CENTRE -PERIPHERY RELATIONS & DEMOCRATIZATION

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Since the 1990s, the movement towards democracy has been a global one. In 1973, almost 27 percent of countries was a minimal democracy. By the end of 1994 more than 57 percent of the political regimes can be classified as minimal democratic. Since 1990, 34 nondemocratic regimes have undergone a transition to minimal democracy. This rapid political transformation began in Eastern Europe, spread to Latin America and parts of Asia, and then moved to parts of sub-Saharan Africa. However, more than 60 regimes remained nondemocratic. The democratic wave did not engulf China, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, and many other countries. Although democracy is now spreading to more and more corners of the globe, contrasts still remain: some nondemocratic regimes made a transition towards a democratic political system while others did not. As a consequence, it is interesting to detect not only a theoretical explanation but also empirical evidence for these variations in the transitions towards democracy since 1989 that is applicable to all countries.

An explanation of the difference in political systems was first offered by modernization theories (cf. Lerner 1958; Lipset 1959). This approach argued that economic development (measured by the gross national product per capita, urbanization and industrialization etc.) would be conducive to a transformation of society; this ‘new’ society, in its turn, would induce political changes, resulting in democracy. According to this approach, each less developed country will follow the same path already traversed by the now developed and democratic countries. If less developed countries are not able to undergo this political modernization process, modernization theory will state that this is a consequence of economic domestic factors.

As a reaction and alternative to the modernization approach, the world-system theories, emerging in the early 1970s, provided another explanation (cf. Wallerstein 1974). This approach states that a country's position in the international division of labor is essential for understanding its social and political developments. According to this approach, a world-system has been developed; and it is the asymmetrical exchange relations and international division of labor within this system that would generate inequality between the countries. The position of a country in the world-system, located in either the dominant rich core or impoverished subordinate periphery, is an important determinant of democracy. If a country is not able to become democratic, world-system theory will argue that this is due to external international, rather than internal domestic factors.

The important modernization hypothesis that there is a relationship between development and democracy has been replicated all the time: all
previous empirical studies clearly support the positive relationship between
development and democracy (e.g. Cutright 1963; McCrone and Cnudde 1967;
Neubauer 1967; Olsen 1968; Jackman 1973; Coulter 1975; Bollen 1979, 1980,
1995b; Inglehart 1988; Muller and Seligson 1994; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck
1994). The ideas of the world-system theory, on the other hand, are
fundamentally neglected. For all I know, Bollen’s study (1983) and my own
analyses (Doorenspleet 1997) are the only studies that focus on the direct
influence of world-system on democracy.

This ECPR-paper makes an initial attempt to carry out cross-national
quantitative tests concerning the relationship between a country’s role in the
world-system and a country’s probability on a transition to democracy during
the so-called Explosive, or Fourth, Wave of Democratization (1990-1994). In
the next Section, attention will be paid to previous research on the relationship
between world-system role and democracy. In the third and fourth Section, the
concepts of world-system role and democracy will be defined and measured.
Then, the fifth Section will present the results of the analyses in which the
hypotheses concerning the influence of world-system role are tested. The final
Section will contain a conclusion and will offer suggestions for future research.

1. WORLD-SYSTEM AND DEMOCRACY: PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The world-system school tried to offer a new interpretation of the events in the
1970s, such as the East Asian industrialization, the crisis of socialist states, and
the so-called decline of the capitalist world-economy. The school started with
Wallerstein’s publications in 1974, e.g. the first volume of The Modern World-
System, which were immediate successes. Already in 1977, Wallerstein began
to edit his own journal, Review, and one year later a special section of the
American Sociological Association began to publish annual volumes on the
political economy of the world-system. World-system researchers started to
develop new, world-level data sets, because current data sets, most of which
have been collected at the national level, were insufficient to answer the global
research questions posed by the world-system theorists. The Research Working
Group on World Labor (RWG) of the Fernand Braudel Centre collected data,
and made content analysis of magazines, almanacs, and newspapers from 1870
to the present in order to extract information on global labor movements.
Within few years, a new school was established.1
Adopting elements from the dependency approach and Annales school, the world-system approach took a holistic view and historical perspective that extends back to the establishment of the world-system in the sixteenth century. In this capitalist world-system, states are not societies that have separate, parallel histories, but parts of a whole reflecting that whole. To the extent that stages exist, they exist for the system as a whole and

‘to understand the internal class contradictions and political struggles of a particular state, we must first situate it in the world-economy. We can then understand the ways in which various political and cultural thrusts may be efforts to alter or preserve a position within this world-economy which is to the advantage or disadvantage of particular groups located within a particular state’ (Wallerstein 1993: 221).

