, 2000: 55). In addition, a growing tolerance

toward other religious denominations followed the Reformation, although this was not the intent of the Protestant reformers (Anderson, 2004: 195). Catholicism, on the other hand, is a more authoritarian variant of Christianity and less conducive to democracy. Accordingly, the Catholic Church had a quite restrictive attitude toward popular government until, finally, the threat of communism made the Vatican take a more positive view toward democracy. The Second Vatican Council, which ended in 1965, is often mentioned as the crucial landmark (Anderson, 2004: 1996). However, it should not be forgotten that Christian Democracy had played an important role in linking Catholicism to democracy well before that. As a consequence of the Vatican's more favorable attitude toward democracy, Huntington (1991, 1996) suggested that western Christianity, rather than Protestantism, was crucial for democracy during the third wave.

Among other religions as well there are potentially important cleavages to consider (although it has to be admitted that concerning religions other than Islam and Christianity, it is more difficult to find any direct theoretical link to the dependent variable). Since the distinction between Protestantism and other Christian denominations is theoretically motivated, I have split up Christianity into three subcategories: Protestant, Catholic, and other Christian (mainly Eastern Orthodox). I have also split up Islam into its two main subdivisions: Shia and Sunni. Concerning the other religions, no further categorization is made.[2]

In comparative global studies, authors tend to treat religion as a quantitative variable measured as the proportion of the population that adheres to the respective religion (for example, Barro, 1999: 175–6; Hadenius, 1992; Muller, 1995: 976). Hadenius, for instance, finds an association between the percentage of Protestants and democracy. A retest of his analysis indicates, however, that when religion is treated as a qualitative phenomenon and when islandness is kept constant, the association disappears (Anckar and Anckar, 1995). It is my firm opinion that religion in this case should primarily be regarded as a qualitative and not a quantitative phenomenon. In order for religion to have an impact on democracy, it is necessary that the religion in question is in a dominant position and more or less permeates society. Also, simply applying the percentage points of, for instance, Protestants for measuring the degree of Protestantism can be highly misleading, since we do not consider the distribution of other religious denominations in a given country. In other words, we would assume that all countries where 23 percent of the population are Protestant would score the same value on the dependent variable. However, it is, of course, very likely indeed that the distinction between Protestantism and all other religions is not the only relevant one with regard to the level of democracy. Thus, in one country the rest of the population (77 percent) might consist of Muslims, whereas in another country it might consist of Catholics. If we, for the sake of the argument, accept as valid Huntington's view that Catholicism is (almost) as conducive to democracy as Protestantism, whereas the opposite is true for Islam, the two countries would score quite different values on the dependent variable due to the fact that we have neglected the impact of the distribution of Catholics and Muslims.

The question is, of course, how to define "dominant position." What is the relevant threshold? Here, I have chosen 50 percent as a cutoff point for dominance. In other words, a religion is in a dominant position in a country if a majority of the population adheres to it.

Ethnic and Linguistic Fragmentation

The impact of ethnicity on democracy has been verified in a number of studies (Clague et al., 2001: 28–9, 31; Hadenius, 1992: 112–18, 143–4; Hannan and Carroll, 1981; Vanhanen, 1984: 29). The link is negative: the more fragmented the society, the lower the level of democracy. The theoretical reasoning underlying the causal link is the argument that heterogeneous societies are more violent than homogeneous ones (Powell, 1982: 51, 154). Ethnicity, of course, is difficult to conceptualize. Originally, ethnicity and race were synonymous, but during past decades the concept of ethnicity has been stretched and it now often encompasses language and religion as well. Here, ethnicity is operationalized in terms of race and language. In the main source used, measurements of linguistic as well as ethnic fragmentation have been calculated for all the countries in the world according to Rae and Taylors' (1970) index of fractionalization.[3]

