

Enabling Environments for Civic Movements and the Dynamics of Democratic Transition

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This study, *Enabling Environments for Civic Movements and the Dynamics of Democratic Transition*, looks at the question of whether there are political or socioeconomic factors that inhibit or facilitate the development of civil resistance movements committed to the democratic, nonviolent transformation of authoritarian societies.

An earlier study sponsored jointly by Freedom House and the International Center for Nonviolent Conflict found that an overwhelming number of transitions to democracy in the latter part of the twentieth century featured civil resistance, including strikes, civil disobedience, boycotts, and mass protests. That study, *How Freedom Is Won*, concluded that "bottom up" transitions far outnumbered those driven by political elites.

Enabling Environments for Civic Movements carries the original study a step further in laying out a case for what Peter Ackerman has called the primacy of skills over conditions in determining the outcome of a conflict driven by civil resistance.

Based largely on original research, *Enabling Environments for Civic Movements* concludes that neither the political nor environmental factors examined in the study had a statistically significant impact on the success or failure of civil resistance movements. Among the major implications of this finding is that civic movements are as likely to succeed in less developed, economically poor countries as in developed, affluent societies. The study also finds no significant evidence that ethnic or religious polarization has a major impact on the possibilities for the emergence of a cohesive civic opposition. Nor does regime type seem to have an important influence on the ability of civic movements to achieve broad support.

The one significant factor that does emerge is government centralization. The study suggests that high degrees of centralization correlate positively with the emergence of a robust civic movement with the potential to challenge regime authority. The reverse also appears to be true: the greater the degree of government decentralization, the less likely it is that a successful movement of civic mobilization will arise.

The study's most important policy conclusion is that the growth of strong civic movements committed to tactics of nonviolent resistance can play the key role in bringing about democratic transformations in authoritarian settings. Policies that contribute to the strength of movements of civic mobilization may make the difference in the struggle to replace dictatorship with a democratic order.

Overview

By Eleanor Marchant and Arch Puddington

In November and December 2004, in what became known as the Orange Revolution, millions of Ukrainian citizens demonstrated in the streets in favor of free and honest elections. In September 2007, tens of thousands of Burmese, led by Buddhist monks, marched peacefully through Rangoon in a challenge to their country's oppressive military regime. While nonviolent protest characterized both of these movements, only one resulted in a successful transition to democracy.

For many in the international community, faith in the transformative power of nonviolent action was reinforced when the Orange Revolution led to the fair election of opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko as president. The Ukrainian movement joined other nonviolent civic movements that have emerged triumphant in practically every part of the globe and in such highly diverse settings as the Philippines, in 1985–86, and Georgia, in 2003–04.

But more recently, the failures of monk-led protests in both Burma and Tibet have prompted some to doubt the efficacy of nonviolent action. In addition, in three countries where so-called color revolutions took place—Georgia, Lebanon, and Kyrgyzstan—democratic gains were subsequently eroded by the actions of both the government and the political opposition. The past several years have brought few, if any, nonviolent movements that have been successful in promoting a transition to democracy.

The mixed results have led to questions about whether one can identify underlying, preexisting conditions that favor the emergence, success, or failure of such civic movements. This study, *Enabling Environments for Civic Movements and the Dynamics of Democratic Transition*, seeks to provide data and analysis that will help answer those questions.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The impetus for *Enabling Environments for Civic Movements* came from the interest generated by a Freedom House study released in 2006 in conjunction with the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict. That publication, *How Freedom Is Won*, looked at the political dynamics in 67 countries where democratic transitions had occurred over the last three decades.

The study evaluated each country for three factors: (1) the degree of influence that civil society had over the transition process as compared with the power holders, (2) the strength and cohesiveness of the nonviolent civic coalition, and (3) the sources of any violence that took place. By looking at these factors, researchers were able to determine which countries had strong, nonviolent, civic-led transitions and whether such conditions were likely to lead to a stable democratic system.

How Freedom Is Won found that most successful regime changes occurred as a result of the actions of domestic political forces that employed nonviolent means of struggle and resistance. Such nonviolent civic movements were seen to emerge in a variety of situations, regardless of

political, economic, or social factors. The study further found that there was a statistically significant correlation between the existence of robust nonviolent civic movements, regime change, and the long-term outlook for freedom within a country. In other words, the emergence of a strong, nonviolent opposition movement appeared to be an important factor in ensuring the longer-term success of the democratic system.

These results had a number of potentially significant policy implications. One was that the best way to promote democratic transition is to invest in the creation of a dynamic civic life. Another was that internal as well as external donors should encourage the leaders of a range of civic groups to join together in broad-based coalitions for democratic change.

The principal finding from the first study—that nonviolent civic action is often crucial for a successful democratic transition—generated discussion among scholars and policymakers about the need to continue to explore what, if any, environmental factors might be conducive to the emergence of such movements. *Enabling Environments for Civic Movements* was conceived as a means of further analyzing the proposition that broad-based, prodemocracy civic movements can emerge in any societal setting, regardless of political, economic, or social factors.

STUDY STRUCTURE

Data and Methodology

Data for this study are drawn from original research as well as preexisting data sets for the categories that look at environmental factors. To identify the countries that would be included in the study, researchers used information from Freedom House's authoritative publication *Freedom in the World*, which has analyzed the level of political rights and civil liberties for every country in the world on an annual basis since 1972. *Enabling Environments for Civic Movements* also used data from other studies about democratization or political transitions that have taken place during the same period.

To be included in the study, a country needed to meet three criteria. It had to have: (1) a population of more than one million, (2) a successful transition to democracy within the *Freedom in the World* study period, and (3) sufficient available data on the selected environmental factors for the period under examination.

In all, 64 countries met these criteria and were eventually divided into two categories: (1) those that experienced a civic movement in the years immediately preceding the democratic transition and (2) those where civic movements were absent in the years immediately preceding the transition to democracy. In the first category, there were 37 countries—8 in Latin America, 7 in Africa, 7 in Asia, and 15 in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (CEE/FSU). In the second category, there were 27 countries—5 in Latin America, 10 in Africa, 2 in Asia, 7 in CEE/FSU, 2 in Western Europe, and 1 in the Middle East.

Breaking the countries down in this fashion enabled researchers to test for any factors present in the first group that were absent from the second group. Though *How Freedom Is Won* had found a significant relationship between strong civic movements and durable democratic

governments, *Enabling Environments for Civic Movements* did not aim to examine that conclusion. Consequently, for the purposes of this study, it was not relevant that a number of countries eventually reverted to authoritarian governance after the initial transition.

Evaluation Factors

To determine which preexisting societal factors the study would examine, Freedom House convened a series of methodology meetings with scholars in the field of democratization. The methodology team recommended that the study look at economic and development indicators, including gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, economic growth, and life expectancy. By examining all of these components, researchers were able to get a well-rounded picture of the level of prosperity and development in each country.

The study also determined the type and power of the preexisting authoritarian regime. Using Barbara Geddes's work on regime types,¹ researchers organized the countries' preexisting governments into six categories: military; personalist; a military-personalist hybrid; a single-party hybrid with either a military or a personalist regime; and finally an amalgam of military, personalist, and single-party types. The study looked at the amount of power a particular regime had and the extent of centralization within the system.

Finally, the study examined the impact of preexisting divisions within the society, especially ethnic, linguistic, or religious differences.

Time-series data for these categories were drawn from a variety of sources, including the Penn World Tables and the World Bank Development Index,² for each country in the study. Researchers then analyzed this statistical data and correlated all of the information with the presence of a nonviolent, prodemocracy, broad-based civic movement in each country prior to its transition.

In summary, countries were evaluated in terms of these factors: economic development; regime type; concentration of power; and the fractionalization of society along ethnic, linguistic, or religious lines. A detailed country narrative accompanies each assessment, with information about the preexisting regime, the progress of the transition, and the durability of the resulting democratic system.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

A regression analysis found that, with one exception, the political and environmental factors examined in the study did not have a statistically significant impact on the emergence of a civic movement.

All else being equal, an economically poor country may be just as likely to foster a successful civic movement as a more affluent, industrialized one. Indeed, the country studies in this report include several cases of impoverished societies that experienced democratic transitions propelled by active civic movements. Two especially striking examples are the West African countries of Mali and Niger.

Before its democratic transition in 1991, Mali's GDP per capita was only \$250, and the average life expectancy was just 46 years. Niger also had poverty-level statistics prior to its democratic transition in 1999. Its GDP per capita was \$970, and its average life expectancy was 44 years. In contrast, Argentina registered a GDP per capita of \$9,732 and a life expectancy of 71 years at the time of its transition in 1983. During its transition in 1984, Brazil had similarly high economic figures. GDP per capita was at \$6,064, and the average life expectancy was 64 years.

Polarization along ethnic, linguistic, or religious lines may also have little impact on the potential for a cohesive civic opposition. The lack of correlation for this factor is illustrated by the fact that countries as homogeneous as South Korea or Poland and those as diverse as Benin or Brazil could all foster nonviolent civic movements that eventually lead to a democratic transition.

Benin, for example, has a polarization factor of 0.8196 (where 1 is the most diverse and 0 is the most homogeneous), with a wide variety of ethnic groups and at least eight principal local languages that are regularly used in addition to the official language of French. Yet this diversity did not prevent 40,000 people from demonstrating in the streets against President Mathieu Kerekou's authoritarian rule and in favor of democracy. Nor did it prevent that movement from taking hold throughout the country and permanently changing the political landscape. Meanwhile, with a polarization factor of only 0.0519 and a population that is 95 percent Roman Catholic and 96 percent ethnically Polish, Poland is one of the most homogeneous countries in the study. Nonetheless, it too was able to foster a broad-based civic movement that forced the communist authorities to the bargaining table in 1989 and eventually brought about democratic change.

Also worth noting is the fact that the type of regime did not appear to have any impact on the likelihood of a civic movement emerging. Of all the regime types, single party was by far the most prevalent, owing to the wide spread of communism in the post-World War II world. A total of 27 of the 64 countries in the study were ruled by a single party prior to the transition, with a 52 percent chance that the country would experience a civic movement. A full 86 percent (or 18 countries) of the 21 CEE/FSU countries in the study fell into this regime type, and of these, 61 percent (or 11 countries) experienced a broad-based civic movement before their democratic transition. The percentage was roughly the same for most of the other regime types.

There was one factor that did emerge as statistically significant. In a small but potentially important number of countries, the centralization of power was found to have a positive effect on the emergence of a cohesive and robust civic movement with enough strength to pose a challenge to the existing regime. In other words, the more political power was dispersed to local leaders or governors throughout the country, the *less* likely it was that a successful national civic movement would emerge.

The data in the study showed that very few of the 37 countries in which a nonviolent civic movement formed had any sort of decentralization prior to their democratic transition. In fact, only eight countries had such a structure, three of which were in Latin America. The implication is that most of the authoritarian regimes, whether led by the military or by a personalist dictator, maintained control with executive power highly concentrated in the system's center, rather than with authority dispersed throughout the country.

Given the relatively small number of countries with decentralized systems examined in the present assessment, further research is needed to explore this relationship, but a number of plausible reasons for the correlation exist:

- 1) In a federated or decentralized system, ordinary citizens are more likely to be able to affect political decisions than they would be in a centralized system. As in many democratic federal systems, citizens can press local officials for changes in policy, and the officials in turn have the power to respond without direct supervision and approval from the central government. As citizens' complaints may be more readily acted upon, it is more likely that popular discontent will be mitigated at the local level. Thus the prospects for a national movement whose objective is democratic transformation may be limited. By giving citizens the ability, however circumscribed, to bring change at the local level, a federated system can minimize the likelihood that discontent will coalesce on a national level.
- 2) A federated system not only means that most of the country's political power is widely dispersed across local jurisdictions or in rural areas, it also means that the inhabitants themselves may be similarly dispersed. This can significantly complicate the mobilization and coordination of a broad movement with the strength to challenge the regime.
- 3) A centralized regime usually maintains power through a paramount leader and limited number of senior officials. If an opposition civic movement is able to discredit or challenge the leader and his inner circle, the "pillars of power" on whom the country's government structure rests, it has a better chance of opening political space than it would where a federated network of power holders is dispersed throughout the country.

Thus, while many authoritarian leaders prefer to keep power close to home, the findings of this report indicate that such a choice can leave them more exposed by contributing to the emergence of a successful prodemocracy civic movement.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Many transitions from authoritarian rule do not lead to a free democratic society. When tyrannies or closed systems collapse, democracy is by no means the only alternative, as the examples of Russia, Belarus, and other former Soviet countries attest. Similarly, even when political transitions lead to democratic government, a nonviolent civic movement is not always the means used to achieve that goal.

However, the original *How Freedom Is Won* study showed that when a strong nonviolent movement is the means to the democratic end, the resulting democratic system is more likely to be a stable and durable one. Consequently, for policy decisions related to promoting democracy, the most provocative finding of the *Enabling Environments for Civic Movements* study is that a centralized political system may facilitate the emergence of successful prodemocracy civic movements.

This finding implies that the inability of civil society to mobilize forces centrally, or to communicate and coordinate actions throughout all parts of a country, could limit the success of

a prodemocracy movement. It further indicates that building a broad-based, cohesive movement, with a unified message and a base of support strong enough to put sustained and successful pressure on the government, appears to be much more difficult under a federal system.

The results of *Enabling Environments for Civic Movements* suggest that one way of fostering the emergence of new and durable democracies would be to encourage dialogue between diverse domestic civic groups and provide mechanisms for building cooperation among them.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

It is essential to the advancement of democracy that the concrete mechanisms through which freedom progresses be better understood and more widely discussed by the policymaking and analytical communities. The earlier Freedom House study, *How Freedom Is Won*, showed these communities that civic movements enjoying broad support and using nonviolent means can be crucial to ensuring the success of a transition and the stability of the ensuing democratic system.

Enabling Environments for Civic Movements and the Dynamics of Democratic Transition provides information and data to reinforce that finding. It also argues that international and domestic actors should find ways to encourage civil society organizations within authoritarian countries to move toward common action. Ultimately, the pressure exerted by broad, unified coalitions committed to nonviolent resistance may well make the difference in the struggle to replace political repression with an open, democratic order.