Leaving aside small-scale, isolated societies, there have been only two kinds of large-scale social systems: (1) empires, in which a functional occupational economic division of labor is subsumed under one imperial state, and (2) world economies, in which there are multiple political sovereignties, no one of which can subsume and control the entire economic system. A world economy should be, Wallerstein argued, more able than a world empire to experience sustained economic development because economic actors have more freedom to maneuver and reinvest surpluses.

The world economy is based upon a geographically differentiated division of labor and divided into three main zones, the core, periphery and the semiperiphery. Each major zone has an economic structure based upon its particular mixture of economic activities (industry and differentiated agriculture in the core, and monoculture in the periphery) and its form of labor control (skilled wage labor in the core, sharecropping in the semiperiphery, and slavery or ‘coerced cash-crop labor’ in the periphery). The different zones are differentially rewarded by the world economy, with surplus flowing disproportionately to the core areas. The core societies are rich, powerful, economically diversified, and relatively independent of outside controls. The peripheral societies are relatively poor, weak, economically overspecialized and subject to manipulation and control by the core countries. The semiperipheral societies stand between the core and periphery and are trying to industrialize and diversify their economies.

Wallerstein’s version of the dependency theory has several important original elements. First is his stress on the importance of a world-system,
which is a single economic exchange network. The world-system perspective insists that the whole world should be taken as unit of analysis. Unlike the dependency school, which concentrates on the study of the periphery, the world-system school has a much broader research focus in studying the whole world-system. Second, Wallerstein stated that at first there was only a small difference in economic and social development between the capitalist core and the periphery. By exploiting the difference (buying cheap primary products in return for manufactured products), the Low Countries enlarged that difference in the sixteenth century, Wallerstein argued. Third, Wallerstein proposed a trimodal system consisting of core, semiperiphery, and periphery. He reasoned that the world is too complicated to be classified as a bimodal system as the dependency theorists do. He argued that the world-system needs a semi peripheral area because a polarized world-system can lead rapidly to acute disintegration. Crises are avoided by the creation of middle sectors, which tend to think that they are better off than the lower sector, rather than as worse off than the upper sector. In addition, semi-peripheral countries can serve as good places for capitalist investment when well-organized labor forces in core economies cause wages to rise to fast.

Fourth, Wallerstein’s trimodal model avoids the deterministic statement of the dependency school that the core always exploits the periphery. With the semi-peripheral concept, the direction of development can be possible upward and downward in the world-economy.

Finally, Wallerstein turned the Marxist concept of ‘class conflict’ into a matter of international conflict, with the core as upper class, the semiperiphery as middle class and the periphery as working class. Internal class structures are adjuncts of the international division of labor and could explain the performance of individual countries in the international game. Socialist revolution would occur only when the periphery overthrew the core and established a socialist world-system free of exploitation (cf. Chirot 1981: 273-274).

According to Wallerstein, an important difference between the modernization school and his approach is the mode of thought: the modernization approach is mechanical, whereas the world-system approach is dialectical. ‘I mean by the latter term that at every point in the analysis, one asks not what is the formal structure but what is the consequence for both the whole and the parts for maintaining or changing a certain structure at that particular point in time, given the totality of particular positions of that particular point in time’, Wallerstein explained (Wallerstein 1993: 221).
Although a considerable number of critical remarks can be made,\(^2\) the insights of the world-system school are valuable in explaining democracy. Semiperipheral and peripheral positions in the world-system are thought to reduce a country’s probability for political democracy, but this hypothesis has been neglected in empirical research. In a remarkable study, Bollen (1983) analyzed the relationship between a country’s position in the world-system and the existence of a democratic system.\(^3\) Bollen discussed the mechanisms by which world-system position influences the likelihood of democracy. The modernization theorists view socioeconomic development as giving rise to a number of powerful groups (e.g. the middle class) which successfully challenge the traditional elites to obtain a more democratic system. World-system theorists argue that a group such as the middle class does not play the same role in the noncore as it does in the core. Those theorists state that the middle class is extremely weak in the noncore because of the alliance between the noncore and core elites. The landowning classes and the merchants join together to promote the export of raw materials and the import of manufacturing products and as a result they undermine the domestic industrial bourgeoisie and middle-class (cf. Chase-Dunn 1975). As a consequence, the effect is, as Chirot states, as follows: ‘Outside the core, democracy is a rarity’ (from Bollen 1983: 470-471).