Colonial Heritage

A large number of countries received their independence during the 20th century. It is clear that these countries to varying extents have adopted the norms, values, culture, and traditions of their former mother countries. The same holds true for the political system. Therefore, it is necessary to include British colonial heritage among the contesting variables. A British colonial past has been said to nurture democratic values (for example, Clague et al., 2001: 27, 31; Srebrnik, 2004: 333). It is important to note that only a British colonial past is assumed to enhance democracy. The contrast to the legacy of the second greatest European colonial power, France, is striking. The two countries differed greatly in terms of their eagerness to introduce the democratic form of government into their colonies. The British encouraged native participation in the governing process and local elites were consequently familiarized with popular government (Bell, 1967; Bollen and Jackman, 1985: 445; Weiner, 1987; 19–20). Local organizations existed in the French colonies as well, but their powers were rather limited (Betts, 1991). It is also worth stressing the fact that whereas the process of independence went smoothly in the British colonies, the opposite was the case in the French ones (Hadenius, 1992: 130). Of particular importance is the fact that the British tended to make sure that their colonies adopted a democratic form of government before independence was granted (Ghai, 1988: 3–4).

Concerning the operationalization of colonial heritage, we should pay attention to the length of the colonial period and the time that has elapsed since the end of colonial rule. With these factors in mind, I stipulate that countries that have been under foreign rule for at least 10 consecutive years from the year 1920 to the present are regarded as former colonies. If countries have been under the rule of several colonial powers, I regard the last colonial power as the relevant one. Although much of the theoretical discussion has concerned the difference between the British and French colonial legacy, it is worthwhile also to assess the effects of a colonial legacy other than the British or French on the degree of democracy.

Empirical Patterns

Bivariate Patterns

I shall begin by assessing the bivariate relations between the contesting and the dependent variables. The quantitative variables will be related to the dependent

variable by means of correlation analyses. Concerning the multi-categorical qualitative variables, I shall use comparisons of means tests (ETA-squared). Results of the bivariate analyses for the quantitative variables are given in Table 4 and show that the socioeconomic indicators are important, whereas ethnic and linguistic fragmentation carries little explanatory weight. For what it is worth, the impact of literacy and HDI seems to be decreasing between 1985 and 2005, whereas that of GDP per capita is stable across time.

Tables 5 and 6 show the results of comparisons of means tests for the variables dominating religion and colonial heritage. Concerning religion, one very clear pattern emerges: Protestant countries have a high degree of democracy throughout the decades. It is also worth noting that the global process of democratization to a large extent has taken place in Catholic countries (primarily in Latin America). Based on the evidence in Table 5, it is evident that the democratic gap between Protestant countries, on the one hand, and Catholic and Eastern Orthodox countries, on the other, is closing. Concerning the other two major religions, Islam and Buddhism, the degree of democracy is low throughout the period under study. A careful interpretation of the results suggests that Christianity, and Protestantism in particular, is conducive to democracy, whereas Islam and Buddhism are more negatively associated with democracy than other religions.

Turning to Table 6, findings suggest that in terms of the degree of democracy for the years 1972 and 1985, the dividing line lies between countries without a colonial past or with an Anglo-American colonial past and other countries. In other words, the assumption that a British (or an American) colonial past nurtures democracy wins some support. However, in the year 2005, the former British colonies no longer stand out as the torchbearers of democratization. Another interesting finding is that countries that have not been subject to colonial rule since 1920 have even higher levels of democracy than former British colonies. Finally, in terms of consequences for the degree of democracy, the difference between a French and a British colonial heritage is stable across time.

Multivariate Patterns

My next step was to run multiple regressions including the contesting variables in the regression models along with the size dimensions. Since area and population are highly interrelated, they cannot be included in the same regression. Also, since

TABLE 4. *Socioeconomic Development, Ethnic/Linguistic Heterogeneity and Degree of Democracy at Three Points in Time. (Pearson's R)*

	GDP/cap (log)	Literacy	Human development index	Index of ethnic fragmentation	Index of linguistic fragmentation
Degree of democracy 1972	−.531** 145	−.526** 136	−.702** 103	.159 145	.218** 145
Degree of democracy 1985	−.535** 168	−.605** 168	−.722** 112	.227** 168	.252** 168
Degree of Democracy 2005	−.549** 192	−.414** 192	−.507** 175	.222** 192	.194** 192

** p < .01, * p < .05 (two-tailed).

TABLE 5. *Dominating Religion and Degree of Democracy in 1972, 1985, and 2005: Arithmetic Means and Median Values*