¹ Barbara Geddes, “What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 115-1

² Other sources included Alberto Alesina, Arnaud Devleeschauwer, William Easterly, Sergio Kurlat, and Romain Wacziarg, “Fractionalization,” *Journal of Economic Growth* 8 (2003): 155-194; James D. Fearon, “Ethnic and Cultural Diversity by Country,” *Journal of Economic Growth* 8 (2003): 195-222; Barbara Geddes, “What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 115-145; and Valerie Bunce, “Rethinking Recent Democratization: Lessons from the Postcommunist Experience,” *World Politics* 55 (2003): 167-1

Regression Analysis Results Chart

This chart illustrates the most important results from the study’s principal regression analysis. The analysis took each of the study’s independent variables (listed in the left-hand column of this chart) and tested to determine whether or not they had any significant impact upon our dependent variable—the likelihood that a broad-based pro-democracy civic movement would emerge prior to a successful democratic transition.

The values in the middle column, the $P > |t|$ column, indicate whether or not the relationship between an independent variable and our dependent variable is *statistically significant*. In other

words, they indicate whether or not any meaningful, sound conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. In order for the relationship to be statistically significant the value in this column must be 0.1 or less. *Federalism* is therefore the only independent variable that has a statistically significant result.

The right-hand column, the coefficient column, illuminates the *nature* of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. If the number in that column is positive, then the independent variable has a positive impact upon the likelihood of a pro-democracy civic movement emerging. If the coefficient is negative, then the nature of the relationship is reversed.

In this case, the middle column shows that federalism is the only independent variable with a statistically significant result, while the right-hand column shows that the existence of a federated form of governance in a country has a negative impact upon the likelihood that a broad-based civic movement will emerge prior to a democratic transition.

Independent Variable	P>[t]	Coefficient
GDP	0.257	1.07758
Economic growth	0.63	-0.026311
Life expectancy	0.922	-0.0086646
Federalization	0.1	-2.564185
Fractionalization	0.358	2.178076
Polarization	0.526	-1.263195
Regime Type 1	0.395	0.8202083
Regime Type 2	0.329	1.54553
Regime Type 3	0.11	1.516408
Regime Type 4	0.358	1.315632
Regime Type 5	0.74	-0.5469561
Regimes Types:	1	Military
	2	Military/Personalist Hybrid
	3	Personalist
	4	Single Party Hybrids with either Military or Personalist
	5	Military/Personalist/Single Party Amalgam

Study Team

Principal Author

Eleanor Marchant

Senior Advisors

Adrian Karatnycky

Arch Puddington

Christopher Walker

Methodology Advisors

Dr. Valerie Bunce (Cornell University)

Dr. M. Steve Fish (University of California, Berkeley)

Jeffrey Herbst (Miami University, Ohio)

Dr. Michael McFaul (Stanford University)

Dr. Lincoln Mitchell (School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University)

Regional Advisors

Prof. Thomas Lansner (School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University)

Dr. Michael Shifter (Inter-American Dialogue)

Dr. Bridget Welsh (Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies)

Statistical Analyst

Raffael Himmelsbach (University of Lausanne)

Statistical Advisor

Dr. Jay Verkuilen (City University of New York Graduate Center)

Country Analysts

Camille Eiss

Jake Dizard

Managing Editor

Elizabeth Floyd

Research Assistants

David Emery

Katherine Hannah

Jonas Haertle

Copy Editors

Tyler Roylance

Linda Stern

Margaret Vogel

Web Designer

Eliza Bonner

Country Reports

Albania

Period of democratic transition: 1990–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Since World War II, Albania was the most isolated country in Europe under the Communist leadership of Enver Hoxha. Freedom of expression was denied, religion was outlawed, and torture and execution were commonplace. However, Ramiz Alia, the Communist leader since 1985, slowly started to relax long-held restrictions and responded gradually to social pressures.

Albania's mass democratic ferment was launched by student strikes in 1989, culminating in a protest at the University of Tirana that erupted in December 1990 and grew to include over 3,000 people. At first focused on better living conditions but later developing a political nature, the protests transformed into a broader civic movement that pressed the government to agree to a multiparty system. Civic activists quickly gravitated to a broad-based coalition Democratic Party that initially became the main standard-bearer of ideas of democratic reform. The protests led to the government's legalization of the opposition Democratic Party and to the emergence of a number of free media outlets. About 300 miners participated in strikes in early 1991, which were also part of the atmosphere of civic ferment and mass protest. The widespread protest movement forced further concessions from the Communist Party of Labor's authorities, who agreed to elections that were eventually held in March 1991. Contested, though not fully free, parliamentary elections in 1991 resulted in a majority for the ruling Party of Labor (which had renamed itself as "Socialist"). However, nationwide worker strikes in early 1992 quickly led to new elections in April 1992, in which the anti-Communist and reformist Democratic Party triumphed.

Poverty and corruption weakened the government after the 1992 elections, as did political infighting. National elections occurred in 1997 and in 2001, while elections in 2005, despite flaws, were praised for bringing Albania's first nonviolent change of power since the collapse of communism.

Argentina

Period of democratic transition: 1982–1983

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Following a 1976 military coup that removed Maria Isabela Peron from the presidency, the new military regime began a campaign of severe repression against political opponents and alleged terrorists and sympathizers. The campaign, known as *el proceso*, or the "dirty war," resulted in the disappearance of some 10,000 to 30,000 persons during the years 1976–83.

Initially, trade unions and other potential focal points of opposition were harshly repressed. However, in the late 1970s labor slowly began to reassert its voice. A key role in the emergence of the protest movement was played by the Mothers of the Disappeared and other civic groups in the 1970s and early 1980s. The defeat of Argentina in the 1982 Falk lands war further eroded support for the armed forces and led to an expansion of civic activism and protest. The year leading up to the return of civilian rule saw the reemergence of strong trade unions, more outspoken business associations, and active human rights and civic groups that successfully coordinated protest actions. A massive protest in December 1982 was the decisive moment, after which the military regime definitively moved to set a date for new elections. The restoration of electoral politics resulted in the election of Raul Alfonsin as president in December 1983 and the reestablishment of democratic institutions.

Since the return of democracy, Argentina has vacillated between moments of political and economic stability and growth and periods of crisis. Tensions have continued between the military and civilian governments over the human rights abuses during the military era, but no military intervention has occurred. Democratic institutions remain imperfect in Argentina, but the risk of returned military rule appears low.

Armenia

Period of democratic transition: 1989–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

After a brief period of independence from 1918 to 1920, a part of the predominantly Christian Republic of Armenia became a Soviet republic in 1922, while the western portion was ceded to Turkey. Problems owing to rapid industrialization, disgust at Communist elites, rampant corruption, and concern over the fate of Armenians living in Azerbaijan fed growing nationalism that developed in the late 1980s.

A bid for autonomy in 1988 by the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh (and ensuing interethnic violence) in the neighboring Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic gave impetus to the emergence of a movement in Armenia that organized mass marches, demonstrations, and occasional work stoppages in support of greater national sovereignty and political autonomy within the USSR. Initial calls for the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia became the catalyst for the emergence of the Armenian National Movement (ANM), which served as an umbrella civic and political organization and united a broad spectrum of pro-independence groups, anti-Communists, and Communists-turned-nationalists. While democratic slogans were occasionally advanced, the major themes of protest were focused instead on national reunification with Nagorno-Karabakh, the creation of an independent state, and the supplanting of Communist rule.

Interethnic violence served as a backdrop during the period of Armenia's march toward statehood, but with several exceptions, the civic movement relied largely on nonviolent means. The pro-independence positions of the opposition civic and political forces grouped around the ANM contributed to the establishment of the independent Armenian state in September 1991.

Presidential elections in October 1991 saw the victory of the ex-Communist-turned-nationalist Levon Ter-Petrossian.

Contested parliamentary elections after independence were not held until July 1995. The 1995 and 1999 parliamentary and 1996 presidential elections were marred by serious irregularities. The most recent presidential and parliamentary polls, in 2003, were strongly criticized by international monitors, who cited widespread fraud, particularly in the presidential vote. Corruption, nepotism, and bribery continue to inhibit the state of democracy.

Azerbaijan

Period of democratic transition: 1989–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

After enjoying a brief period of independence from 1918 to 1920, Azerbaijan entered the Soviet Union in 1922 and became its own Soviet republic in 1936. Azerbaijan experienced repression under Communist rule, as well as growing nationalism in the 1980s.

Azerbaijan's civic movement emerged at a time of growing interethnic conflict over the majority Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. Anti-Azeri violence in Nagorno-Karabakh heightened tensions and resulted in the forced migration of tens of thousands of Azeris to the capital. In turn, anti-Armenian hostility led to a large refugee flow of Armenians from the capital. Soviet troops sent in to restore order exacerbated the situation. In this violent context, a generally peaceful civic movement, the Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF), emerged out of mass protests that mobilized hundreds of thousands of participants who took part in marches, demonstrations, and some worker strikes. The APF pursued a democratic agenda, with calls for independence, a multiparty system, independent trade unions, and diverse media. While the nonviolent APF operated in a setting in which there was considerable violence, radical and armed forces never attracted a mass following. After the collapse of the USSR in August 1991, Azeri authorities declared statehood and independence from Moscow. A brief period of rule under the presidency of former Communist Party chief Ayaz Mutalibov ended with his resignation after mounting protests and civic pressure led by the APF. Despite a widening conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, a competitive presidential election in June 1992 was won by the APF-backed candidate, Abulfaz Elchibey.

Azerbaijan's leadership has pledged to advance a democratic reform program but has been slow to do so in practice. Elections since 1992 have often been mired in fraud or intimidation, and fighting took place between demonstrators and security forces prior to the 2003 presidential elections. Nevertheless, elections occur with some regularity.

Bangladesh

Period of democratic transition: 1990–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

In Bangladesh, President Lieutenant General Hossain Mohammed Ershad seized power in a 1982 military coup and ruled under martial law until 1985. He subsequently won elections in 1986 and 1988 that were boycotted by major opposition parties. Under Ershad, all executive power was vested in the presidency; the unicameral National Parliament was a rubber-stamp institution dominated by Ershad's Jatiya Dal coalition party. The government directly controlled television and radio, and independent newspapers were censored.

A significant opposition movement persisted throughout Ershad rule, led by the influential Awami League and the Bangladeshi Nationalist Party, which both organized strikes and demonstrations on a regular basis. Nonetheless, divisions between the two groups hampered large-scale movements in the late 1980s. In early October 1990, however, the civic movement to oust Ershad was revived as both student groups and opposition parties united under a demand for the resignation of Ershad and the dismissal of Parliament. The movement attracted people from all spheres of life who began to defy a state-imposed curfew and organize mass strikes and demonstrations. Initially, protests were primarily student led, and violence between students and government forces led to several deaths. The demonstrations soon expanded, however, and 100,000 people participated in a march in Dhaka on December 4, leading to Ershad's resignation that day. Following Ershad's downfall, a transitional government quickly established democratic institutions. Free elections with candidates from over 100 parties were held in February 1991. Khaleda Zia was named Bangladesh's first female prime minister, and within months the country adopted a parliamentary system, ending 16 years of presidential rule.

Since 1991, Bangladesh has remained an electoral democracy, with elections held at least every five years. However, electoral violence remains a significant problem, and parliamentary boycotts have at times undermined the legislative process.

Belarus

Period of democratic transition: 1989–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Belarussians suffered greatly as an ethnic minority under the Polish government in the years following World War I and under Communist rule after World War II. Belarussian culture and language were suppressed under Stalin's intense "Russification," while the opposition was met with imprisonment, intimidation, and deportation.

The 1986 Chernobyl accident and the 1988 discovery of mass graves containing 250,000 victims of Stalinism swelled public discontent and led to the October 1988 demonstration of about 10,000 people. Political apathy was such, however, that the majority of the population continued to support the Soviet government in the belief that such activism would make no difference. A small civic movement, the Belarussian Popular Front (BPF), did emerge in 1988, pressing first for liberalization and autonomy and later for democracy and statehood. While the BPF united small independent labor unions and cultural, human rights, and civic organizations, it never achieved significant nationwide mass support. The coalition's influence was felt mainly in the capital, with moderate support in other urban centers. With the collapse of the August 1991 coup by Soviet hard-liners, pro-democracy civic groups pressed in vain for a petition drive to force

early elections. Stanislau Shushkevich, head of the country's Parliament (elected in 1990, under Soviet rule), was a moderate reformer who pressed successfully for the orderly dissolution of the USSR and secured Belarus's independence. Yet he and the democratic forces were too weak to secure the resignation of a government headed by hard-line representatives of the old order.

In the first years of independent Belarus, the media and civil society were weak as former Communist hard-liners maintained a firm grip. After the new constitution went into effect in 1994, voters made Alexander Lukashenka Belarus's first post-Soviet president. Since then, Lukashenka has maintained his power through flawed and controversial elections, making it impossible for genuine democracy to take hold.

Benin

Period of democratic transition: 1990–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

In 1972, Mathieu Kerekou took control of Benin, ending a series of coups and countercoups that had plagued the stability of the country since its independence from France in 1960. Three years later, Kerekou proclaimed a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship under the single-party rule and military leadership of General Kerekou himself. Seventeen years later, Kerekou still remained in power, but fiscal bankruptcy from economic mismanagement of the nation's coffers had weakened his rule.

In January 1989, university students demanding the return of guaranteed public sector employment and teachers angered by months of unpaid salaries began a stream of protests and strikes that lasted some 20 weeks. By the end of 1989, the movement had grown to include other civil society groups and had taken on a more general political nature, demanding the resignation of Kerekou and the implementation of democratic rule. In December alone, more than 40,000 citizens participated in street demonstrations in the country's two largest cities. With such political pressure, and the suspension of French financial and diplomatic support, Kerekou abolished Marxist-Leninism, legalized opposition parties, and announced the holding of a national conference in February 1990 to discuss the possibility of democratic rule. This conference, the first of its kind in Africa, brought together 488 delegates, including leaders from opposition political parties, unions, universities, religious associations, the army, human rights organizations, and women's groups. Despite Kerekou's resistance, the conference drafted a new democratic constitution, asserted sovereignty over the country, and organized competitive, national multiparty elections the following year.

Presidential elections were held in early 1991 and were won, in a second-round runoff, by opposition candidate Nicephore Soglo with 67 percent of the vote. In this way, Benin began the wave of democratic transitions that covered much of Africa. Although it continues to be among the poorest countries on the continent, Benin has remained one of Africa's most stable and respected democracies.