Democracy is more likely in the core than in the peripheral countries. One reason for this is that, Bollen stated, a number of groups in the core countries are sufficiently strong to demand and receive some say in the national government. To maintain domestic stability within the core, it is necessary to distribute political power more equally than might otherwise be desired by the core’s elite (Bollen 1983: 470-471).

To find evidence, Bollen undertook a regression analysis of the relations between world-system position, economic development and democracy. The results supported the idea that different positions in the world-system are associated with different levels of democracy, even after controlling for economic development. Both peripheral and semiperipheral countries are less democratic than core countries. Peripheral position has a larger negative effect than does the semiperipheral position. The analysis indicated a persistent positive relationship between economic development and democracy.

It has to be emphasized that Bollen’s study (1983) focused on explaining democracy at one point in time. This ECPR-paper, by contrast, pays also attention to explaining transitions to democracy. We already know, on the basis of other studies (Rustow 1970; Bratton and van de Walle 1997;
Doorenspleet 2001), that the transitions to democracy might require another explanation than the presence or endurance of democracy. On the basis of a relationship between world-system role and the presence of democracy one cannot simply conclude that there is a relationship between the world-system role and the probability that a country will make a transition to democracy. The value of this paper, therefore, is that the relationship between world-system role and transition to democracy will be investigated for the first time. Furthermore, previous studies have not been able to take into account the period since 1990; a period in which many countries effected a transition to democracy. It is important to investigate the influences on democracy during this explosive wave of democratization. Finally, two different measurements will be included, one of which is a completely new developed measurement.

In conclusion, the following hypotheses evolve from the theoretical ideas of the world-system approach as described above:

1. Core countries have a higher probability to be democratic at a certain point in time than semi-peripheral and peripheral countries;
2. There is relationship between a country’s role in the world-system and the probability of democracy, even after having controlled for development;
3. Core countries have a higher probability to make a transition to democracy than semi-peripheral and peripheral countries;
4. There is relationship between a country’s role in the world-system and the probability that a country makes a transition to democracy, even after having controlled for development.

2. THE CONCEPT AND MEASUREMENT OF WORLD-SYSTEM

The world-system approach stresses the importance of the unity and structure of a hierarchical, differentiated world-system. The world-system is a network of multiplex dependence relations among countries (Wallerstein 1974; 1994); the different strata of the world-system – core, semi-periphery, and periphery – play different roles in the international division of labor. The core countries have diversified economies and are relatively independent of non-core countries. The peripheral countries are economically overspecialized, based on a monoculture, and dependent on core-countries. Galtung (1971: 89) stated that
the world-system is characterized by a feudal interaction structure in which the interaction between center and periphery is vertical and interaction among peripheral countries is missing. A country’s role in the world-system is determined by its pattern of relationships (Van Rossem 1996: 509).

Social network analysis provides a powerful tool to measure complex interaction systems (cf. Snyder and Kick 1979: Smith and White 1992; Van Rossem 1996). Snyders and Kick’s (1979) study set the standard for later research. The authors examined data on four types of international exchanges (trade, military interventions, treaty memberships, and diplomatic exchanges) circa 1965, and they argued that their results provide evidence for Wallerstein’s model of a division of countries into core, periphery and semi-periphery.

Although this study was innovative, the analysis has been criticized on methodological grounds (Jackman 1980), for misclassifying a number of countries (Bollen 1983) and for inadequately operationalizing key elements of world-system theory (Nemeth and Smith 1985). The most important problem of their 1979 study is that Snyder and Kick used a measure of structural equivalence between countries, based on similarity in terms of the same identical (trading) partners. These spatial clusters indicated greater trade with counterparts within a region and did not necessarily reflect valid differences in terms of global patterns of stratification (cf. Smith and White 1992: 860-862).

As Van Rossem (1996: 509) put it clearly:

‘A country’s role in the world-system is determined by its overall pattern of relationships and not by the identity of its alters (…). For instance, it is irrelevant that Costa Rica is dependent on the United States, or that Kenya is dependent on the United Kingdom, or Cuba on the Soviet Union.’