Dominating religion	Degree of democracy 1972				Degree of democracy 1985				Degree of democracy 2005			
Christianity	7.42	6.00	(4.45)	N79	6.73	5.00	(4.29)	N96	4.57	3.00	(3.20)	N110
Protestantism	4.43	2.50	(3.76)	N14	4.35	4.00	(2.68)	N20	3.54	2.00	(2.45)	N 24
Catholicism	7.78	8.00	(4.16)	N41	6.94	5.00	(4.23)	N50	4.50	3.00	(3.28)	N 54
Other	11.00	12.50	(4.08)	N 4	7.00	4.00	(6.08)	N 3	5.25	4.50	(2.92)	N 8
Islam	10.77	12.00	(2.72)	N31	10.83	11.00	(2.04)	N36	10.10	11.00	(2.57)	N 42
Sunni	10.74	11.00	(2.80)	N27	10.84	11.00	(2.08)	N31	10.03	11.00	(2.71)	N 37
Shia	11.00	12.00	(2.45)	N 4	10.80	10.00	(1.92)	N 5	10.60	11.00	(1.14)	N 5
Buddhism	9.33	10.00	(3.54)	N 9	11.75	14.00	(3.24)	N 8	8.38	8.50	(4.10)	N 8
Hinduism	8.00	8.00	(4.24)	N 2	6.00	6.00	(1.41)	N 2	8.00	8.00	(4.24)	N 2
Chinese folk religions	10.50	10.50	(.71)	N 2								
Judaism	5.00	5.00		N 1	4.00	4.00		N 1	3.00	3.00		N 1
Indigenous beliefs	9.40	9.00	(2.51)	N 5	12.00	12.00	(2.00)	N 3	7.50	7.50	(.71)	N 2
No religion/atheism	13.33	14.00	(1.16)	N 3	13.60	14.00	(.894)	N 5	6.00	2.00	(6.93)	N 3
Eta-squared (sig.)	.156 (.003)				.291 (.000)				.378 (.000)			
N	132				152				167			

Notes: Mean values are listed first, followed by median values. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. Only countries where a majority (more than 50 percent) of the population adheres to the same religion are included. The same criterion applies to the three subcategories of Christianity, which explains why the sum of these subcategories does not add up to the total for Christianity.

TABLE 6. *Colonial Heritage and the Degree of Democracy in 1972, 1985, and 2005: Arithmetic Means and Median Values*

Colonial heritage	Degree of democracy 1972				Degree of democracy 1985				Degree of democracy 2005			
None	7.89	(4.37)	8.50	N64	6.97	(4.38)	5.50	N64	4.81	(3.53)	3.00	N63
Great Britain	7.96	(3.93)	8.00	N49	7.55	(3.77)	8.00	N65	6.42	(3.82)	6.00	N65
France	10.29	(2.49)	12.00	N24	12.12	(1.79)	13.00	N25	9.52	(2.73)	10.00	N25
Spain	12.00		12.50	N1	14.00		14.00	N1	7.50	(7.78)	7.50	N2
Portugal					13.20	(.84)	13.00	N5	6.20	(3.42)	7.00	N5
Netherlands	10.00		10.00	N1	11.50	(.71)	11.50	N2	5.00	(1.00)	5.00	N3
USA	10.00		10.00	N1	7.00		7.00	N1	3.00	(2.00)	2.00	N4
Belgium	13.33	(.577)	13.00	N3	13.33	(1.16)	14.00	N3	10.33	(2.08)	11.00	N3
Ethiopia									13.00		13.00	N1
Soviet Union									8.47	(4.26)	9.00	N15
Yugoslavia									4.75	(2.22)	5.00	N4
Japan	13.00	(1.41)	13.00	N2	11.50	(3.54)	11.50	N2	8.50	(7.78)	8.50	N2
Eta-squared (sig.)	.142 (.003)				.262 (.000)				.232 (.000)			
N	145				168				192			

Notes: Mean values are listed first, followed by median values. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses.

bivariate analyses indicated that there was a threshold above which the association between size and democracy disappeared, I additionally created two size variables in which population as well as area was used in a trichotomized form. Countries situated in the smallest categories in Tables 2 and 3 are given the value "0"; countries in the second smallest categories in the same tables, the value "1"; and all other countries, the value "2." The size variable that is most strongly associated with the dependent variable in bivariate analyses (Pearson's *R*) is included in the regression analysis along with the other independent variables. For the years 1972 and 1985, area (log) is more strongly associated with democracy than the other three size variables, whereas for 2005, the trichotomized population variable carries more explanatory weight than any of the other size variables.