Bolivia

Period of democratic transition: 1982
Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Bolivia was governed by a military regime for most of the period between 1964 and 1982. Transition to civilian rule was initiated in the late 1970s under the rule of General Hugo Banzer; elections were held in 1978, 1979, and 1980, but the military prevented a full democratic transition from occurring. The years between 1978 and 1982 witnessed a succession of weak, though often brutal, military and civilian governments.

Luis Garcia Meza's oppressive and corrupt military government, which took power in 1980, was brought down in 1981. His repressive and internationally isolated government eroded support in the military's ranks. Amid a severe economic crisis that triggered mass protests and a crippling general strike in 1982, the military high command decided to return to the barracks. Throughout the preceding period, opposition to the regime had centered on the main union in Bolivia, the Bolivian Workers Confederation (COB). By 1981, the Confederation of Bolivian Private Entrepreneurs had joined the COB and sectors of the middle class in pushing for rapid democratization. The Catholic Church was also actively involved as a mediator among all sides. The Congress elected in 1980 was reconvened in October 1982 and selected as the new president Hernan Siles Zuazo, who had won a plurality of votes in the annulled 1980 elections. He assumed office on October 10, 1982.

Since the democratic transition in 1982, Bolivia has not achieved sustained political or economic stability. The rise of largely indigenous social movements as a powerful force changed the Bolivian political equation, especially after democratically elected president Gonzalo Sanchez de Losada was forced from power in 2003. Though the military has not staged large-scale interventions in politics, democracy remains unconsolidated and social conflict is rife.

Brazil

Period of democratic transition: 1984–85
Pro-democracy civic movement: present

At the time of the transition, Brazil was ruled by the military, as it had been since 1964. Repression peaked in the early 1970s; by the end of that decade, redemocratization was on the horizon. Elections of variable quality were held throughout the 1970s, but the powerful presidency remained under the control of the military. Impatience with the military regime accelerated after the economy went into crisis in 1982. By 1985, the military was ready to return to the barracks; though an attempt was made to install its preferred candidate in the presidency, the opposition was able to overcome the system of indirect elections and prevail in the election.

Brazil's democratic transition advanced gradually between 1979 and 1985. A sanctioned opposition had been permitted for most of the period of military rule, but as the Brazilian economy faltered in the late 1970s, the military regime proved increasingly incapable of holding democratic demands in check. The labor movement became the most important force in the transition, staging a series of massive strikes between 1978 and 1980. Direct elections of governors and most federal and local representatives were reintroduced in 1982. The opposition

consisted of labor unions, the Catholic Church, intellectuals, and other segments of civil society that expressed varying degrees of militancy. While not formally unified, opposition groups frequently cooperated in order to organize mass demonstrations, such as those of 1983–84 calling for direct presidential elections. That effort failed, but the military was unable to prevent opposition candidate Tancredo Neves from triumphing in indirect elections in 1985.

Since 1985, Brazil has seen the deepening of democratic practices. Direct elections to the presidency returned in 1989, and several different parties have come to power since that time. The threat of military intervention in politics has declined significantly throughout the post-transition period.

Bulgaria

Period of democratic transition: 1989–1990

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Having sided initially with Germany in World War II, Bulgaria's government fell to a Communist-led coup when Soviet forces invaded in 1944, and the monarchy was abolished shortly after the war. From 1954 to 1989, Communist leader Todor Zhivkov ruled the country.

Bulgaria's international reputation became tarnished in the 1980s through a series of issues including severe energy shortages, persecution of Turkish minorities, and growing political differences between Moscow and Zhivkov. In 1989, environmental, civic, political, and trade union organizations joined the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), a loose, broad-based movement that pressed for democratic reform. Protests, strikes, and mass rallies forced Bulgaria's Socialist Party (the former Communist Party) to agree to June 1990 multiparty parliamentary elections, which the party won by a narrow margin. Civic activism also spread to the large Turkish minority, which in 1990 won significant minority rights. Amid a political scandal and rising nonviolent civic ferment, the country's Socialist president resigned and UDF leader Zhelyu Zhelev was elected president by Parliament with support from Communist and pro-Communist legislators who responded to pressure from the growing mass protest movement. A multiparty system was established by a new constitution adopted in 1991, and parliamentary elections were held in October, with the UDF winning the largest share and establishing a reform government. President Zhelev was elected to the office in a nationwide, contested vote in January 1992.

Bulgaria's transition to a multiparty system was made more difficult by an entrenched Communist bureaucracy. The UDF was instrumental in paving the way for additional democratic reforms in the late 1990s, which was furthered by former child king Simeon II, who promised faster movement toward democracy in the early 21st century. Free and fair elections in 2006 ensured European Union membership for Bulgaria.

Cambodia

Period of democratic transition: 1991–1993

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia in 1978, toppling the genocidal Pol-Pot government and setting up a Hanoi-backed Communist administration. Fighting continued throughout the 1980s among the government, Khmer Rouge rebels, and other political contenders.

However, with the collapse of Eastern European communism in the late 1980s and the fall of the Soviet Union—Vietnam’s closest ally—Vietnam came under increasing international pressure to enter into peace talks. In 1991, Vietnam yielded to China’s demands for a full military withdrawal and a role for the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia’s new government. In October 1991, the leaders of four rival groupings—Prince Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge’s Sonn Sann, Prime Minister Hun Sen, and Khieu Samphan—and representatives of 18 other countries signed a peace treaty in Paris. The agreement called for a new constitution to be drafted by a freely elected National Assembly, for the United Nations to run five key ministries in advance of national elections, and for the UN to place over 20,000 troops in temporary cantons. In May 1993, Cambodians elected a new government led by the United Front for an Independent, Neutral, and Free Cambodia (FUNCINPEC) in the country’s first multiparty voting since the 1972 presidential election. Despite some irregularities, security issues, and the UN’s inability to fully provide a neutral political environment, the vote was the freest in the country’s history. A new constitution was adopted on September 21, creating a constitutional monarch in which the king “reigns but does not rule,” with the power to make governmental appointments after consultation with ministers and to declare a state of emergency if the prime minister and cabinet agree.

However, Cambodia’s democratic transition was short-lived; persistent violence plagued the country, and the Khmer Rouge refused to disarm or participate in the electoral process. Rule of law remained weak in the countryside, and those living in areas controlled by the Khmer Rouge were denied basic rights. The steady erosion of freedom following the peace accord culminated in a 1997 coup launched by leaders of the Cambodian People’s Party (CPP), the nominally junior member of the new coalition government, and Co-Premier Hun Sen, in which the leader of FUNCINPEC was ousted and hundreds of FUNCINPEC party members were imprisoned. Currently, the CPP continues to dominate national and local politics, and both political and civil rights in Cambodia are severely restricted.

Central African Republic

Period of democratic transition: 1993

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

In 1979, the self-styled emperor of the Central African Republic, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, was overthrown and presidential elections held in 1981. The fledgling democracy had lasted barely six months when General Andre Kolingba’s military junta overthrew it and suspended the constitution. In 1986, a single-party system was adopted that secured Kolingba’s hold on power.

A sprinkling of antigovernment protests began in 1989, primarily involving students unhappy about the lack of scholarship money. These protests had little impact on the government’s resistance to political change. However, in October 1990 several thousand protesters braved police brutality to demand that the government hold a national conference to discuss the

possibility of democratic rule. In December 1990, to pacify an increasingly restive opposition movement, Kolingba announced the establishment of a multiparty system. Unappeased and persistent in their demand for a national conference, students, teachers, civil servants, press, health personnel, rural development workers, and financial sector employees staged official strikes in April 1991. Violence increased as some opposition groups clashed with security personnel. Strikes and protests waned in 1992 as the government entered negotiations with the opposition to determine a date for the national conference. However, with Kolingba's refusal to accept the sovereignty of such a conference, negotiations stalled. In September 1992, Kolingba finally announced plans for elections in October; however, the government suspended the first round of these elections after accusations of polling irregularities. In 1993, following several attempts to postpone the rescheduled elections, Kolingba bowed to the unified opposition and elections were held in August.

Ange-Feliz Patasse, a former health minister under the Bokassa regime, won with 37 percent of the vote; Kolingba trailed in fourth place. Though the ensuing regime was democratic, its stability was fleeting. Following a coup attempt led by Kolingba in 2001, Patasse was ousted by his former military chief in 2003.

Chile

Period of democratic transition: 1988–1989

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Between 1973 and 1988, Chile was governed by an authoritarian military regime led by General Augusto Pinochet. Repression against opponents, mostly on the Left, was harsh, and thousands were tortured or killed. A new constitution in 1980 imposed severe restrictions on political parties and placed most power in the hands of the military president.

Protests began to increase in size and regularity beginning in 1983, led by urban civic movements, which also began to link up with trade unions. The Catholic Church, which had sought to preserve its moral authority throughout the postcoup period, joined with these groups to protest human rights violations. In ensuing years, violent repression declined and there was a rise of major public protests as civic organizations, trade unions, and political parties reemerged. A broad coalition—the National Accord for a Full Transition to Democracy—was the principal civil society force that used nonviolent means to press for gradual democratization and liberalization, including an end to restrictions on civil liberties and free and open elections. Unions played an important role and in 1982 were joined by the middle class and students in the wake of an economic crisis. The decision of political parties to work together became the main impetus for a broad ideological coalition created around an effort to defeat the military in the 1988 plebiscite on Pinochet's rule. The opposition alliance portrayed the post-Pinochet future in optimistic terms and worked assiduously to boost turnout. Their efforts were successful; the “no on Pinochet” vote won a clear majority, and the military heads decided to honor the results.

Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin assumed the office of the presidency after winning open elections held in December 1989. Since that time, Chilean democracy has consolidated, and the country has become a successful political and economic model for Latin America.

Croatia

Period of democratic transition: 1999–2000

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

After independence was proclaimed in 1991, Croatia drifted gradually toward authoritarian rule under President Franjo Tudjman and his ruling Croatian Democratic Union Party (HDZ). At the same time, Tudjman manipulated the presidency, the state, economic patronage, state media, political intimidation, and ethnic nationalism to mobilize his base and consolidate his hold on power. Nonetheless, some independent media and a number of civic groups and political parties continued to function throughout the 1990s.

When the Serb-Croat civil war ended in 1995, small pockets of opposition began gaining strength, while the HDZ found that its capacity to use ethnic nationalism and scare tactics was weakening. The death in December 1999 of President Tudjman enabled him to be perceived as the hero of Croatia's march to independence. As a result, the authoritarian system was shaken, and the ruling authorities agreed to ensure a civic and political environment conducive to a free and fair electoral process. In the subsequent presidential elections in January 2000, Stjepan Mesic, running as a joint candidate of the Croatian Peasant Party, the Croatian People's Party, the Liberal Party, and the Istrian Democratic Assembly, was elected president. In legislative elections that also took place in January 2000, a center-left coalition wrested control of Parliament from the HDZ. Ivica Racan, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDPC)—formerly the League of Communists of Croatia—was named prime minister. The parliamentary majority in the government formed by liberals and the SDPC advocated Croatia's rapid integration into the European mainstream.

Presidential and legislative elections have been held regularly in Croatia since 2000, and transitions are generally peaceful. Concerns continue to exist over minority rights and war crimes, but Croatia has striven to apply itself to democratic procedures in line with European Union membership rules.

Czech Republic

Period of democratic transition: 1989–1990

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

The Czech Republic is a part of the former Czechoslovakia created in 1918 following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Soviet troops helped establish the Communist People's Party of Czechoslovakia in 1948. In 1968, Soviet tanks crushed the so-called Prague Spring, a period of halting political liberalization.

Despite relatively “quiet” times during the 1970s and 1980s, the group Charter 77 formed a loose alliance of citizens calling for the protection of civil and human rights in 1977. The impact of dissent and opposition activity through underground newspapers and rock music is hard to determine, but November 1989 saw the emergence of massive nonviolent civic protests involving hundreds of thousands of participants in the urban center. Charter 77 united with other

groups to form the Civic Forum, led by dissident playwright Vaclav Havel, and rapidly gained followers. The protests involved as many as a million people opposed to one-party Communist rule and calling for liberalization and democracy. The upsurge of protests, called the “Velvet Revolution,” culminated in a nationwide general strike on November 28, 1989, which led to the announcement by Communist authorities that they would end their monopoly on power. By the end of 1989, roundtable talks conducted under constant civic pressure paved the way for parliamentary elections in June 1990 that were won by parties representing the democratic civic forces. Havel was elected president of the then Czechoslovak Federation by a vote of the Federal Assembly. In 1992, a new constitution was adopted, and new, competitive democratic legislative elections for the Czech Chamber of Deputies were held. In 1993, the state dissolved peacefully into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, and Havel became president of the new Czech Republic.

Since the Velvet Revolution, the Czech Republic has enjoyed free and fair elections and has worked hard to gain a consolidated democracy.

Ecuador

Period of democratic transition: 1978–1979

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Since gaining independence in 1830, Ecuador has seen close to 100 changes of power, averaging a new government every two years, with few completing a full term. Political turbulence in the 1960s gave way in 1972 to a government overthrow by a military junta with General Guillermo Rodriguez Lara in control. Political and social reform organizations such as labor unions and peasant groups stagnated under control of the armed forces.

A bloody military coup in September 1975 cost 22 lives but failed to overthrow Lara. A bloodless coup in January 1976 succeeded, and Lara was replaced by a military triumvirate, the Supreme Council of Government. The three military commanders aimed to return the government to constitutional civilian rule for pragmatic reasons. The bloody coup had illuminated divisions within the armed forces, and civilian control was seen by the military as a mechanism to heal, or at least mask, the divisions. The original timetable set presidential elections for February 1978, but disagreement among military leaders and military manipulation of the electoral process postponed the vote. A national referendum in January 1978 resulted in a newly drafted national charter, and presidential elections were held in April 1979, with Jaime Roldos winning 68.5 percent of the votes. Pressure from the United States and Ecuadorian public consensus led to a peaceful transition. Still, the military blocked any investigation into human rights abuses within their ranks, which remained a source of political turmoil.

Indigenous organizations have gained and flexed political strength and often spearhead protests, yet civic movements still have little influence, and government is far from stable.

El Salvador

Period of democratic transition: 1992–1994
Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

El Salvador was ravaged by civil war between 1980 and 1992. Tens of thousands of deaths, most attributed to the military and death squads, occurred as the state battled the left-wing insurgency headed by an umbrella group known as the FMLN. Actors on both sides were aided and abetted by outside powers, and the civil war became one of the major cold war proxy conflicts of the 1980s. A democratic transition occurred between 1992 and 1994, when a UN-sponsored mediation process resulted in peace accords that brought the FMLN into mainstream politics and sent the soldiers back to the barracks. Political violence declined markedly (though not entirely) after the signing of the 1992 accords.