It is not relevant whether countries have the same trading partner; such an analysis results in a clustering of political blocks (for instance, communist countries traded with communist countries) and regional blocks (for instance, West European countries trade with each other). Patterns in the world-system should not be confounded with geography. It should be pointed out that not the geographical position in the world-system, but the role played by a country in the world-system is crucial for the world-system approach. Later studies have taken this criticism seriously focusing on patterns in the world-system and the role a country plays in this world-system (Smith and White 1992; Van Rossem 1996).
While Snyder and Kick (1979) examined the presence or absence of four different types of international relationships, Smith and White (1992) focused exclusively on flows of types of international commodity trade arguing that the world-system approach stresses the world economy as the basic unit of analysis (Smith and White 1992: 861). Their data of 63 countries in 1965, 1970, and 1980 assessed directly the roles that importing and exporting countries play in the global division of labor. Factor analysis demonstrated that five clusters of commodity trade can be identified, that is the high technology heavy manufacture, sophisticated extractive, simple extractive, low wage/light manufacture, and finally, food products and by-products (Smith and White 1992: 866). For each of these clusters, the authors chose three commodities that loaded most highly on each of the five factors. For each ordered pair of countries, data on the magnitude of trade for 15 commodities were collected; this constituted the raw data for the network analysis. The results of network analysis showed that five groups of countries can be distinguished, namely one core, two semi-peripheries, and two peripheries.

Although Smith and White’s study is theoretically closest to the world-system approach in focusing on economic relations, their data will not be used in this present study because the data is available for only 63 countries. More seriously, communist countries are fully neglected. That’s why I will rely on the more recent study of Van Rossem (1996). Van Rossem followed Snyder and Kick (1979) by conceptualizing the world-system as a multiplex system consisting of political and military relations as well as economic ones. To construct a map of the world-system, data were collected for five networks of dependence relations: imports, exports, trade in major conventional weapon systems, the presence of foreign troops, and the presence of diplomatic representation (Van Rossem 1996: 510-513).

Blockmodel analysis resulted in a network compromising four distinct roles: a core block, a semi-peripheral block, and two peripheral blocks. It appeared that the core block is dominant: the other three blocks are dependent on the core block through trade as well as military and diplomatic ties, while core countries themselves usually are dependent only on other core countries. Countries in the second periphery are the most isolated, having relations only with core countries while relations within the block or with other noncore countries are virtually nonexistent. For instance, Mali is very dependent on core countries like the United States and Germany while relations with other noncore countries are not important. The first periphery (periphery 1) is dependent on both the core and semi-periphery, and its members tend to have
diplomatic relations with each other. The semi-peripheral countries have numerous complex relations with each other, but remain strongly dependent on the core in economic, political and military terms. India, Czechoslovakia, and Austria are examples of countries that belong to the semi-periphery according to Van Rossem’s analysis (Van Rossem 1996: 513-515).

Figure 1 World-System Roles

By the way, Van Rossem’s results showed that the core does not only contain industrialized countries and the superpowers but also some countries one would not expect here: Brazil, Saudi Arabia, and China. Given their level of development, these countries are usually considered semi-peripheral rather than core countries. Van Rossem (1996: 516) explained:

‘If one accepts that world-system role refers to a country’s relations with the rest of the world rather than to the country’s internal characteristics, their classification as members of the core becomes understandable. Core countries have large economies, are active on the international scene, and display relational patterns that place them toward the top of the feudal interaction structure’.

Van Rossem collected data for 163 countries in 1983. Thus, an advantage is that the data are available for so many countries. Moreover, Van Rossem’s
1983 classification is also useful to explain transitions to democracy during the so-called explosive wave (1990-1994) of democratization.

3. THE CONCEPT AND MEASUREMENT OF DEMOCRACY

When students of democratization try to classify regimes, the key distinction is made between those that are democratic and those that are not. Determining the meaning of those concepts is not easy. Illustrative of this conceptual chaos is that David Collier and Steven Levitsky (1997) identified more than 550 subtypes of democracy in about 150 mostly recent studies. Hence, it has to be emphasized that this paper adopts a definition of democracy that fits into the Schumpeterian tradition and relies on Dahl’s ideas. Dahl (1971) developed some widely accepted and used criteria for classifying a country as democratic. His procedural definition, which was based on Schumpeter (1947), has significantly affected the conceptualizations of democracy in the field of quantitative research on democracy. In this paper, a democratic regime is defined as a system of government in which:

1) There are institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative policies at the national level and there are institutionalized constraints on the exercise of power by the executive (competition);

2) There exists inclusive suffrage, right of participation in selection of national leaders and policies (inclusiveness/participation).

Non-democratic regimes are defined as those political regimes that fail to meet the (first) requirement of competition and/or the (second) requirement of inclusiveness. Within the category of non-democratic regimes, several subtypes can be identified. Non-democratic regimes that fail to meet both conditions are called ‘closed hegemonies’. On the other side, the two requirements can vary somewhat independently. During the Cold War, communist states like the USSR had almost no system of competition, though it did have inclusive suffrage. Dahl called such political regimes that do only meet the second requirement of inclusiveness ‘inclusive hegemonies’ (Dahl 1971: 5-7).