Concerning the contesting variables, results in the bivariate analyses showed that in 2005, ethnic fragmentation was more strongly related to democracy than linguistic fragmentation. The index of ethnic fragmentation is therefore included in the regression for the year 2005. For 1972 and 1985, the opposite was the case and I included linguistic fragmentation in the regressions. Among the measures of socioeconomic development, GDP per capita was more strongly associated with the dependent variable than HDI or literacy in 2005 and was therefore included in the regression. For 1972 and 1985, HDI was more strongly related to the dependent variable than literacy or per capita GDP. The problem, however, is that there are many missing cases concerning HDI for the years 1972 and 1985. This problem is accentuated by the fact that many of the missing cases are the ones that, in a sense, are the most interesting ones for the purpose of the present study, namely the smallest countries. Therefore, I was compelled to use instead the second strongest indicator of socioeconomic development for 1972 and 1985, that is literacy in 1985 and GDP per capita in 1972.

With regard to religion, countries where more than 50 percent of the population is made up of Christians were given the value "1" and countries where other religions were in a dominant position the value "0." In a number of countries, Christianity is the largest religion, but the Christian population does not reach a level greater than 50 percent. These countries were given the value "0.5." Finally, concerning colonial heritage, countries with a British or American colonial heritage were given the value "1" and all other countries the value "0."

The results, which are given in Table 7, show that size contains no explanatory value in any of the three time settings. However, in 1972 we detect a weak association between islandness and democracy. All in all, the results show that socioeconomic development is a powerful determinant of democracy at all points in time. Concerning Christianity, we reach an interesting conclusion, namely that the explanatory power of Christianity is increasing rapidly. In 2005, Christianity is more or less as strong a determinant of democracy as socioeconomic development. This result stands in sharp contrast to findings which have stressed the negligible role of religion in relation to democracy (for example, Muller, 1995: 977–9). Instead, it gives support to Huntington's (1991, 1996) assumption of religion as a key determinant of democracy. It is worth stressing that substituting Protestantism for Christianity for the years 1972 and 1985 does not alter the picture much. The regression coefficient for Protestantism in 1972 is –1.94 (t-value –2.01), whereas the corresponding value for 1985 is –1.54 (t-value –1.87). The initial assumption that the explanatory variables should perform less well in 2005 than in the two previous time settings is not confirmed. The only variable for which such a pattern

TABLE 7. *Size, Islandness, GDP/Cap (Log), Literacy, Ethnic/Linguistic Heterogeneity, Dominant Religion, Colonial Heritage and Degree of Democracy at Three Points in Time. Multiple Regressions*

Independent variables	1972	1985	2005
(Constant)	17.021	13.589	14.687
	2.241	1.625	1.635
	7.596**	8.363**	8.982**
Area (log)	.107	.063	Not included in
	.120	.110	model
	.894	.574	
Population	Not included in	Not included in	.547
(trichotomized)	model	model	.449
			1.219
ISLAND (dummy)	−1.885	−.292	−.993
	.834	.748	.608
	−2.259*	−.391	−1.632
GDP/cap (log)	−1.323	−.066	−.927
(1972, 2005) or	.233	.011	.140
literacy rate (1985)	−5.666**	−6.181**	−6.613**
Ethnic (2005) or	.503	−.055	.219
linguistic (1972, 1985)	.949	.897	.846
heterogeneity	.530	−.061	.259
Christianity	−1.264	−1.799	−3.127
(dummy)	.628	.610	.492
	−2.013*	−2.950**	−6.361**
British/American	−1.204	−1.124	.330
colonial heritage	.627	.583	.493
(dummy)	−1.920	−1.929*	.670
R-square	.389	.423	.475
Adjusted R-square	.363	.402	.458
F-sig.	.000	.000	.000
N	145	168	192

Note: In each cell, the regression coefficients are listed first, followed by the standard error and the t-value.
** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (two-tailed)

can be detected is British or American colonial heritage, the explanatory value of which decreased sharply between 1985 and 2005.