In the years prior to the peace accords, El Salvador held legislative and presidential elections, the results of which were generally recognized internationally but had excluded leftist groups with substantial support in the population. Military and economic elites dominated the machinery of state decision making. Several factors combined to push the civil war toward resolution, including the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and a peace process propelled by both regional leaders and the UN. Internal factors included a 1989 FMLN offensive that failed but convinced the Salvadoran military that indefinite stalemate was likely, economic stagnation that led to elite dissatisfaction, and the brutal murder of six Jesuit priests, an incident that galvanized international opposition to continued support for the Salvadoran military.

Pluralistic democratic practice has been largely consolidated in El Salvador. The primary political antagonists of the civil war, the ARENA (National Republican Alliance) and FMLN, remain the main political movements, with ARENA holding the presidency throughout the postconflict period.

Estonia

Period of democratic transition: 1990–1991
Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Soviet troops occupied Estonia during World War II, following a secret protocol in the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact that forcibly incorporated Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the USSR. Under Soviet rule, approximately one-tenth of Estonia's population was deported, executed, or forced to flee abroad. Subsequent Russian immigration substantially altered the country's ethnic composition, with ethnic Estonians constituting just over 61 percent of the population in 1989.

During the late 1980s, a relaxation of rules against free expression led to demands for Estonian self-determination. Mass protests began as early as 1987, including the 1988 "singing revolution," in which people gathered to sing banned national songs. At the same time, a nonviolent, pro-independence, pro-democracy movement—the Estonian Popular Front—emerged; mass demonstrations and protests routinely attracted hundreds of thousands of participants. Some protests were coordinated among the three Baltic states. Most notable among these was a human chain organized in 1989, consisting of more than two million people who spanned the territories of Latvia and Lithuania. The Congress of Estonia, a democratically

elected (though informal) body formed in 1990, served as a parallel legislature to the official Communist-dominated counterpart. The Congress represented a broad array of political, student, civic, women's, and cultural groups. Estonia took advantage of weakening Soviet control in the wake of the failed Soviet coup attempt against USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev by asserting economic independence before quickly claiming full independence on August 20, 1991. A democratic constitution was adopted in the summer of 1992, and open, multiparty elections were held in September 1992, solidifying the democratic transition.

After the first popular vote in 1992, subsequent presidential elections reverted to parliamentary ballot. The prime minister was chosen by the president and confirmed by Parliament. Subsequent parliamentary elections were free and fair, although recently some political infighting has dominated coalition ruling parties.

Georgia

Period of democratic transition: 2003–2004

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

In 1922, Georgia entered the Soviet Union as a component of the Transcaucasian Federated Soviet Republic, becoming a separate Soviet republic in 1936. Following a national referendum in April 1991, Georgia declared its independence from the Soviet Union.

Former Georgian Communist Party head and Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze overthrew the previous president in 1992 and won two five-year terms in 1995 and 2000. However, the 2000 election was accused of being fraudulent and led to vocal opposition from other politicians. Massive demonstrations in the capital, Tbilisi, organized under the leadership of Mikheil Saakashvili and his United National Movement, soon spread to most of Georgia's other major cities and towns. Another leading force in the nonviolent struggle was the Kmara student and youth movement. The civic movement employed rallies, marches, nonviolent takeovers of government buildings, and strikes. At their height, the rallies involved hundreds of thousands of participants in the capital and tens of thousands of demonstrators in other municipalities. After the flawed and fraudulent parliamentary elections in November 2003, frustration over corruption boiled over into what became known as the "Rose Revolution". The protests forced the resignation of President Shevardnadze and resulted in new, freely and fairly contested elections for the presidency in January 2004. Constitutional amendments in February 2004 strengthened the authority and powers of the presidency. Multiparty elections for Parliament in March 2004 consolidated the revolution and allowed democracy to take root.

It is still too early to determine how well democracy has been maintained in Georgia since the 2004 parliamentary elections. Reform in Georgia is hampered by economic conflict with Russia. Meanwhile, the governing National Movement Party continues to dominate the domestic political scene, as the opposition has so far proven incapable of providing meaningful competition.

Ghana

Period of democratic transition: 2000

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Following a series of alternating civilian and military governments, Jerry Rawlings led a coup in 1979 that returned power to a civilian government. However, the new administration did not live up to Rawlings's expectations, and in 1981 he seized power, banning political parties and free expression. His ensuing administration was responsible for both substantial economic progress and grave human rights violations.

Since Rawlings's takeover, the transition to democracy has been gradual, beginning with his reluctant adoption of a multiparty constitution in 1992 and ending with the democratic transfer of power in 2000. After a ban on opposition parties was lifted with the new constitution in 1992, presidential and legislative elections were scheduled. With little time to organize a coherent campaign, the opposition lost the presidential election and subsequently boycotted the legislative election, facilitating the continuation of unchallenged one-party rule. Antigovernment opposition mounted during 1995 as high inflation eroded living standards and reports of government corruption incensed the public. During an opposition march in Accra, armed government supporters opened fire against the demonstrators, killing five. The opposition made a stronger showing in the 1996 election, largely considered to be more open than that in 1992. Nevertheless, Rawlings was returned to power, although transparency and accountability remained absent. Despite fears that he intended to hold on to power, Rawlings abided by the constitution and stepped down in 2000 after his handpicked successor, John Atta Mills, was defeated by opposition leader John Kufuor in the December 2000 poll. This marked the first time in Ghana's history that one democratically elected president was succeeded by another.

During his time in office, Kufuor has made economic growth a priority and was rewarded in 2004 for his policies with a second electoral victory.

Guatemala

Period of democratic transition: 1996

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

After the onset of the civil war in 1960, the dominant military greatly restricted the constitutional powers of the civilian administration. Political and civic expression was curtailed, while political and criminal violence targeted politicians, student organizations, labor unions, and media. An estimated 200,000 Guatemalans ultimately died in the struggle between the right-wing, U.S.-backed government and the left-wing, Marxist-Leninist guerrillas.

Despite this history of dictatorships and guerrilla insurgency, a civilian government was elected in 1985. The early 1990s saw a shift toward peace as the Soviet Union collapsed and both sides lost their international backing. Right-wing businessman Jorge Serrano, who had been elected president in 1991, attempted a self-coup in 1993 by dissolving the legislature. Although the armed forces initially supported Serrano, they eventually withdrew support amid mass protests and international pressure. An alliance of unions, business sector moderates, and civil groups pressured Congress into choosing Ramiro de Leon Carpio, who was elected president in 1993.

Constitutional reforms were agreed to by Congress and the executive, and in 1994 the legislature was revived and a 13-member Supreme Court was designated. In 1995, a UN human rights monitoring mission was established to enforce the rights of indigenous peoples, the primary victims of the long-running civil war. That year, only 46.8 percent of eligible voters turned out to cast their ballots. In December 1996, a peace treaty was signed, the guerrillas were demobilized, and Alvaro Arzu and his Partido de Avanzada Nacional (National Advancement Party) won the presidential and National Congress elections.

Later elections were followed by poor management, internal power struggles, dissatisfaction over lack of government reforms, and violent riots. The stubbornness of the military to accept democratic changes and admit its role in civil war atrocities, violent demonstrations, and intimidation of elected officials has made government efforts to validate democracy challenging.

Guinea-Bissau

Period of democratic transition: 1994

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

In 1980, Joao Bernardo Vieira led a bloodless military coup against the unpopular government of Luis Cabral. Vieira suspended the constitution and governed through a military council until 1984, when he approved the return to civilian rule, ensuring for himself the presidency and for his own party the Parliament.

In 1991, the transition to democracy began when the Parliament approved a multiparty system. The decision was driven by the belief that successful economic liberalization needed to be accompanied by political pluralism to attract external investment. However, Vieira and his party continued to control the nature and timing of the transition and barred two main opposition parties from competing with legislation prohibiting political parties from being either regionally or tribally based. In early 1992, security agents detained and beat members of the opposition who were planning a political rally. Despite harassment, a major demonstration attracted nearly 30,000 people and demanded that a national conference be held including all sectors of society to plan for democratic transition. However, these demands were ignored by the regime. Moreover, elections that were originally scheduled for 1992 were postponed twice and were not held until July 1994. Despite irregularities and delays in the electoral process, the elections were deemed free and fair; Vieira was elected with 51 percent of the vote in the second round, defeating Kumba Yala. The opposition, which had previously suspected electoral rigging, accepted the results as legitimate.

Democracy under Vieira was stable, though riddled with corruption, until 1998 when an army mutiny led to his overthrow. An ensuing period of multiple coups failed to install a durable government until 2005, at which point presidential elections returned Vieira to power.

Honduras

Period of democratic transition: 1980–1981

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

In 1972, the military, in agreement with the labor movement, overthrew President Ramon Ernesto Cruz and replaced him with the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, a group of approximately 20 colonels, instituting a military dictatorship that would replace presidents at will.

By 1978, military-backed president Juan Alberto Melgar Castro faced charges of government corruption, inefficiency, and lack of progress toward democracy. Despite these accusations, unions and student organizations protested in support of Melgar, but right-wing members of the military ousted him in a bloodless coup. The replacement three-member junta, led by General Policarpo Paz Garcia, promised a return to democracy. In April 1980, a record 81 percent of Hondurans elected delegates for a new Congress, which selected an interim government and established the procedures for elections in 1981. Despite slow work by the Congress, presidential and congressional elections took place in November 1981. Suazo Cordova was elected president with 52.4 percent of the votes and took office in January 1982. The military maintained its influence over politics until 1999, when President Carlos Flores used his constitutional right to veto the military and removed the foreign minister.

Despite subsequent democratic elections, effective government control has been hampered by rising police corruption, violent youth gangs, and widespread poverty. Political repression in the 1980s led to the creation of grassroots organizations, which, along with the labor unions and student movements, have pressured the government on human rights and social issues.

Hungary

Period of democratic transition: 1990

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Hungary fought as a German ally during World War II but was taken over by Germany after an unsuccessful attempt to switch sides. Despite joint Allied sovereignty after the war, the Communist Party soon took control. The Soviet Union crushed an uprising by Hungarians seeking to liberalize the political and economic system in 1956, an event that remains prominent in the country's consciousness. Subsequent Communist policy was relatively liberal compared with that imposed on the rest of the Soviet bloc.

In the late 1980s, the country's economy was in sharp decline, and the ruling Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party came under intense pressure to accept reforms. By 1987, activists within the party and the bureaucracy, as well as intellectuals in Budapest, began to pressure for change and organized their own groups. Among the most prominent opposition groups were the FIDESZ student movement, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and the Liberal Alliance of Free Democrats. Independent civic groups and trade unions emerged in 1988 and expanded in 1989 among growing regional democratic political ferment. While no single, formal umbrella coalition was formed, major civic and political groups worked together and jointly organized several important mass protests in 1989. In addition to these actions, reform began from within the government; in 1988, Parliament adopted a number of democratic reforms, including freedom of assembly and press, and a new electoral law. The following year, the Central Committee endorsed a multiparty system for Hungary. Civic pressure and government actions combined in

Hungary to create one of the smoothest transitions in the former Soviet states when it held its first free, multiparty parliamentary elections in 1990.

Since 1990, government control has passed freely and fairly between left- and right-leaning parties. The country has followed an aggressive path of reform and pursued the popular cause of European integration.

Indonesia

Period of democratic transition: 1998–1999

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Suharto assumed power in 1968 following a violent repression of opposition parties. Suharto's party, Golkar, presided over a corrupt and authoritarian political system that restricted opposition party and dissident activity. Heavily manipulated elections held every five years ensured Golkar's political dominance.

The political transition in Indonesia began in May 1998 when General Suharto was forced to resign following months of antigovernment protests. In the year prior to the 1998 uprising, Indonesia underwent a financial crisis that contributed to the devaluation of the currency, sent food prices soaring, and caused millions to lose their jobs. Price riots on May 13–15 led to 500 deaths and extensive destruction of property. The Chinese minority, resented for its prosperity, was particularly targeted. The widespread crisis motivated pro-democracy student groups to align with religious and civic organizations in rallying against the regime. The shooting of unarmed students by Suharto's security forces during a demonstration on May 12 provoked large-scale demonstrations, first on campuses and later outside the Parliament building. Suharto stepped down on May 21 after three days of mass demonstrations led by students, professors, and some retired generals. Vice President B. J. Habibie, a longtime Suharto loyalist, became president and quickly announced plans to hold democratic elections within a year. The military played a key role in supporting and facilitating this negotiated settlement. In June 1999, Indonesia held its first free parliamentary elections, in which the opposition party PDI-P (Indonesia Democratic Party—Struggle) won the most public support.

Since the beginning of the transition, competitive elections, civic freedoms, and press freedom have been enhanced.

Kenya

Period of democratic transition: 2002

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

After the death of Kenya's charismatic president, Jomo Kenyatta, in 1978, Vice President Daniel arap Moi assumed the presidency. Initially very popular for following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Moi began to consolidate power in a de jure single-party state after a failed coup attempt in 1982. The Moi regime's history of torture and corruption was overlooked by external financiers who considered Kenya to be an important outpost against communism in the region.

To appease donors, in 1992 Moi approved the return to a multiparty electoral system. Nonetheless, he continued to dominate electoral politics through excessive use of state patronage, control of key media, and harassment of the disorganized opposition. Elections in 1992 and 1997 were neither free nor fair. In 1997, dissatisfaction with the Moi regime was heightened by an economic slowdown exacerbated by a sharp drop in tourism and suspension of International Monetary Fund financial support. Anti-Moi and pro-democracy demonstrations followed but were not able to alter the outcome of the election. Following the failure of the opposition in 1997, pro-democracy movements began to peter out. However, in the run-up to the 2002 presidential election, the opposition became substantially better organized and more unified and was able to defeat Moi's chosen successor in a landslide that ended Moi's 24-year rule and more than 40 years of power for his political party, Kenya African National Union.

The new president, Mwai Kibaki, took steps to combat the widespread corruption that was characteristic of the Moi regime. Although Kibaki's rule is substantially more transparent and legitimate than that of his predecessor, Kenya has never quite been able to shake the legacy of corruption left by Moi.