Another type of non-democratic regime is a political system that does not meet the second requirement; that is, there is no existence of inclusive suffrage in the selection of national leaders and policies. This norm of inclusiveness requires that most adults living on the territory of the state—
regardless of their sex, race, language, descent, income, land holdings, education or religion beliefs—formally have the rights of citizenship to vote and to be elected (cf. Schmitter 1995: 346-350). The fact that certain prerequisites are demanded, such as age, sound mind, or absence of criminal record, does not negate this principle. Since centuries, several restrictions on citizenship have been imposed in competitive systems according to criteria of gender, literacy, and income. For example, the political system of Belgium could be considered competitive already during the nineteenth century, but women received the right to vote only in 1948. In South Africa, a racially restricted suffrage excluded more than two-thirds of the population until 1994. These kinds of political systems that deny suffrage for certain groups in society are not inclusive, and consequently non-democratic regimes. Dahl called regimes that do not meet the second requirement of inclusiveness ‘competitive oligarchies’ (Dahl 1971: 5-7).

It is surprising—and in my opinion rather shocking—that most quantitative studies have considered this type of exclusive regimes as ‘democratic’. Many studies have taken into account only one of Dahl’s two dimensions—competition—and ignored the other (cf. Bollen 1980; Gastil 1991; Jaggers and Gurr 1995; Alvarez et al. 1996). In my opinion, however, the concept of democracy will be biased, or even possibly racist or sexist, if the dimension of inclusiveness is ignored. In this paper, therefore, a political regime is considered as democratic when it fulfills the requirements of both competition and inclusiveness.

The first requirement of minimal democracies, the existence of competition, can be seen to be met if there exist institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative policies at the national level and if there are institutionalized constraints on the exercise of power by the executive. Indicators of these phenomena have already been collated in Gurr’s well-known Polity III data set, which covers most independent countries on an annual basis from 1800 to 1994, and which therefore offers an ideal source to measure the presence of competition. Moreover, this data is also easily adapted to the definition of ‘competition’, which I will employ in this analysis.

The second requirement of minimal democracies is the existence of inclusive, universal suffrage at the national level. The norm of universality requires that all citizens of the state—regardless of their sex, race, language, descent, income, land holdings, education or religion beliefs—formally enjoy the right to vote and to be elected to public office. Only countries that at some
stage meet the first requirement of competition from 1800 to 1994 are considered when measuring the inclusiveness of the system. Following Coppedge and Reinecke (1991), levels of inclusiveness of the political system may be broken down into one of the following four categories: 1) no popular suffrage; 2) suffrage denied to large segments of the population (more than 20 percent is excluded); 3) suffrage with partial restrictions (less than 20 percent of the population is excluded); 4) universal suffrage or minor restrictions.

Using these definitions and requirements, I carefully examined a variety of historical sources to determine the type of political regime, and when the political regime in each country changed from one of the categories to another, that is from a non-democratic to a democratic regime or vice versa (cf. Doorenspleet 2000). I also investigated the extent of variation in transitions of political regimes that has occurred across different countries and over time (Doorenspleet 2000; Doorenspleet 2001). Indeed, the three waves initially identified by Huntington (1991) can be distinguished. When the requirement of inclusive suffrage is included, however, the first wave is seen to begin much later, indicating that transitions to minimal democracy are a twentieth-century phenomenon. Moreover, the peaks of the first and second wave of democratization also appear to be lower. In addition, the first wave of transitions to democracy appears to be very striking, but there is no strong evidence of a second reverse wave. And finally, the explosion of democratization in the period 1990-1994, in which an impressive total of 34 authoritarian regimes effected a transition to minimal democracy, emerges with real force.

These results clearly show that the period after the Cold War is the most interesting period to investigate. The explosion of democratic transitions since 1990 has been striking. At the end of the 1980s, the wave swept through Eastern Europe. In 1988, the Hungarian transition to a semi-democratic system began. In 1990, Hungary moved to democracy. That same year, Poland became democratic after elections for a national parliament and a president. The voters chose a non-communist government and the leader of Solidarity, Lech Walesa. Russia began to liberalize and the communist regimes in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania collapsed. The 1990s saw widespread rapid collapse of non-democratic regimes in Africa, and thirteen minimal democracies emerged in this region. This rapid political transformation spread also to Latin America (Chile became for instance democratic) and parts of Asia (e.g. Mongolia, and Nepal).
This recent democratization wave has not only been more global and affected more countries than earlier waves did; there have—at least so far—also been fewer regressions to non-democratic regimes than in the past. Gambia's democratic tradition of almost three decades ended with a military coup in 1994. The minimal democracy of Comoros lasted only three years and collapsed in 1994. The democracy of Peru reversed in 1992 when President Alberto Fujimori declared a state of emergency, gave himself special powers, and dissolved the legislature. This ‘autogolpe’ (self-coup) took place under siege by drug traffickers and the 'Shining Path', a guerrilla group. Haiti moved to democracy, but experienced a short reversal when the first democratically elected president Aristide was forced out by a military coup in 1991. In 1994, however, Aristide came back with the help of outside intervention and democracy was restored.