Discussion

Given the theoretical framework, the results have been quite discouraging in the sense that the impact of the physical variables on democracy seems to be negligible. Instead, the analyses have indicated that religion and socioeconomic development appear to be the most important determinants of democracy. The results for 1972 and 1985, on the one hand, and 2005, on the other, differed in one important respect. In 1972 and 1985, the explanatory power of religion was much weaker than

that of socioeconomic development, but in 2005 the explanatory power of religion was more or less equal to that of GDP per capita. It is remarkable that between 1985 and 2005, the regression coefficient for Christianity went from –1.8 to –3.1.

Although it is evident that the explanatory power of size appears to be over-shadowed by that of religion and socioeconomic development, it is still possible that size can have an impact on democracy under special circumstances. Concerning the two latest time settings, the biggest difference lies in the fact that democracy has spread at a tremendous rate between 1985 and 2005. All over the world, authoritarian regimes have felt pressure from the "international community" to make democratic reforms. It is only reasonable to expect that the likelihood of success of the democratic form of government varies a lot within these former authoritarian countries and religion in particular appears to play a crucial role. The increased explanatory value of religion between 1985 and 2005 suggests that a religion other than Christianity has become a big obstacle for the success of democracy during the "fourth wave" of democratization.

Although the results have indicated that physical factors carry little explanatory value, we should still bear in mind that the explanatory power of population size in particular has increased over time. This is clearly shown in the bivariate analyses in Table 1, but the tendency is detectable also in Table 7, where we find that population size in 2005 appears to be more strongly connected to democracy than area in 1972 and 1985. One plausible explanation for the increased explanatory power of size between 1985 and 2005 could be that physical factors are conducive to the success of democracy particularly in contexts in which democracy has not been successful. It could well be that physical factors add little to the level of democracy when it competes with a powerful determinant of democracy such as Christianity. However, it is not unlikely that as democracy is introduced in non-Christian countries, physical factors suddenly appear as important for the development of democratic qualities. In this "hostile" setting, the attributes connected to smallness emerge as a conducive factor for democracy.

Let us therefore see if this is indeed the case. I have split the population into two categories, Christian countries and non-Christian countries, and rerun the regressions shown in Table 7 in these two settings. In order clearly to separate Christian countries from non-Christian ones, I exclude from the analyses all countries where Christians constitute a plurality, but not a majority, of the population.

The results are shown in Table 8 and provide some interesting findings. Among the Christian countries, socioeconomic development is the most important determinant of democracy at all points in time. However, when we turn to the non-Christian countries, socioeconomic development loses all its explanatory power at all points in time.[4] This result supports the finding by Burkhart and Lewis-Beck (1994: 906) that the explanatory power of socioeconomic development on democracy is stronger in industrialized countries than in semi-peripheral or peripheral countries.

We also find evidence of a link between physical variables and democracy in non-Christian settings. However, not size, but rather islandness appears to be crucial. Islandness is associated with democracy in 1972 and 2005. In 1985, no such association was found (this result is not altered if literacy is substituted by GDP per capita). This finding shows that the tendency for a weakening effect of islandness on democracy detected in Table 1 does not apply in non-Christian contexts. Instead, we find the opposite to be true. Finally, concerning colonial

TABLE 8. *Size, Islandness, Socioeconomic Development, Ethnic/Linguistic Heterogeneity, Colonial Heritage and Degree of Democracy in Two Religious Contexts in 1972, 1985 and 2005. Multiple regressions*