Kyrgyzstan

Period of democratic transition: 1991–1992

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Kyrgyzstan was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1924. In 1936, the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic became established as a full union republic of the USSR. Stalinism repressed Kyrgyz ethnic and nationalist identity in its attempt to "Russianize" the various republics.

Civic activism in the late 1980s was led by writers and academics who initially pressed for greater cultural rights primarily through *Literaturny Kyrgyzstan*, a periodical of the Union of Writers. However, it was the bloody rioting between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in June 1990 that played a critical part in the transition. News of the rioting spread rapidly to the capital, where students marched on the Communist Party building, initiating further violence. The simmering discontent broke out as members of the Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan, a loose affiliation of activists, participated in hunger strikes and highly publicized demonstrations. Communist Party members took advantage of the situation to vote against the incumbent president during the 1990 elections. None of the three candidates won a majority, and in a surprise move, Askar Akayev, head of the Kyrgyz Academy of Sciences, was named president. Immediately after the 1991 coup against USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev was announced, President Akayev threw his support behind Russian president Boris Yeltsin, and the legislature declared independence on August 31, 1991. In October 1991, Akayev ran unopposed and was elected president of the new independent state, receiving 95 percent of the votes cast.

In the 1995 parliamentary elections, no single party won a clear majority, although later that year, Akayev was reelected president in early elections with more than 70 percent of the vote. Protests, violence, and political maneuvering have plagued elections since then, and in 2004 protesters succeeded in removing the increasingly unpopular Akayev from office. Stability remains elusive amid signs of recrudescing authoritarianism.

Latvia

Period of democratic transition: 1989–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

After having been ruled for centuries by Germany, Poland, Sweden, and Russia, Latvia gained its independence in 1918, only to be annexed by the USSR during World War II. More than 50 years of Soviet occupation saw a massive influx of Russians and the deportation, execution, and emigration of tens of thousands of ethnic Latvians.

Despite the “Russification,” Latvian nationalism was galvanized by the liberalizing politics of glasnost introduced by Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev in the late 1980s. Beginning in 1987, groups promoting religion, folk culture, and the environment (among others) gradually coalesced into the Popular Front of Latvia (PFL), which pressed for autonomy and later full democracy and state independence. In 1989, after rapid growth of membership and increasing influence in government, the PFL and its allies captured a majority in elections to the legislature and proclaimed “sovereignty” in July 1989. The PFL won a majority of seats in the 1990 parliamentary elections as well.

Several unarmed protesters died and many were wounded in a January 1991 clash with Soviet Interior Ministry troops; two months later, 73 percent voted to support an independent Latvia. When the attempted coup against USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev collapsed in August 1991, Latvia rapidly proclaimed independence. A constitutional law was adopted in December 1991 that greatly expanded basic rights, while in July 1992, the new Parliament adopted a constitution restoring Latvia’s original democratic constitution of 1922. On June 5–6, 1993, the country held new nationwide legislative elections, the first since independence.

Latvia moved rapidly away from the Soviet political and social structure, and elections have continued, despite political turmoil, corruption scandals, and tensions among government leaders. Voter turnout has slowly declined, with only 62 percent taking part in the October 2006 parliamentary elections, the lowest figure in years.

Lesotho

Period of democratic transition: 1993

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

In 1986, Major General Justin Lekhanya ousted the prime minister, dissolved Parliament, banned all political activity, and conferred both legislative and executive power to a new military council.

By 1990, Lekhanya announced his intention to hand back powers to an elected Parliament and in July convened the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) of about 100 members—traditional chiefs, church leaders, and representatives of development councils—to rewrite the constitution and provide for a multiparty system. Though Lekhanya consulted civil society, he initiated many of the steps toward democracy, and popular protests and civic movements were noticeably

absent. In April 1991, another military coup led by Tutsoane Ramaema overthrew Lekhanya's regime but continued on the path toward civilian governance by lifting the five-year-old ban on political parties. The work of the NCA continued, and in 1992 it hosted weeks of nationwide public meetings, in which voters were consulted on the constitutional text. While the military regime tried to add a constitutional provision establishing a military defense commission with the power to dismiss elected officials, domestic and international criticism led to the dropping of the controversial clause. After several postponements, elections were finally held in March 1993, just two weeks after the constitution was completed.

Although the 1993 election did mark a democratic transition, it was unable to ensure political stability. After less than a year, Lesotho witnessed a period of violent military infighting, assassinations, and a new suspension of constitutional rule. By 1995, the political situation had restabilized, and most subsequent elections were considered to be free and fair, though occasionally marked by violence.

Lithuania

Period of democratic transition: 1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

After gaining its independence at the end of World War I, Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 under a secret protocol of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact. Under Soviet rule, tens of thousands of Lithuanians were imprisoned, deported, or killed, as were any political dissidents.

Lithuania's Communist Party leadership was unreceptive to USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika. Encouraged by dissident movements in neighboring countries, Lithuanians began to support Gorbachev's ideas as well as democratization. An umbrella movement embracing Communists and non-Communists, the Lithuanian Reform Movement, or Sajudis, was formed in June 1988 and at first cautiously focused on ecological issues and the crimes of Stalinism before fully adopting pro-independence and pro-democracy aims. Some protests were coordinated among the three Baltic states, including a human chain organized in 1989, consisting of more than two million people across Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Sajudis employed mass demonstrations, and the strength and importance of these movements was made clear when Communist Party leaders found participation necessary. After the March 1990 Supreme Soviet elections, in which Sajudis won a clear majority, Parliament voted overwhelmingly for independence. The vote was rejected by the USSR, which imposed economic sanctions. In January 1991, a Soviet attempt to remove the Lithuanian government in Vilnius resulted in the death of 13 civilian protesters. In the aftermath of the failed Soviet coup attempt in August 1991, international recognition of Lithuania was rapid.

In October 1992, openly contested multiparty elections were held for the legislature, as was a referendum that established a parliamentary-presidential system. In December 1992, Lithuania freely elected its first president, Algirdas Brazanskas, previously a Communist Party first secretary, marking the return of the former Communist Party. Although elections have continued with regularity, persistent political instability has plagued Lithuania.

Macedonia

Period of democratic transition: 1990–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

The six constituent republics in the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia were Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia, all ruled by Communist Josip Broz Tito from 1943 to 1980. Following Tito's death in 1980, a rotating collective presidency governed while nationalistic and ethnic tensions intensified within the six republics. The Yugoslav political system struggled through the 1980s with weak leaders and no civil movement. After the collapse of communism in 1989–1990, the republics began to break apart and claim independence.

Federal prime minister Ante Markovic, selected in 1989, pushed for new laws that would allow for national, multiparty elections in 1990. When the League of Communists of Yugoslavia began to break up in 1990, the Macedonian branch transformed into the Social-Democratic League and initiated democratic reforms, including the acceptance of an emerging civil society and the adoption of laws and constitutional amendments that guaranteed universal suffrage and the right to form political organizations. A new generation of young Macedonian intellectuals, who had recently returned from exile and discovered the history of Macedonian nationalism, founded the Internal Macedonia Revolutionary Organization–Democratic Party for Macedonian Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) in 1990. In Macedonia's first free, multiparty elections on January 27, 1991, the VMRO-DPMNE won a slim majority of seats over the Social-Democratic League. On September 8, 1991, Macedonia proclaimed its independence in a general referendum. The new constitution was declared on November 17, 1991, and then in 1992, the new government negotiated an agreement with the Yugoslav army that led to a withdrawal. Macedonia thus became the only republic to gain independence legitimately and peacefully.

Although Macedonia was spared ethnic warfare, stability was threatened in the 1990s over the treatment of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. Despite continued ethnic conflict, the government remained stable, and in 2005 Macedonia was accepted as a formal candidate for European Union membership.

Madagascar

Period of democratic transition: 1992–1993

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

In 1975, Lieutenant Commander Didier Ratsiraka was named head of state after a coup. Over the next 10 years, Ratsiraka nationalized the economy and implemented single-party rule.

A year after his reelection in 1989, Ratsiraka began moving the country toward competitive democracy by formally legalizing political parties, opening space for political and social opposition. In August 1990, a meeting of new opposition parties, labor unions, and nongovernmental organizations called for the immediate dissolution of the existing government and the formation of a transitional government. Opposition politicians and hundreds of thousands

of their supporters rallied daily in the streets of the Malagasy capital for over three months, demanding the government hold a sovereign national conference representative of civil society to create a new constitution and prepare for democracy. Civil servants also went on strike to increase pressure on Ratsiraka. By July 1991, the prime minister and his cabinet had resigned, but Ratsiraka remained obstinate; he offered to reinstate talks with the opposition but refused to allow the national conference to take place. In response, nearly half a million people marched on the presidential palace; the march turned violent when security forces fired on the crowd, killing 100 and injuring 300. Following this violence, and mindful of the military's refusal to come to his aid, Ratsiraka finally agreed to a national conference, a constitutional referendum, and new elections. The national conference was held in February 1992, and voters approved a new constitution in August. Later in the year, clashes between the opposition and Ratsiraka supporters threatened to derail the transition. But by February 1993, opposition leader Albert Zafy defeated Ratsiraka in the second round of free and fair elections, receiving nearly 67 percent of the vote.

Except for a period of violence and political crisis following the contentious 2001 presidential election (with both lead candidates claiming victory), the democratic system has functioned unhindered since 1993.

Malawi

Period of democratic transition: 1993–1994

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

In 1964, shortly after independence, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, former head of the independence movement, assumed the prime ministership, becoming president two years later. His rule was characterized by the centralization of power, the implementation of a single-party regime, and a culture of silence for opposition opinions and presidential criticism.

The end of authoritarian rule in Malawi began in March 1992 after the country's Catholic bishops formally criticized the government's abysmal human rights record. The detainment and mistreatment of the bishops that followed the release of their statement sparked student protests that were the most direct form of opposition seen in Malawi for nearly three decades. This emboldened underpaid workers, who staged a series of strikes in May that began as protests for poor working conditions and turned into political riots and angry demonstrations aimed at government offices and Banda supporters. More than 6,000 demonstrators demanded the release of political prisoners, the suspension of the undemocratic constitution, and the creation of a government of national unity to manage the political transition. A subsequent crackdown by Banda and his paramilitary Young Pioneers led foreign donor countries to suspend aid programs. Subsequently, Banda approved the holding of a referendum on multiparty democracy, which was overwhelmingly approved by Malawians in July 1993. Presidential polls were held in May 1994 and saw the defeat of Banda and the victory of opposition leader Bakili Muluzi. However, while generally free and fair, the elections were marred by voter intimidation and violence, most of it on the part of Young Pioneers.

Upon assuming the presidency, Muluzi immediately freed political prisoners and reestablished freedom of speech. Throughout his two years in office, Malawian politics remained relatively stable and open. However, Malawi's subsequent elections have featured significant incidents of voter fraud and electoral violence.

Mali

Period of democratic transition: 1991–1992

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Soon after independence from France in 1960, General Moussa Traore led a bloodless coup establishing a single-party regime in 1979 and left a legacy of corruption and economic mismanagement.

In March 1990, a debate on multipartyism took place in Bamako during a conference of national officials. While most of those present agreed that the country was in urgent need of political pluralism, Traore insisted that multipartyism was not an option for a country as ethnically diverse as Mali. However, in October small groups of demonstrators began demanding democracy. Traore continued to stand firm on his single-party position but announced in January 1991 that he would permit further debate on democracy. Believing this to be inadequate, thousands took to the streets throughout the country in the midst of a general strike, demanding an open political system. In response, the government banned all opposition activity and arrested opposition leaders and demonstrators as young as 11 years of age. In February 1991, the government announced a state of emergency and imposed a curfew, continuing its crackdown on the opposition. In response, many protests degenerated into destructive riots where clashes with security services left over 160 dead. At this point, the army refused to continue suppressing the protests and, under the leadership of reformist Amandou Toumani Toure, deposed the Traore regime through a military coup. Toure's assurances that the military would play a limited role in the transition were upheld, and a national conference of civil society members took place in July 1991, adopting a new draft constitution that was approved by a December referendum.

In elections held in April 1992, Alpha Konare was elected president with 69 percent of the second-round vote. Despite accusations of fraud, international observers deemed the election to be essentially fair. Mali has been a successful example of stable African democracy ever since.

Mexico

Period of democratic transition: 2000

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

For 70 years, Mexico was governed by the Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI) in what was deemed "the perfect dictatorship." Elections occurred every six years, but the results were preordained.

The disputed, possibly fraudulent victory of Carlos Salinas over Cuauhtemoc Cardenas in 1988 spelled the beginning of the end of PRI rule. The election marked the first time that the PRI did

not win a supermajority in the Federal Congress, requiring it to obtain support from others to carry out its agenda. As a result, Cardenas's left-leaning Party of the Democratic Revolution and the pro-business Party of National Action (PAN) were able to extract electoral reforms from the PRI, the most significant of which was the establishment in 1996 of the Federal Electoral Institute, an independent institution charged with control of the electoral process. The peso crisis of 1994 contributed to the overwhelming defeat of the PRI in municipal, gubernatorial, and congressional elections in the mid-1990s, culminating in its loss of simple majority control of the Congress in 1997.

The 2000 presidential elections, held under intense international scrutiny, produced a surprisingly decisive victory by the PAN's candidate, Vicente Fox Quesada, marking the end of over 70 years of one-party rule. Unlike the situation in other Latin American countries, the military has not intervened in politics in the postrevolution era, making the risk of a coup very low. In 2006, in Mexico's first postdemocratization election, PAN candidate Felipe Calderon won a controversial victory in an extremely close competition.

Moldova

Period of democratic transition: 1989–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

During World War II, the USSR forced boundary changes, creating the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic by merging parts of Dniester and parts of Bessarabia. Despite territory disputes with Romania, after the war Moldova effectively came under Soviet control. Repression of Moldovan nationalism festered into resentment toward Soviet authorities.

A general easing of Soviet repression under Mikhail Gorbachev facilitated the emergence in 1989 of the Moldovan Popular Front (MPF), which initially was a coalition of cultural, civic, and political organizations. The MPF pressed demands for sovereignty and autonomy, with special emphasis on the rights of the Romanian-speaking majority. Amid increasing ethnic tensions, the MPF won a majority during the first democratic elections to the Supreme Soviet. Mircae Snegur, a Communist, was elected chairman of the Supreme Soviet and in September became president of the republic. Endorsing independence from the USSR, Snegur also actively pursued Western support. The following May, the country's name was changed to the Republic of Moldova, and the Supreme Soviet was renamed the Moldovan Parliament. During the failed Moscow coup against USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev, Soviet military leaders attempted to declare a state of emergency against Moldova, but the government declared its support for Russian president Boris Yeltsin. A few days later, in August 1991, Moldova proclaimed its independence. Over the following year, violence and conflict broke out over the breakaway, predominantly Slavic enclave of Transnistria and resulted in close cooperation between Snegur and Yeltsin. Post-Soviet-era legislative elections did not take place until February 1994. A new post-Communist constitution was adopted in July 1994.