During this short period, there were 34 transitions to minimal democracy and only four transitions back to non-democratic regimes. This can be considered as a true wave of democratization: the difference of transitions to and from democracy ('outnumbered transitions') is 30. One can really speak about an impressive, explosive wave, indicating that this is an excellent period to investigate.

These positive developments, however, should be seen in perspective. In particular, the Middle East has seemed immune to changes and the democratic wave has not engulfed Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, and Libya. In Algeria, democratic experiments came abruptly to an end, when the first competitive elections in 1992 led to a victory of Islamic fundamentalists. More than 60 countries remained non-democratic in 1994.

Hence, contrasts between political regimes in the world still remain and it is very interesting to investigate why some non-democratic regimes have undergone a transition towards a minimal democratic political system while others have not done so during the explosive wave of 1990-94. A country’s role in the world-system may be an explaining factor.

Now that the concepts of world-system and democracy have been defined and measured, the empirical relationship between world-system and transitions to democracy can be tested. It has to be emphasized that this relationship has not yet been investigated in previous quantitative empirical research. In order to test the relationship, I decided to compare countries that remained non-democratic during the period from 1990 to 1994, the period that I also refer to as the Explosive Wave of Democratization (cf. Doorenspleet 2000), with countries that made a transition to democracy in this period. In
such a research design, the probability that a country made a transition to democracy can be estimated.

4. WORLD-SYSTEM AND DEMOCRACY: EMPIRICAL ANALYSES

The first Section of this paper made clear that the main hypothesis of the world-system theory is that a country’s role in the world-system has influence on a country’s political system. When a country plays a peripheral role in the world-system, this country has more probability to be or become nondemocratic, while core-countries are generally democratic.

This Section will focus on empirical tests of the world-system ideas. First, I will test the hypothesis that there is a positive direct relationship between a country's role in the world-system and the probability that a country is democratic at a certain point in time. Such a test does not only replicate Bollen's results, but also will go a step further. The additional value of this Section is that the relationship will be tested for a more recent points in time (1990), while Bollen's study is limited to 1965. Another contribution of this study is that it will be investigated whether there is a positive direct relationship between a country's role in the world-system and the probability that a country becomes democratic. On the basis of the strong relationship between world-system roles and the presence of democracy, one cannot simply conclude that world-system role has a strong impact on a transition towards a democratic political system. It has to be investigated in this paper whether this assumption holds.

It is first useful to describe simply the association between world-system roles and the type of political regime (democratic or non-democratic). The bivariate table reflecting the association between the two variables in 1990 is as follows:
It can readily be seen that the largest difference is to be found between core and non-core countries. In the core, the regimes are mostly democratic, while in non-core countries the regimes are nondemocratic in approximately half of the cases. The measures of association all indicate the existence of a significant association.

Consider now the logistic regression analysis for estimating the probability that a regime is democratic. The independent variable ‘role in the world-system’ is categorical. Because the variable has four categories, a new variable must be created to represent the categories. The number of new variables required representing a categorical variable is one less than the number of categories, in this case three.

The only statement that can be made about the effect of a particular category is in comparison to some other category. For example, here only statements can be made such as ‘a country’s role in the core compared to a country’s role in the semi-periphery increases the chance on the presence of a democratic political regime’. It is not appropriate to make a statement about core countries without relating it to another role in the world-system.

We have already seen that in principle the core differs from the rest of the roles in the world-system (see e.g. the Table above). On the basis of this finding, the reference category that has been chosen in this analysis is the ‘core’. The coefficient of wsysrole (1) is the indicator variable for semi- peripheral countries compared to core countries, the coefficient of wsysrole (2) is the indicator variable for countries in the first periphery compared to core countries, and finally the coefficient of wsysrole (3) is the indicator variable for countries in the second periphery compared to core countries.

Is it possible to predict the political regime knowing a country’s role in the world-system? The table below shows the results of logistic regression analyses for the different points in time.