Independent variables	Christian countries 1972	Non-Christian countries 1972	Christian countries 1985	Non-Christian countries 1985	Christian countries 2005	Non-Christian countries 2005
(Constant)	20.510	9.668	16.361	11.542	13.230	23.216
	2.671	3.317	2.241	2.412	1.751	5.923
	7.680**	2.915**	7.302**	4.786**	7.557**	3.920**
Area (log)	.119	.136	−.003	.128	Not	Not
	.134	.196	.131	.178	included	included
	.887	.693	−.255	.719	in model	in model
Population (trichotomized)	Not	Not	Not	Not	.628	−5.088
	included	included	included	included	.391	2.635
	in model	in model	in model	in model	1.605	−1.931
Ethnic (2005) or linguistic (1972, 1985) heterogeneity	3.792	−1.487	.099	−1.551	1.803	−1.245
	1.355	1.118	1.349	1.079	.964	1.583
	2.798**	−1.329	.073	−1.437	1.871	−.786
ISLAND (dummy)	−.198	−2.613	−.740	−1.144	.264	−3.509
	1.130	1.196	.999	1.203	.673	1.307
	−.175	−2.184*	−.740	−.951	.392	−2.684**
GDP/cap (log) (1972, 2005) or literacy rate (1985)	−2.154	.137	−.111	−.019	−1.193	−.469
	.279	.329	.016	.013	.151	.293
	−7.729**	.416	−6.934**	−1.426	−7.914**	−1.601
British/American colonial heritage (dummy)	−2.874	−1.801	−.815	−1.618	−1.129	1.165
	.944	.762	.939	.687	.608	.886
	−3.044**	−2.362*	−.868	−2.356*	−1.856	1.314
R-square	.547	.262	.428	.214	.479	.192
Adj. R-square	.516	.196	.397	.150	.454	.127
F-sig.	.000	.004	.000	.009	.000	.019
N	79	62	96	68	110	68

Note: In each cell, the regression coefficients are listed first, followed by the standard error and the t-value.
**$p < .01$, *$p < .05$ (two-tailed).

heritage, the tendency is clear: a British or American colonial legacy was important in both religious settings in 1972, but has now lost all its explanatory value.

The results that emerge from the multiple regressions should be interpreted with some caution. On the one hand, stratifying the population by religion strongly reduces the number of cases in the regressions. Also, since heteroskedasticity is a frequent problem when using cross-sectional data, White's test of heteroskedasticity was conducted for all nine regression models. In Table 7, the test was significant at the .01 level for the year 1985 and at the .05 level for 1972, and in Table 8 the test was significant at the .05 level for the years 1972 and 1985 in the category of

non-Christian countries. The good news is that none of the regressions conducted for the year 2005 suffered from heteroskedasticity. Thus, the conclusion that islandness is related to democracy in non-Christian settings in 2005 is not weakened.

Smallness and Islandness

Before we can reach any final conclusion about the relationship between size, islandness, and democracy we must still reflect on the possibility that combinations of variables are important, and not the independent variables per se. As noted above, it has been argued that the combination of smallness and islandness should be strongly correlated with democracy. The easiest way to test for combined effects would be to create interaction terms and use them in the regression analyses. Unfortunately, this cannot be done, due to high levels of multicollinearity. The combination of smallness and islandness goes hand in hand with a key variable such as Christianity and also with a British or American colonial heritage. In other words, it is very difficult indeed to try to capture the independent effect of "small islandness" on democracy. However, some careful conclusions can be reached by combining smallness, islandness, religion, and a British or American colonial heritage in a cross-table.

In terms of size, I use the same trichotomized population category that I used in the multiple regressions for 2005, whereas all other independent variables are dichotomies (again, I exclude all countries where Christians constitute a plurality, but not a majority, of the population). The results are shown in Table 9 and are quite telling. In 2005, all countries in the smallest size category were Christian. The degree of democracy was exceptionally high regardless of "islandness" or colonial heritage. In the second smallest size category, only two countries were non-Christian (Brunei and the Maldives) and they both have a very low degree of democracy (a score of 11).

TABLE 9. *Degree of Democracy when Cross-Tabulating Size, Religion, Colonial Heritage, and Islandness in 2005: Arithmetic Means and Median Values (in Parentheses)*

Size category		British/American colonial heritage		No British/American colonial heritage	
		Island state	Landlocked state	Island state	Landlocked state
Very small	Christian	2.7 (2.0) N9	No cases	No cases	2.3 (2.0) N4
	Non-Christian	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases
Small	Christian	3.5 (3.0) N11	3.0 (3.0) N1	2.7 (2.0) N3	6.3 (4.0) N3
	Non-Christian	11.0 (11.0) N2	No cases	No cases	No cases
Other	Christian	4.4 (5.0) N8	5.7 (5.0) N11	7.8 (6.0) N5	4.9 (4.0) N55
	Non-Christian	6.8 (7.5) N4	10.1 (11.0) N17	4.5 (4.0) N4	9.3 (11.0) N41