After elections in 1998, Moldova undertook much needed economic reforms and drafted a new constitution. In 2000, constitutional changes made Moldova a parliamentary republic, with the

president chosen by Parliament. Elections have continued, although government manipulation and lower voter turnout plague them.

Mongolia

Period of democratic transition: 1990

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP, the former Communist Party) ruled Mongolia beginning in 1924, when a Soviet-backed Marxist revolt led to the creation of the world's second single-party Communist state. The MPRP dominated all aspects of political life, including the legislature, which met for only three days each year. No other political parties were permitted.

In the wake of the 1989 Eastern European anti-Communist revolutions, a group of Mongolian dissidents initiated public civic gatherings, which became the core of the nonviolent reform movement. The unofficial civil society meetings gave birth to several prominent political groups, including the Mongolian Democratic Union, which organized popular street protests and hunger strikes in December 1989 and early 1990. On March 4, tens of thousands of demonstrators protested outside the Parliament, leading to the resignation of much of the MPRP leadership on March 12. The constitution was revised in May to allow for free elections with a multiparty system, abolish the MPRP's dominant role, and adopt a presidential system. These changes were facilitated by reform-leaning MPRP members, who assumed power following the resignation of the old hard-line leadership. Facing an unprepared opposition, the newly reformed MPRP easily won the country's first free parliamentary elections, quickly called in July 1990.

Political liberalization has continued since, and the 1996 elections saw the MPRP swept out of Parliament and a subsequent peaceful transfer of power to the Democratic and Social Democrat parties.

Mozambique

Period of democratic transition: 1994

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

After independence from Portugal in 1975, Samora Machel led the ruling Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and the Marxist-Leninist government until his death in a plane crash in 1986. Joaquim Chissano succeeded him as both president and FRELIMO party leader. During this time, Mozambique has also been engulfed by a brutal civil war between FRELIMO and the rebel Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), which has claimed the lives of over 600,000 people since independence.

In 1990, Chissano made moves toward multiparty democracy when he approved a new constitution that allowed for nonviolent political opposition, freedom of expression and belief, greater associational rights, and an independent judiciary. However, Mozambique's transition to electoral democracy was made possible chiefly through the internationally brokered peace

accord signed by both FRELIMO and RENAMO in October 1992. The peace accord followed a series of negotiations between the leaders of the two parties, both frequently reluctant to make concessions. However, once signed, the peace accord established the replacement of warring factions with political parties and guaranteed a series of civil liberties, an independent judiciary, a unified armed force, and the repatriation of refugees, internally displaced persons, and former combatants. The international brokers also managed to get both parties to agree to an October 1994 election date. With the participation of more than 90 percent of Mozambique's registered voters, the legislative and presidential elections took place as scheduled and saw a victory for FRELIMO and Chissano. The elections were judged a resounding success by the international community, despite a brief but aborted preelection boycott called by RENAMO accusing FRELIMO of electoral fraud. While RENAMO did not win the presidential polls, they were able to capture 112 out of 250 seats in the Parliament.

Subsequent elections have evidenced increasing political maturity in Mozambique, though FRELIMO continues to inordinately dominate the country's political system.

Namibia

Period of democratic transition: 1989

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

In 1988, Namibia—governed by South Africa as a protectorate under a 1920 League of Nations agreement—was finally given its independence in an international treaty contingent upon the removal of Cuban troops from Angola. South Africa had administered Namibia under apartheid in contravention of a 1966 United Nations resolution granting Namibia independence.

In addition to independence, the agreement called for a cease-fire between South African forces and the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO)—an association with Communist tendencies that had been fighting for independence since 1966. Preparations were also made for a phased withdrawal of South African troops as well as free parliamentary elections. By the end of June 1989, South Africa had granted amnesty to all Namibian guerrilla fighters, repealed apartheid legislation, and pulled its defense force out of Namibia, leaving just 1,500 troops in the country. Leading up to the November 1989 parliamentary elections, SWAPO reversed earlier statements favoring a preference for a one-party state by issuing public reassurances that it would respect democratic principles and multiparty politics should it win; it has largely lived up to this promise. In addition to SWAPO, 10 newly formed political parties participated in elections, considered to be free and fair by UN observers, for which almost 98 percent of registered voters turned out to cast ballots. SWAPO dominated the elections, taking 57 percent of the seats and enabling the party to nominate Sam Nujoma, one of its own, as the first president of Namibia. By February 1990, the Constituent Assembly had drafted and adopted a new liberal constitution.

Despite SWAPO's continued dominance of the political process, Namibia has generally been one of the most consistently free and open countries on the continent, and its elections have continued to be among the fairest.

Period of democratic transition: 1990–1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

King Birendra ruled Nepal beginning in 1962 through a repressive *panchayat* (village council) system, under which many opposition parties went underground. Political activity was limited to six government-sponsored class and professional organizations that were strictly warned against opposition politics.

The popular uprising followed India's refusal to renew trade and transit agreements with Nepal in 1989, causing shortages of food and medicine. The Nepali Congress Party (NC), which existed illegally under the Birendra regime, launched peaceful demonstrations countrywide in February 1990, advocating a democratic, multiparty system of government. Shortly thereafter, several hundred members of the opposition party were arrested, newspapers that opposed the regime were shut down, and in several instances police officers opened fire on the crowds, killing dozens of civilians. The killing of young Nepali demonstrators mobilized support for the opposition, even among doctors, lawyers, and other segments of the professional elite who traditionally avoided involvement in politics. On April 6, 1990, the security forces fired on a crowd of over 100,000, killing approximately 150 people, garnering widespread domestic and international condemnation. Two days later, Birendra agreed to remove the 29-year ban on political parties and appoint a commission to amend the constitution under democratic principles. The decision paved the way to a new constitution, promulgated in November, which guaranteed free elections, an independent press, and the right of workers to organize. Free and fair elections were held in May 1991, culminating in a victory for the NC, which was led by Girija Prasad Koirala.

The NC governed democratically until 1994, when intraparty conflicts forced them to call early elections, which they subsequently lost to the Communist Party of Nepal. Democratic stability has since been tenuous, despite an NC electoral victory in 1999, owing to the persistence of the Maoist insurgent groups that wanted an end to the constitutional monarchy and the drafting of a new constitution.

Nicaragua

Period of democratic transition: 1990

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

The Sandinista regime came to power in 1979 after overthrowing the Somoza dynasty, which had ruled Nicaragua for over four decades. Within three years, Nicaragua found itself in a midlevel civil war as rebels opposed to the socialist nature of the Sandinista regime took up arms against the government with U.S. support. By the late 1980s, the government had turned sharply authoritarian, denying many political rights and civil liberties to Nicaraguan citizens.

In the two years before elections in 1990, the Contra rebels continued to wage a low-intensity civil war against the leftist Sandinista dictatorship, but the killings and violence had declined significantly from the brutality of the mid-1980s. As the election approached, civic opposition included the Catholic Church, a small, independent trade union movement, business organi

zations, independent political parties, and independent print and radio that were frequently under state pressure. The previously fractious opposition united under the banner of the National Opposition Union, with Violeta Barrios de Chamorro as the presidential candidate. In the February 1990 elections, Chamorro defeated the Sandinista candidate, Daniel Ortega. Weariness of conflict, polarization, and economic stagnation played a critical role in forging this somewhat surprising result. The Sandinistas exited power peacefully, though they initially maintained control of the security forces. Additionally, the Sandinista leaders were discredited by the self-enrichment of some party members through the privatization of publicly owned land and businesses.

Since the transition, Nicaragua has struggled to achieve either political or economic stability. Though political violence tapered off, the government has been ineffective at bringing prosperity to the country. A 2000 pact between the Liberal and Sandinista parties was viewed as corrupt and resulted in decreased confidence in these two dominant parties. However, in 2006 Daniel Ortega was returned to the presidency, winning a plurality of the vote.

Niger

Period of democratic transition: 1999

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

After gaining independence from France in 1960, Niger was governed for 30 years by alternating one-party and military regimes. After a brief period of transient democratic rule under Mahamane Ousmane in the early 1990s, General Ibrahim Bare Mainassara seized power in 1996 in a military coup, won a fraudulent election staged that same year, and ran an increasingly repressive state.

The government opened into negotiations with the opposition in January 1997, but very little was achieved that year as Mainassara refused demands for the dissolution of the National Assembly. That same month, the opposition coalition, Front pour la Restauration et la Defense de la Democratie, organized a number of demonstrations in the capital that were violently dispersed by security forces. In the days following these demonstrations, security forces arrested more than 100 opposition supporters. In 1998, Mainassara's rule was shaken by brief army mutinies, strikes by unpaid teachers and civil servants, defections of his own supporters, and opposition demonstrations staged in Maradi and Zinder in April. In retaliation, the police formally banned demonstrations that same month. In April 1999, Mainassara was assassinated by members of his presidential guard. The commander of the presidential guard was appointed head of a transitional government to oversee the drafting of the constitution and democratic elections. Elections were held in November 1999 and were hailed as free and fair by international observers. Mamadou Tandja, a former army officer, won the presidency in the second round of polling, defeating former president Mahamane Ousmane with about 60 percent of the vote.

In 2004, Tandja retained the presidency in elections also considered to be free and fair. His victory was largely credited to widespread support for his efforts to return Niger to relative economic and political stability after years of turbulence.

Nigeria

Period of democratic transition: 1998–1999

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has been controlled for all but 15 years by the military. Like many other countries in the region, Nigeria made moves toward democratization in the early 1990s and even held national elections in 1993. But the military, led by General Ibrahim Babangida, annulled the elections and imprisoned President-Elect Moshood Abiola. By the end of 1993, Babangida was overthrown by General Sani Abacha, who promised to prepare the nation for democratic elections, though his reputation for broad political repression made many skeptical.

The Abacha government continued to claim that its program for transition was on course, but by 1998 fraudulent mock elections with the potential to aggravate existing ethnic tensions were all that seemed possible. However, in June 1998 Abacha mysteriously died, followed five weeks later by the death in detention of Abiola. The sudden departure of the two most significant figures on Nigeria's political landscape opened possibilities for genuine democratic reform. Army Chief of Staff General Abdulsalami Abubakar emerged as the consensus choice of the military to lead the transition. Parting ways from the Abacha tradition, Abubakar remained faithful to his promise and held a national debate on a draft constitution as well as local elections in December 1998. The electoral process culminated in presidential elections in May 1999 that saw the victory of former military ruler Olusegun Obasanjo, the only previous military ruler to have voluntarily handed over power to civilians.

Progress was apparent soon after the elections when thousands of prisoners were released from overcrowded jails and commissions were set up to investigate rights abuses and corruption. Despite continued corruption, Obasanjo's government has proven to be remarkably stable and was reelected peacefully and fairly in the 2003 polls.

Pakistan

Period of democratic transition: 1985

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

General Zia Ul-haq came to power in 1977 following a military coup against President Ali Bhutto. Zia suspended the constitution following the coup—ostensibly to ensure stability until general elections were held. However, the main opposition candidate was arrested and later executed, and no elections took place. Zia ruled by decree, curtailing press freedom and freedom of association; thousands of members of the opposition were imprisoned or flogged in a violent political climate.

In January 1985, however, Zia unilaterally announced that parliamentary and provincial elections would be held in February that year. The elections were deemed relatively free and fair despite the arrest of some opposition figures. Martial law was lifted at the end of 1985, and the new Parliament legalized political parties. Seventeen political parties were quickly authorized,

including the Pakistani Muslim League, headed by Prime Minister Muhhammad Khan Junejo. Both Zia and the new Parliament contributed to an amended constitution, leading to a document that included new checks on the powers of both the president and the prime minister, but also a clause that granted Zia the authority to dissolve the Parliament and dismiss the prime minister.

The civilian government remained intact for the next three years before Zia, citing government corruption and incompetence, sacked the Parliament and Prime Minister Junejo in March 1988 and called for new elections. Although Zia died in a plane crash shortly thereafter, the sacking began a cycle that would continue over the next several years, with a number of elected civilian governments being dismissed by successive presidents citing corruption or abuse of power. However, Pakistan remained a fragile democracy until General Pervez Musharraf came to power in a 1999 coup, after which political rights and civil liberties became heavily restricted.

Paraguay

Period of democratic transition: 1989

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

General Alfredo Stroessner violently seized control of the politically unstable Paraguayan government in May 1954 with the use of the armed forces. Stroessner was nominated president two months later by the Colorado Party and immediately declared a state of siege, which he renewed every three months until 1987. Fraud, repression, and torture became hallmarks of his regime, with no allowance for civil society participation.

In April 1987, Stroessner allowed the decades-long state of siege to lapse. Rivals were then freer to claim that there had been widespread fraud in the 1988 elections, after which the government announced that Stroessner won his eighth consecutive presidential term with 89 percent of the vote. General Andres Rodriguez, Stroessner's second in command and longtime aide as well as rival, had quietly aligned himself with a political faction that favored limited democratic reforms, earning the displeasure of Stroessner. In February 1989, Rodriguez led the violent coup that ousted Stroessner. Rodriguez's troops attacked the presidential guards, and fighting lasted for eight hours with at least 100 soldiers killed. Rodriguez was elected president in elections that May and enacted political and economic reforms. A new democratic constitution was adopted in 1992, and the first free multiparty elections were held in 1993.

The 1999 assassination of Vice President Luis Maria Ferraro highlighted the widespread corruption in the government and marked the point at which political instability returned. Civic groups are free to protest, while nonviolent elections have continued, yet the country has been unable to settle into a lengthy period of functional stability.

Peru

Period of democratic transition: 2000–2001

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

From 1990 to 2000, Peru was ruled by right-wing populist Alberto Fujimori. Though freely elected in 1990, Fujimori dissolved the Congress in April 1992, the first manifestation of an authoritarian pattern that increased after his reelection under a new constitution in 1995.