**Table 1** The Association of World-system's Role and Political System in 1990 (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World-system (X) &amp; Regime (Y)</th>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Semiperiphery</th>
<th>Periphery1</th>
<th>Periphery2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-democracies</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracies</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=15)</td>
<td>(N=22)</td>
<td>(N=52)</td>
<td>(N=32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-Square, Phi, Cramer's V, and Gamma are all significant ($p<0.01$).
Table 2
Log. Regression of World-System Role and ‘Nondemocratic or Democratic Regimes’ in 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B in 1990 (stand.dev)</th>
<th>Sign 1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wsysrole(1)</td>
<td>-1.39 (0.77)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wsysrole(2)</td>
<td>-1.31 (0.70)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wsysrole(3)</td>
<td>-2.32 (0.76)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.39 (0.65)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1990, the role in the world-system clearly predicts the probability of a country’s political regime. The coefficients for all three indicator variables are negative. This means that compared to the core countries, the semi-peripheral and peripheral countries have a decreased probability of a democratic regime. Outside the core, democracy is less likely. At the same time, the relationship becomes less significant; while the countries in the second periphery remain significantly associated with a higher probability on non-democratic regimes, the deviations of countries in the first periphery and semi-periphery from the core countries become less clear.

These findings are of considerable importance. However, this relationship may be spurious. The negative relationship between a country’s role in the world-system and democracy may be caused by other factors. It is reasonable to expect that countries in the core are richer than non-core countries. The role in the world-system may be determined by economic development, simply because only rich countries can effort to station foreign troops and diplomats and to play a central role in the world trade system. If the association between the role in the world-system and democracy is indeed spurious, then this association should disappear once economic development has been controlled. The following Table indicates that, once economic development is controlled, a country’s role in the world-system is no longer related to democracy.
Table 3
Logistic Regression of World-System Role, Development and ‘Nondemocratic or Democratic Regimes’ in 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B in 1990 (stand.dev)</th>
<th>Sign 1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wsysrole(1)</td>
<td>-1.19 (0.92)</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wsysrole(2)</td>
<td>0.68 (0.92)</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wsysrole(3)</td>
<td>0.02 (1.00)</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>2.26 (0.50)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.39 (0.65)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This outcome is not consistent with Bollen’s results for 1965. Bollen’s findings supported the belief that different roles in the world-system are associated with a different probability on a democratic regime even after having controlled economic development (Bollen 1983: 472-477). The present analysis tells another story. The influence of a country’s role in the world-system fully disappears when economic development is introduced. It is likely that in 1990 a country’s role is strongly associated with economic development. Probably, there is an intervening relationship between world-system role and democracy with development being the intervening variable. Not clear, however, is why this was not the case in 1965. It remains for future research to determine this more precisely.

It has to be emphasized that the analysis demonstrates the strong power of the modernization theories in explaining the presence of a democratic regime at a certain point in time: economic development has a significant, positive effect on democracy. This finding brings forth a debate about the relative importance of external versus internal factors of democracy. Modernization theorists expect that economic development, as an internal characteristic, increases the likelihood of democracy (cf. Lerner 1958; Lipset 1959). World-system theorists suggest, on the other hand, that a country’s role in the world-system may be more important determinants of democracy. The empirical estimates in this analysis hint that the direct effects of internal factors are more important than the direct effects of external factors on democracy.

In short, the findings in this Section support the first hypothesis: there is a strong positive relationship between world-system role and the probability of the presence of a democratic regime. However, after having controlled with economic development, this relationship disappears, indicating that the relationship between a country’s role in the world-system and democracy is
spurious. The second hypothesis cannot be confirmed; the findings suggest that there is an intervening relationship between world-system role and democracy with development being the intervening variable.

Can the third hypothesis be confirmed in empirical analyses? Do core countries have a higher probability to make a transition to democracy than semi-peripheral and peripheral countries? The following Table indicates that there is no relationship at all.