TABLE 10. *Degree of Democracy when Cross-Tabulating Size, Religion, Colonial Heritage, and Islandness in 1985: Arithmetic Means and Median Values (in Parentheses)*

Size category		British/American colonial heritage		No British/American colonial heritage	
		Island state	Landlocked state	Island state	Landlocked state
Very small	Christian	51 (4.0) N9	No cases	No cases	4.0 (4.0) N3
	Non-Christian	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases
Small	Christian	4.8 (4.5) N8	2.0 (2.0) N1	9.7 (13.0) N3	9.3 (12.0) N3
	Non-Christian	10.3 (10.0) N3	10.0 (10.0) N1	12.0 (12.0) N1	12.0 (12.0) N1
Other	Christian	3.7 (3.0) N7	8.9 (10.0) N10	8.4 (11.0) N5	7.1 (5.0) N47
	Non-Christian	6.7 (7.0) N3	9.9 (10.0) N20	7.7 (10.0) N3	11.8 (12.5) N36

TABLE 11. *Degree of Democracy when Cross-Tabulating Size, Religion, Colonial Heritage, and Islandness in 1972: Arithmetic Means and Median Values (in Parentheses)*

Size category		British/American colonial heritage		No British/American colonial heritage	
		Island state	Landlocked state	Island state	Landlocked state
Very small	Christian	5.0 (5.0) N2	No cases	No cases	5.5 (6.0) N3
	Non-Christian	No cases	No cases	No cases	No cases
Small	Christian	3.7 (3.0) N3	6.0 (6.0) N1	2.0 (2.0) N1	7.5 (7.5) N2
	Non-Christian	8.0 (8.0) N2	11.5 (11.5) N2	No cases	No cases
Other	Christian	4.3 (3.0) N7	8.2 (10.0) N11	10.7 (13.0) N3	8.1 (9.5) N46
	Non-Christian	6.9 (5.0) N3	9.3 (9.5) N18	8.0 (10.0) N3	11.6 (12.0) N34

Similar cross-tabulations were conducted for the years 1985 and 1972 (Tables 10 and 11). At neither point in time were there any non-Christian countries in the smallest size category. In 1972, four non-Christian countries were found in the second smallest size category: two island states (Bahrain, scoring 11, and Maldives, scoring 5) and two landlocked states (Qatar, scoring 11, and the United Arab

Emirates, scoring 12). Of these countries, only the Maldives were classified as "free" on Freedom House's scale. In 1985, six non-Christian countries were found in the second smallest size category. Four of these were island states (Bahrain, Brunei, the Comoros, and the Maldives), while two were landlocked states (Djibouti and Qatar). With regard to the level of democracy, all these countries performed badly: Bahrain, the Maldives, and Qatar scored 10, Brunei 11, and finally Djibouti as well as the Comoros 12.

In other words, if any conclusion at all can be reached, it would be that almost all small island states that are democracies are Christian and that almost all small non-Christian island states are nondemocracies. Thus, the combination of smallness and islandness does not turn Islamic countries (all non-Christian countries discussed in this section are Islamic) into democracies. Furthermore, the fact that there are only a few non-Christian island states in the two smallest size categories means that the association between islandness and democracy found in the regression analyses among non-Christian countries in 1972 and 2005 in particular is based on countries situated in the largest size category. A closer examination of the data thus lends support to the conclusion that islandness is related to the degree of democracy in non-Christian settings, and that this association has nothing to do with a presumed association between islandness and smallness.

It should nevertheless be made clear that although islandness is likely to raise the level of democracy in non-Christian countries, the overall level of democracy in this category of countries is much lower than in the population of Christian countries. In other words, islandness helps to introduce democratic features into authoritarian structures, but does not necessarily turn these countries into full-fledged democracies. In contrast, in Christian countries, the already high level of democracy is not raised by islandness.

Conclusion

The present study has provided us with additional knowledge concerning the association between size and democracy. All in all, we have learned that the arguments linking size to democracy put forward by Dahl and Tufte (1973) win little support in empirical tests in which all countries in the world are included. Instead, islandness emerges as the relevant physical determinant of democracy, but only in "hostile" religious settings. Although there were some indications that the impact of size on democracy is increasing over time, the results obtained clearly lead to the conclusion that democracy is better enhanced by remoteness and isolation than by small size.