To justify the unpopular prospect of winning a third term in 2000, Fujimori adopted increasingly authoritarian governing techniques, gutting independent oversight centers in the government and coercing the media. This helped unite a previously demoralized opposition, which engaged in a variety of ultimately unsuccessful legal efforts to try to bar Fujimori from running. Though Fujimori was declared the winner of the first-round election in April 2000, opposition outcry led by second-place candidate and opposition leader Alejandro Toledo resulted in increased international scrutiny of the process. When the May runoff election appeared little fairer, Toledo dropped out, allowing Fujimori a victory in a contest deemed neither free nor fair by international observers. The growing opposition movement then applied pressure on the streets, holding massive protests during Fujimori's inauguration and in the months after. Student groups were among the most vocal opponents but were joined by civil society groups including trade unions, nongovernmental organizations, and social movements.

A major corruption scandal emerged in September 2000 centering on Fujimori's right-hand man and intelligence chief, Vladimiro Montesinos. Massive street demonstrations calling for the spy chief's arrest and the president's resignation, coupled with an erosion of support from the ruling elite, led Fujimori to announce his intention to hold new elections the following year, in which he would not be a candidate. Mounting civic pressure forced him to resign prematurely in November 2000 while in Japan.

Since the transition, Peru has remained tenuously democratic. After Fujimori's fall, a caretaker government directed free and fair national elections won by Toledo in June 2001. Despite low approval ratings, Toledo completed his term, and former president Alan Garcia won the 2006 election. Fujimori currently faces extradition proceedings in Chile with the goal of putting him on trial in Peru.

Philippines

Period of democratic transition: 1985–1986

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Longtime dictator Ferdinand Marcos became president in 1965 and ruled under martial law between 1972 and 1981. Under a constitution written during emergency rule, Marcos was empowered to rule by decree. Heavily manipulated parliamentary elections held in 1978 gave 151 of 161 seats to Marcos's Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement), ensuring Parliament would function only as an extension of Marcos's authority.

Although the end of martial law led to some modest liberalization in 1981, the 1983 assassination of Benigno Aquino, a leading opposition figure, gave momentum to a growing opposition movement. In November 1985, plagued by mounting popular discontent and pressure from the United States, Marcos agreed to hold presidential elections. An election took place in February 1986, and by official count, Marcos defeated the opposition United Nationalists

Democratic Organizations. However, the vote was marred by widespread irregularities as Marcos's supporters manipulated the count, stole ballot boxes, and even shot opposition supporters. The crisis provoked "People Power" protests in late February, in which Corazon Aquino, the widow of Benigno Aquino and an opposition candidate in the February elections, led hundreds of thousands of people in street protests in Manila. The movement included students, members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, workers, and a faction of the armed forces. The demonstrators attracted broad-based support across the country. Following the protests, Marcos fled the country and Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency.

Over the next five years, the Aquino administration was plagued by allegations of corruption and mismanagement and survived seven coup attempts. In 1992, however, the Philippines experienced its first peaceful transition of power when Fidel Ramos won elections in June.

Poland

Period of democratic transition: 1989–1990

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Poland enjoyed a window of independence from 1918 to 1939 but was invaded by Germany and the Soviet Union at the opening of World War II and then forced into the Communist sphere at the end of the war. Polish citizens endured decades of Soviet domination and mismanagement of the economy, which created waves of strikes and government violence. Martial law was declared in 1981 in an attempt to repress Solidarity, the free national trade union that was established the same year.

The glasnost and perestroika that USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev promoted led, in the late 1980s, to a resurgence of Solidarity as well as the release of political prisoners. Economic hardships inspired a new generation of workers in 1988 to strike and to support Solidarity, which had functioned underground since 1981. While operating clandestinely, the union movement and related civic-political resistance established an underground press, an alternative set of cultural institutions, strike funds, and networks of mutual support. Waves of strikes and protests in the end forced the Communist authorities to the bargaining table and led to a comprehensive settlement that relegalized the union movement and opened the door to its eventual electoral victory. Solidarity candidates won 99 out of 100 contested seats (representing 36 percent of Parliament) in June 1989 parliamentary elections and given their overwhelming show of support were asked to form a government. On December 9, 1990, Solidarity leader Lech Walesa was elected president in a competitive, multicandidate election. The country's first fully contested legislative elections were held in 1993.

Since the election of Lech Walesa, Poland has made good progress in a democratic government, with Solidarity and Communist candidates smoothly alternating power. Several presidential and parliamentary elections have all been found free and fair.

Romania

Period of democratic transition: 1990
Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Throughout the latter half of the cold war, Romania was harshly and capriciously ruled by Nicolae Ceausescu, one of Eastern Europe's most repressive dictators.

The collapse of the Ceausescu tyranny was precipitated by growing public discontent that appeared in part to have been orchestrated by segments of the country's Communist leadership and former Communist officials. Protests against Ceausescu's regime began among the ethnic Hungarian minority, eventually spread to Bucharest, and resulted in Ceausescu's execution on Christmas Day 1989. The collapse of the totalitarian system was accompanied by significant violence that claimed over 1,000 lives, with several thousand others seriously wounded. While civic groups, labor unions, and political parties quickly rose, most of the initiative and all power was transferred to the National Salvation Front (NSF), a body established in December 1989 by a group of anti-Ceausescu Communist Party officials along with dissident writers and liberal cultural figures. In 1990, public civic discontent focused on the post-Ceausescu NSF, which was dominated by former party officials. The NSF accepted the end to one-party rule and agreed to the emergence of opposition political parties and independent media outlets that over time led to the emergence of a competitive democratic system. However, the months that followed Ceausescu's fall from power were marred by significant violence directed at the opposition. The NSF nonetheless dominated the national media in the early months after the Communist regime's collapse, and in May 1990, NSF leader Ion Iliescu was elected president with 85 percent of the vote. Multiparty legislative elections followed in February 1992.

Elections have since continued smoothly in Romania and have been considered generally free and fair by international observers. The need to restrain corruption has been a popular theme in election politics.

Russia

Period of democratic transition: 1988–1990
Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Since the takeover of Russia by the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, Russia never recovered from the brutal rule of Josef Stalin between 1924 and 1964; Stalin maintained complete control amid forced collectivization, political purges, and a harsh penal and labor system. Subsequent Soviet leaders followed where Stalin had led.

After Mikhail Gorbachev became (the last) general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1985, he instituted glasnost (openness) and perestroika (reform), which resulted in a general political relaxation across the USSR. At the same time, news of protests and opposition movements in other Soviet republics leaked in, resulting in heightened public pressure to institute further reforms. Gorbachev also called for multicandidate elections for regional legislatures and the separation of the government apparatus from the party, leading to a loss of controlling power for the Secretariat. In December 1988, the Supreme Soviet approved the formation of a Congress of People's Deputies and dissolved itself. Deputy elections in 1989

shocked the CPSU as voters rejected the nominated Communist candidates. Nevertheless, the CPSU won 87 percent of the seats. In further shocks to the tightly controlled Soviet system, the newly elected deputies railed on national television against every detail of Soviet failings, including Gorbachev. By the end of 1990, the Soviet Union had ceased to exist.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the Russian Federation emerged as an independent state under the leadership of President Boris Yeltsin. Although Yeltsin won elections again in 1996, three years later he handed over power to his successor, Vladimir Putin, who easily won elections in 2000 and 2004. Putin has consolidated power and has slowly strengthened the centrality of the state. Corruption, government influence, and state-controlled media have combined to make continued democracy challenging.

Senegal

Period of democratic transition: 2000–2001

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Although Senegal escaped the military or harshly authoritarian rule that many of its neighbors have experienced, true democratic rule has also been elusive, as the Socialist Party (PS) has dominated the nation's political life through patronage and electoral manipulation since its independence from France in 1960. President Leopold Senghor exercised de facto one-party rule under the PS for more than a decade after independence. Even in 1974, when three other political parties were permitted to operate freely, Senghor remained in power through blatantly biased electoral proceedings. In 1981, Abdou Diouf succeeded him as leader of the PS. Changes to the electoral code made in 1992 lowered the voting age to 18, introduced secret ballots, and created a nominally fairer electoral framework. But Diouf's victories in both 1988 and 1993 were still widely discredited as being unfair and undemocratic.

Nonetheless, four decades of rule by the PS came to an end when veteran opposition leader and law professor Abdoulaye Wade of the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) defeated Diouf in presidential elections held in March 2000. Wade was able to defeat Diouf in these polls—the first ever in Senegal's history to go to a runoff—by consolidating opposition political support unavailable to him in the first round. Less than a year later, in January 2001 the people of Senegal adopted by an overwhelming majority a new constitution that reduced presidential terms from seven to five years, set the number of terms at two, and for the first time gave women the right to own land. Wade soon dissolved the impotent National Assembly, and free and fair legislative elections were held in April 2001.

Wade's PDS has maintained control of Senegal since 2001 and has governed peacefully even while President Wade has often been accused of becoming increasingly authoritarian.

Serbia and Montenegro

Period of democratic transition: 2000

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

The six constituent republics in the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia were Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia. After the collapse of communism, the republics began to break apart and claim independence, until only Serbia and Montenegro were left, and these formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992. Slobodan Milosevic, Serbian president since 1989, controlled the country's security forces as well as the state-owned media. Through his promotion of aggressive Serbian nationalism, he instigated territorial and ethnic wars with Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, which prompted NATO bombings and international isolation, all of which led to an erosion of popular support for Milosevic.

In January 2000, members of the divided Serbian opposition joined forces as the Democratic Opposition of Serbia in an effort to remove Milosevic from power. The pro-democracy student movement Otpor, founded at Belgrade University in 1998, was able to provide central support to the opposition parties with civilian membership that swelled into the tens of thousands. Milosevic called for Yugoslav presidential elections on September 24, 2000, but when he lost to Democratic Party of Serbia candidate Vojislav Kostunica, Milosevic refused to accept the results. In protest, Otpor, joined by approximately one million people including professionals and pensioners, took to the streets, a national strike was called, and gradually key Milosevic allies, including the Serbian Orthodox Church, withdrew support. Protesters invaded and set fire to both the Parliament and state TV station buildings. When Milosevic's security forces abandoned him after several days of unrest, he publicly conceded to Kostunica. Parliamentary elections in December solidified the transition to democracy.

Presidential elections in both parts of the country failed for the first few years, but finally in 2003 and 2004, each part elected its own president. Voter turnout was relatively low. In the summer of 2006, Montenegrins voted for independence from Serbia. The strength of democracy in the independent halves remains to be seen.

Slovakia

Period of democratic transition: 1989

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Slovakia is a part of the former Czechoslovakia, which was created in 1918 following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Soviet troops helped establish the Communist People's Party of Czechoslovakia in 1948, and the country was renamed the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in 1960. In 1968, Soviet tanks crushed the so-called Prague Spring, a period of halting political liberalization.

Despite relatively "quiet" times during the 1970s and 1980s, the group Charter 77 formed a loose alliance of citizens calling for the protection of civil and human rights in 1977. November 1989 saw the emergence of massive nonviolent civic protests involving hundreds of thousands of participants in the urban center. Charter 77 united with other groups to form the Civic Forum, led by dissident playwright Vaclav Havel, and rapidly gained followers, while other organizations like People Against Violence also emerged. Protests in Bratislava as well as Prague and other major cities involved as many as a million protesters calling for liberalization and democracy. The upsurge of protests, called the "Velvet Revolution," culminated in a nationwide general

strike on November 28, 1989, which led to the announcement by Communist authorities that they would end their monopoly on power. By the end of 1989, roundtable talks conducted under constant civic pressure paved the way to parliamentary elections in June 1990 that were won by parties representing the democratic civic forces.

Slovakia emerged as a sovereign and independent republic when it separated from the Czech Republic on January 1, 1993. From 1993 to 1998, Vladimir Meciar, twice prime minister, battled with then president Michal Kovac over executive and governmental powers and opposed direct presidential elections. Meciar was rejected in an election in 1998, and elections have since strengthened steadily, with parliamentary elections in 2006 considered free and fair.

Slovenia

Period of democratic transition: 1990–1992

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

At the end of World War I, Slovenia became a part of the new kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (renamed the kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929), and after World War II, it became one of six constituent republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Slovenia was the most prosperous of the republics; in the years shortly after Josip Tito's death, it consolidated economic and political power and allowed a powerful civil society with some independent media to flourish.

Slovenia's independence drive began in earnest in 1989. With the approval of Milan Kucan, the reform-minded leader of the Communist Party, the assembly approved constitutional amendments that strengthened its right to secede from the federation. After multiparty elections were allowed in 1989, a non-political party opposition group, the Democratic Opposition of Slovenia Party (DEMOS), formalized. Made up of six opposition groups, DEMOS won an absolute majority in the April 1990 elections. DEMOS's political platform, independence within a year, was successful when 88 percent of Slovenia's population voted for independence in December 1990. On June 25, 1991, these same civic and political forces declared independence, resulting in a 10-day war with the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav government. Eighteen Slovenians and 44 soldiers from the Yugoslav army perished, while 5,000 were taken prisoner by Slovenia. On July 7, a peace pact was signed that led to the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces, paving the way for the long-term independence of Slovenia.

Kucan was reelected in 1992 and 1996 as the new country consolidated its power. It is considered a stable democracy where voter turnout remains high; in 2006, approximately 1 million of Slovenia's 1.6 million eligible voters participated in municipal elections.

South Africa

Period of democratic transition: 1992–1994

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

In 1948, the Afrikaner-dominated National Party (NP) came to power on a platform of comprehensive, institutionalized racial separation, and in 1961, upon independence from the United Kingdom, the NP continued to govern South Africa under the apartheid system for decades.

In 1990, President F. W. de Klerk decided to release the opposition African National Congress (ANC) leader, Nelson Mandela, after 27 years of imprisonment and begin negotiations with the previously illegal ANC and other opposition parties. These actions were taken largely in response to both domestic and international pressure to do away with white minority rule and the de facto exclusion of the African majority from the political process. A large civic movement led by trade unions, student groups, and the ANC used both violent and nonviolent means to pressure the government. At the second Convention for a Democratic South Africa in 1992, the NP, the ANC, and 17 opposition parties all participated in negotiations aimed at facilitating the transition to a representative democracy. A whites-only referendum in the same year saw 69 percent of voters endorse further negotiations with African parties. Bilateral talks between the government and the ANC began soon after, resulting in a Record of Understanding, signed by de Klerk and Mandela, which mandated the dissolution of the racially based Parliament, the election of a Constituent Assembly to draft and ratify a new constitution, and the formation of a freely elected government. In November 1993, these were codified in a formal accord and interim constitution calling for the holding of universal elections in 1994 and the establishment of a five-year Transitional Government of National Unity.