### Table 4
The Association of World-system's Role and Transition to Democracy during Fourth Wave (1990-1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World-system (X) &amp; Transition 1990-1994 (Y)</th>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Semiperiphery</th>
<th>Periphery1</th>
<th>Periphery2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regimes that remained non-democratic</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regimes that made a transition to democracy</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100% (N=3)</td>
<td>100% (N=13)</td>
<td>100% (N=30)</td>
<td>100% (N=21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-Square, Phi, Cramer's V, and Gamma are not significant (p>0.05)

Analyses with the logistic regression technique result in the same findings. This means that compared to the core countries, the semi-peripheral and peripheral (nondemocratic) countries have not a significantly higher or lower probability that they become democratic. There is no significant influence of a country's role in the world-system on the probability of a transition to democracy.
Table 5 World-system Role and Transition to Democracy during Fourth Wave (1990-1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wsysrole(1)</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wsysrole(2)</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wsysrole(3)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.69</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, core countries generally have democratic political regimes. It has to be pointed out that this relationship is spurious, because the relationship disappears after having controlled with economic development. Moreover, a country's role in the world-system does not explain whether a country makes a transition to democracy or not. Hence, core countries have not more probability to make a transition to democracy than semiperipheral or peripheral countries.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The analyses of the world-system hypotheses have offered mixed results. Outside the core, democracy is a rarity. This statement appears to hold. The analyses support the hypothesis that there is a strong positive relationship between world-system role and the probability of the presence of a democratic regime in 1990. In general, core countries have democratic political regimes. It has to be emphasized, however, that this relationship is spurious (after having controlled for development). There might be indirect effects of position in the world-system on democracy. Economic development increases the likelihood of democracy. If countries in the periphery generally have a low level of economic development, then indirectly it will reduce democracy. These indirect influences may be just as (or more) important than the direct effects in this analysis. It remains for future research to determine this. Furthermore, a country's role in the world-system does not explain whether a country makes a transition to democracy or not. Hence, core countries are not more likely to make a transition to democracy than semiperipheral or peripheral countries. Finally, it must be stressed that this study has focused on the ‘transition to democracy’ as key variable. It is quite possible that the relationships between role in the world-system and transition to democracy found here would be different if the correlation is with consolidation, instead of transition to
democracy. In other words, further research on whether the findings reported here hold also in the consolidation phase would be both important and interesting in the future.

NOTES

1. Wallerstein started as a specialist on Africa and published studies of developmental problems after Africa's independence (Wallerstein 1961). Consequently, Wallerstein was strongly influenced by the dependency school. In fact, he has included many concepts developed by Frank and other dependency theorists; concepts such as unequal change, the world market, core-periphery exploitation, international division of labor. In addition, Wallerstein was influenced by Fernand Braudel and the French Annales school. The Annales school protested against the overspecialization of social science disciplines within conventional academic boundaries. Braudel wanted to develop ‘total’ or ‘global’ history, using a multidisciplinary approach. He argued for the synthesis of history and social sciences through an emphasis on ‘la longue durée’, the long-term process. The ‘longue durée’ is a historical process in which history means repetition and all change is slow and cyclical. In that way, history would move away from eventism, and the social sciences would gain a historical perspective. Finally, Braudel wanted to ask ‘big’ questions, like ‘what is capitalism’ and ‘how did Europe become dominant in the world?’

2. Considerable critique can be given on the world-system theories. Often Wallerstein used teleological argumentations to support his theory. Skocpol explained Wallerstein’s shortcoming as follows: ‘Repeatedly he argues that things at a certain time and place had to be a certain way in order to bring about later states or developments that accord (or seem to accord) with what his system model of the world capitalist economy requires or predicts. If the actual causal patterns suggested by historical accounts or historical-comparative analyses happen to correspond with the a posteriori reasoning, Wallerstein considers them to be adequately explained in terms of his model, which is, in turn, held to be supported historically. But if obvious pieces of historical evidence or typically asserted causal patterns do not fit, either they are not mentioned, or (more frequently) they are discussed, perhaps at length, only to be explained in ad hoc ways and/or treated as “accidental” in relation to the supposedly more fundamental connections emphasized by the world-system theory’ (Skocpol 1993: 235). Moreover, Wallerstein’s world-system model is a blueprint with temporal categories (core, semiperiphery, periphery) which have been imposed on the reality and which can and should explain all events; the historical events are used to explain the capitalist world-system, but these historical events had to happen because the world-system required them to happen. No escape is possible. Everything fits in Wallerstein’s world-system. Due to this teleological argumentation and holistic view, the world-system school neglects historically specific development of separate states. Actual patterns and causal processes in history are neglected, so the world-system theory is in fact a-historical. Unfortunately, what Wallerstein wanted to improve upon the a-historical
mechanical blueprint model of the modernization school, he was not able to do and he reproduced old difficulties in new ways. In addition and often as consequence of these methodological problems, the world-system theory is criticized because of the lack of empirical explanatory strength (cf. Chirot 1981: 277-278).

3. Notice that Bollen treated the dependency and world-system theories as belonging to the same school. In the end, however, he only tested the relationship between a country’s position in the world-system and the existence of a democratic regime. He neglected to investigate the dependency hypotheses.

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