This, of course, makes it relevant to ask if democracy is enhanced by other isolating topographical constellations as well. Based on the evidence of the present article, good advice for future researchers interested in physical determinants of democracy would be to pay less attention to size and more attention to features such as islands, mountain ranges, jungles, and deserts, all of which are expected to enhance a feeling of remoteness and isolation.

Finally, the results in the total research population showed that the explanatory values of physical factors were clearly outweighed by socioeconomic development and religion. The increased explanatory power of religion between 1985 and 2005 indicates that as the "fourth wave" of democratization continues to surge, poverty is becoming a lower obstacle to overcome than a non-Christian, dominating religion.

Appendix: Main Data Sources

Degree of Democracy

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Population Size, Area, and GDP Per Capita

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Notes

1. The following variables were considered, but rejected from the analysis: dependency,
   the economic system, and the size of the military.
       Hadenius (1992) devotes a lot of attention to the role of *dependency*. The basic argu-
   ment, trailing back to the dependency school, is that it is in the interest of the metro-
   politan countries (as well as in the interest of local merchants and elite groups) to

uphold authoritarian regimes in satellite states. The nondemocratic form of government constitutes a means to continue the exploitation of the states in the periphery (Hadenius, 1992: 91–2). To capture the essence of dependency, Hadenius (1992: 93–4) uses a number of economic indicators. In addition, he introduces four indicators which reflect the extent to which countries are dependent on trade with the USA, European Union, Soviet bloc, or other countries. He then finds that countries which trade a lot with the USA are more democratic than countries whose trade depends on the former Eastern bloc. However, I would argue that this finding can hardly be regarded as giving support for the dependency theory. Instead, it is more reasonable to expect that the causal relation is reversed. In other words, socialist countries were not authoritarian because they traded a lot with the Soviet Union, but their trade exchange with the Soviet Union was extensive because they were socialist. The most interesting finding concerns commodity concentration (as measured by the percentage of the largest export item within total exports). Throughout his work, Hadenius finds that it is associated with democracy. However, as Hadenius (1992: 150–1) himself indicates, this measure probably captures socioeconomic diversification rather than the degree of dependence. Bearing these shortcomings in mind, I chose to disregard dependency as a potential determinant of democracy.

The same conclusion applies to another variable which turned out to be important in Hadenius's study, namely, the *economic system*. Hadenius notes that there is a strong link between capitalism and democracy. Here, the distance between the independent and the dependent variable is indeed very short, which Hadenius (1992: 151) readily admits. Capitalism (or, if you wish, economic freedom) is an inherent part of any democratic system and it therefore makes little sense to measure the association between the two phenomena.

Hadenius (1992: 138–42) also finds that the *size of the military* is negatively linked to democracy. When reflecting on this finding, he notes that the causal relation might be reversed: "it may be the case that authoritarian regimes (since they need it the most) strengthen the armed forces, while states which have become democratic disarm" (Hadenius, 1992: 149). I, too, find it reasonable to believe that the size of the military is a consequence, rather than a cause of the form of government.

2. The literature on religion and democracy is vast. The reader who wishes to penetrate more deeply into the subject is referred to, for instance, Anderson (2004), Bruce (2004), McCargo (2004), Stepan (2000), and Woodberry and Shah (2004).

3. For a thorough discussion of how the operationalizations and calculations are done in the source used, the reader is referred to Anckar et al. (2002).

4. Evidently, we would expect that this is due to the presence of the oil-producing Islamic countries in the Middle East, which have high levels of GDP per capita, but low levels of democracy. However, in terms of literacy, these countries score modest values for socioeconomic development. It is remarkable that substituting GDP per capita (log) with literacy in non-Christian countries for the years 1972 and 2005 does not change the results in any way. For the year 1972, the regression coefficient for literacy is –.01 (t-value –.61) and for the year 2005, .003 (t-value .16). The conclusion, then, is that the low explanatory power of socioeconomic development in non-Christian countries cannot be explained by the rich and Islamic oil-producing states with low levels of democracy.

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