Despite fervent pro-apartheid protests and significant violence among African political factions, national elections were held in April 1994, resulting in an overwhelming victory for the ANC, the emergence of Mandela as president, and the peaceful establishment of a national unity government.

South Korea

Period of democratic transition: 1987

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

General Chun Doo-Hwan came to power in a military coup shortly after his predecessor's assassination in 1979. Chun presided over an authoritarian political system in which the national assembly was effectively controlled by the ruling Democratic Justice Party (DJP). Decision making was primarily in the hands of Chun and a small circle of advisers, while the press was tightly controlled and protests often violently suppressed.

In 1986, Chun, like several of his predecessors, considered passing a constitutional amendment that would grant him an additional term in office. However, his scheme produced considerable public backlash. Opposition parties formed coalitions with powerful student and labor groups and pressured the government through mass demonstrations and, in some cases, riots. Protesters demanded a new constitution under which the president would be elected in general elections rather than by a government-dominated electoral college. In early 1987, after the killing of a student protester while under interrogation, the protest movement grew rapidly and began to attract a broader base, including the South Korean middle class. A decision by Chun in April to

suspend debate on constitutional reform was met with near universal disapproval. This sparked a new wave of demonstrations, culminating in June 1987 with thousands of students protesting the DJP's decision to nominate Roh Tae Woo, another military general, as Chun's successor. Days later, Roh accepted the opposition's demands and called for parliamentary and presidential elections. Relatively free and fair elections in December 1987 saw the DJP receive a plurality of votes and Roh receive the presidency, but two opposition parties together were able to form a majority bloc in Parliament. A revised constitution went into effect in 1988, guaranteeing basic rights, limiting the president to a single five-year term, and taking away his power to dissolve Parliament.

Opposition leader Kim Young-sam became the first civilian president since 1961 when he joined the ruling party to win the 1992 presidential election. However, in 1997 Kim lost the presidential election to Kim Dai-jung in the country's first peaceful transfer of power to an opposition candidate.

Spain

Period of democratic transition: 1975–78

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

General Francisco Franco took power in Spain after his right-wing Nationalist forces defeated the left-leaning republican government in the country's 1936–39 civil war. He subsequently restored the monarchy, exercising authoritarian rule as regent until his death in November 1975. Opposition parties were banned under his regime, and the governing National Movement was the only legal political grouping.

Franco's handpicked successor as head of state, Prince Juan Carlos, was proclaimed king in 1975 and expressed his desire for democracy and reform. He and Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez, Franco's successor as head of the National Movement, used the existing political structure to bring down the old regime and erect a democratic system. A Law for Political Reform was passed by the parliament in 1976, leftist opposition parties were legalized, and the first free elections in decades were held in 1977. Suarez's newly created Union of the Democratic Center party won a parliamentary majority, and he was elected prime minister. A new constitution was approved by referendum the following year. Although the new charter completed Spain's major democratic reforms, the country continued to face terrorism by the Basque separatist group ETA and pressure for greater autonomy in other regions. In 1981, Juan Carlos was able to thwart a coup attempt by right-wing officers opposed to the decentralization process. The Spanish Socialist Workers Party took power in elections the following year, confirming Spain's transformation into a multiparty democracy.

Successive left-leaning and conservative governments have since coped with Basque terrorism and other internal problems without deviating from the democratic order established in 1978.

Thailand

Period of democratic transition: 1992
Pro-democracy civic movement: present

After a brief experiment with democracy in 1973, the military took power in Thailand in 1976 and began its domination of the Thai political scene. In February 1991, following a period of modest liberalization under General Prem in the late 1980s, the Thai army staged a bloodless coup against elected president Chatichai Choonhavan, claiming that Choonhavan's administration was corrupt and incompetent.

Soon after the coup, the pro-military National Assembly adopted a controversial new constitution allowing an unelected prime minister to be appointed by the lower house. Elections to the lower house took place in March 1992, bringing a majority of pro-military parties to the new National Assembly. This new majority subsequently installed General Suchinda Kraprayoon—former head of the 1991 coup—as the new prime minister despite his previous statements that he was not a candidate. Within hours of his appointment students began demonstrating, demanding Suchinda's resignation and calling for a constitutional amendment under which the prime minister must be an elected member of Parliament. For the next month, protests in Bangkok escalated, attracting significant support from the urban middle class. Former Bangkok governor Chamlong Srimuang emerged as leader of the movement, which culminated in a 200,000-strong rally on May 17 that was violently dispersed; at least 40 died and 600 were injured when the army fired on a mainly peaceful crowd. Following the violence, the king appeared on television and instructed the government to end the movement through peaceful reconciliation. Soon after, the Parliament amended the constitution to ensure that future prime ministers were chosen from among elected members of Parliament. Elections considered to be the cleanest in Thailand's history were held in September 1992, with pro-democracy parties winning a slim majority.

Thailand continued its democratic progress in the 1990s, holding several democratic elections, and promulgated a new constitution in 1997 that called for a directly elected upper house among other reforms.

Turkey

Period of democratic transition: 1981-1983
Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Turkey, a distinctly unique country with a contentious political history, has been struggling with the idea, institutionalization and practice of democracy since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey has in fact had a number of “democratic transitions” – each occurring with a military intervention, under the guise of “safeguarding the democracy,” and a rewriting of the Turkish Constitution. Unfortunately, following each instance of attempted democratization the Turkish state would find itself in the midst of the instability of an evolving democracy and slowly fall back into the pattern of corruption and autocracy.

Beginning in 1972, the year this study began, Turkey was in the midst of alternating periods of military and civilian rule coupled with periods of intense political violence.

Throughout the 1970's the Turkish government consisted of the Grand National Assembly, President Koruturk and the military. In response to sectarian violence in 1978, martial law was declared, again, in thirteen Turkish provinces. And, in April 1980, President Koruturk's seven-year term in office ended and the Grand National Assembly failed to appoint a successor.

In September 1980 the military – once again as the self-appointed saviors of the democracy – seized control of Turkey, appointed members to the Consultative Assembly for the purpose of drafting a new constitution, named members to the National Security Council and appointed Bulent Ulusu prime minister. The transition to civilian rule took three years and, although the coup met with no organized popular political resistance, there were a staggering number of political arrests made.

The new constitution was drafted and in effect by 1982. It provided for a strong presidency, outlawed politicians from the pre-1980 period and dissolved the pre-existing parliament and government. The state of Turkey's democracy and accordance with human rights protocol began to come under intense scrutiny by western countries during this period – and continues to this day. Following the coup in 1980 Turkey has had a tumultuous journey on the path to democracy. And, although it has not backslid into martial law, Turkey remains under close watch.

Ukraine

Period of democratic transition: 2004–2006

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

In December 1991, Ukraine's voters ratified a declaration of independence from the Soviet Union and elected Leonid Kravchuk as president. Communists won a plurality in parliamentary elections in 1994, and Leonid Kuchma defeated Kravchuk in the presidential poll. Over time, Kuchma's government became the target of domestic and international criticism for extensive and high-level corruption and for the erosion of political and free speech rights.

The 1999 presidential election was marred by harassment of independent media, biased coverage by state media, intimidation of candidates, and illegal campaigning by state officials. Mounting high-level corruption led to the emergence of a protest movement in 2001–2002, which mobilized as many as 100,000 protesters at its demonstrations. Although the Constitutional Court ruled in 2004 that Kuchma was eligible to run again, support was so low that an alternative, Viktor Yanukovych, was chosen. With most national broadcast media under government control, opposition candidates, including former prime minister Viktor Yushchenko, opted for nationwide mass rallies, which attracted student and civic groups. In a runoff election between Yushchenko and Yanukovych, massive voter fraud was detected by international and domestic election monitors. The result was two weeks of massive protests known as the "Orange Revolution," in which millions took part nationwide. These protests, which were accompanied by assertive nonviolent tactics and a revolt against censorship by the news media, forced a new repeat round of elections that was won by Yushchenko. In free and fair parliamentary elections in March 2006, the forces that supported the Orange Revolution captured a majority, but infighting and mutual mistrust led to the defection of the Socialists and to the creation of a government led by Yanukovych and the Party of Regions.

Parliamentary elections in March 2006 were universally declared free and fair. However, it is still too early to determine how firmly democracy has taken root.

Uruguay

Period of democratic transition: 1984

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

In 1971, elected president Juan Maria Bordaberry dissolved Congress and banned political parties the following year at the direction of the military, which then seized power in 1973 and ousted Bordaberry in 1976. Until 1985, Uruguay remained under control of a military dictatorship, which held absolute power as intense “preventive” repression against communism.

A November 1980 plebiscite rejected the new constitution drawn up by military leaders. After this rejection, and in conjunction with their inability to control the worsening economic situation, the military announced a plan to return to civilian rule. In 1982, a law was passed to regulate the election of political leaders and other aspects of political conventions and platforms. In elections that year, political parties opposing the dictatorship won overwhelmingly. While politicians and the military attempted dialogues, a workers union and a student organization demonstrated separately, and in November 1983, all of the opposition parties staged a massive protest rally in Montevideo, demanding elections and full restoration of the democratic practice. Labor and civil strikes continued into 1984, organized by social groups and political parties. The military agreed to an advisory board controlled by the president and the cabinet. Elections were held in November, with a victory for Colorado Party candidate Julio Mario Sanguinetti. While attempting to resolve the many complicated issues he inherited, Sanguinetti proposed an unrestricted amnesty bill for the military and police that was approved by the General Assembly in December 1986 and essentially halted any examinations into human rights abuses under the military regime. Despite opposition to this law, Uruguayans voted to keep it in effect, thus maintaining a peaceful transition to democracy.

Democratic elections continued through relative stability in the 1990s, but since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been increasing labor unrest and crime. Recent attempts to address human rights abuses from the past continue to meet with military opposition.

Yemen

Period of democratic transition: 1992-1993

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

Yemen’s political transition began in May 1990, when North Yemen (the Yemen Arab Republic) and South Yemen (the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen) unified to form a new republic. The unification in reality represented more of a absorption of the South by the North, as the latter, formerly a Soviet Style one party state, had been virtually bankrupted after Soviet backing dried up in the late 1980s. Upon their dissolution, parliaments from both countries elected a new governing council, headed by Colonel Ali Abdullah Saleh, formerly the leader of North Yemen, which had previously functioned as a military dictatorship with limited democratic participation.

A new constitution drafted by the governing council and ratified by 98.3 percent of the population provided for significant democratic reforms: political parties, which had previously been banned in both the North and South, were legalized, women were given full political rights, and multi-party elections were scheduled for 1992. In 1993, after a year of delays, Yemen elected 301 candidates to parliamentary seats in the first free elections held in North or South Yemen. The elections saw the General People's Congress (GPC), the former ruling party of the North, win a majority in parliament. The Yemeni Congregation for Reform (al-Islah) and the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), the former ruling party of the south, also won a small number of seats.*

The reform process stalled in 1994 when the YSP, disappointed with its poor election showing, boycotted the new government and tried to reestablish an independent South Yemen. This led to a 70-day civil war that ended with the exile of YSP leaders. Yemen's experiment with democracy continued after the war, though the YSP's boycott allowed the GPC to dominate political life. Saleh is still president, and holds broad powers under a constitution change ratified in 1994.

Zambia

Period of democratic transition: 1991

Pro-democracy civic movement: present

Since independence in 1964, Zambia has been ruled by President Kenneth Kaunda and the United National Independence Party (UNIP), which declared the state to be a "one-party participatory democracy" in 1968 and institutionalized this status in the 1972 constitution. Over time, Kaunda's rule grew increasingly repressive and corrupt.

In late 1989, the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions and its chairman, Frederick Chiluba, began to call for multipartyism in Zambia. Despite the ban on opposition political activity, a number of pro-democracy groups came together under the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). In tandem with economic stagnation and falling living standards, a number of trade unionists and opposition supporters took part in riots, which turned violent and were met with a forceful official response. Following this incident, Kaunda initially agreed to a nationwide referendum on the introduction of democracy planned for October 1990. However, in September continued robust opposition led Kaunda to cancel the referendum in favor of the legalization of opposition political party activity and full parliamentary and presidential elections in 1991. During the campaign, violence was prevalent as MMD activists were beaten, fired upon, arrested, and forced to suffer property damage at the hands of suspected UNIP vigilantes. MMD candidate Chiluba resoundingly carried the presidential election over Kaunda with 81 percent of the vote, while the MMD won 125 out of 150 seats in Parliament.

While the election was deemed free and fair, subsequent elections in Zambia have brought about a significant decline in political rights, including restrictions on opposition parties and candidates and instances of electoral fraud.

Zimbabwe

Period of democratic transition: 1977–1979

Pro-democracy civic movement: not present

In 1965, a white-minority regime led by Prime Minister Ian Smith unilaterally declared independence from the United Kingdom; Zimbabwe—then known as Rhodesia—was subsequently considered illegal and was subject to extensive sanctions.

In 1976, following economic sanctions, guerrilla warfare, the end of Portuguese colonial rule in neighboring countries, and Anglo-American diplomatic pressure, Smith agreed in principle to majority rule and to meeting black nationalist leaders in Geneva. However, the meeting failed to produce a settlement. The following year, an internal settlement signed by the Smith government and prominent black leaders Bishop Abel Muzorewa, Reverend Nadabaningi Sithole, and Chief Jeremiah Chirau provided for qualified majority rule and free elections. Elections took place in April 1979 and resulted in a victory for Bishop Muzorewa. However, the guerrilla conflict that had killed thousands persisted, and later that year the United Kingdom convened deliberations with the African parties in London. On December 12, 1979, “Zimbabwe-Rhodesia” reverted to British colonial rule in preparation for official independence; and on December 21, an agreement was signed in London calling for a cease-fire, new elections, a transition period under British rule, and a new constitution implementing majority rule while protecting minority rights. The United Nations Security Council approved the settlement and lifted all sanctions. Free and fair elections were held in February 1980 and resulted in a victory for Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party, which formed the first democratically elected government. Zimbabwe was granted independence in April, and its first representative Parliament convened in May.

A few years of stability followed. However, since then ZANU-PF has become one of the most politically oppressive regimes in all of Africa, with a reputation for human rights abuses and violent intimidation under the relentlessly authoritarian hand of Mugabe.