

## Multiparty Democracies and Rapid Economic Growth A Twenty-first Century Breakthrough?

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### Abstract

This essay examines whether developing countries with competitive multiparty democracies may be just as capable of sustaining rapid economic growth as single-party states. It begins with a literature review identifying political stability and the ability to mobilize labor and capital production inputs as key factors behind sustained rapid growth. It then develops the hypothesis that under certain conditions, multiparty democracies may be strong in these dimensions, but *ceteris paribus*, single-party states are likely to have an advantage. I test this hypothesis by exploring historical trends in rapid growth over the last five decades. Statistical regression analysis confirms that most sustained high-growth regimes have not been competitive multiparty democracies. On a more optimistic note, however, the number of high-growth multiparty democracies increased significantly during the period between 2000 and 2009, signaling a possible breakthrough in the twenty-first century.

**Key words:** Democracy, multiparty democracy, single-party states, authoritarianism, political regimes, rapid growth, economic growth, sustained growth.

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In recent years, a trend in Western political economy scholarship has been to argue that competitive multiparty democracies (CMDs) are either good for economic growth or that CMDs and non-CMD regimes on average have roughly the same record when it comes to economic growth.<sup>1</sup> Hence, if both regime-types fare about the same, it makes sense for developing countries to choose a CMD political system to enjoy the benefits of both democracy and economic growth. If this inference is correct, opting for multiparty democracy

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<sup>1</sup> One of the most definitive studies in this literature is Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

will not threaten economic growth rates in the developing world; instead, it may actually improve prospects for growth.<sup>2</sup> The historical experience of countries such as China, Taiwan, and Singapore in sustaining rapid growth under single-party regimes, however, defies this logic. Not only is China growing quickly in the twenty-first century, but also quite possibly the absence of multiparty democracy has boosted its pace of economic development.

Addressing this puzzle, I investigate whether competitive multiparty democracies are just as capable as single-party states when it comes to sustaining rapid economic growth. This essay fills an important gap in the literature on political regime-types and economic growth. Although dozens of papers on this subject have appeared over the last decade, there has been relatively little careful analysis of the relationship between political regime-type and sustained rapid economic growth, an area of particular concern for political leaders and populations in the developing world. Many nations in the “Third World” seek not only to expand their economies, but also to sustain rapid economic growth in order to catch up to wealthy industrialized countries.

The essay begins by discussing some of the major findings from the literature on the relationship between regime-type and economic growth. I then theorize why single-party political regimes, as experienced in Taiwan prior to its democratization, may have an advantage over competitive multiparty democracies in sustaining rapid growth. Third, I examine the historical record over the past half-century, one decade at a time, to see whether CMDs or non-CMD regimes have been more successful in sustaining high economic growth rates. Lastly, I try to make sense of the paradoxical empirical finding that although multiparty democracies generally failed to sustain rapid growth between 1960 and 1999, they were more successful in the period from 2000 to 2009.

## Literature Review

The puzzle of what causes economic growth is a broad topic that has generated much debate. Here, I focus on a narrow subset of the growth literature that links the presence of democratic or authoritarian regimes with differential rates of economic growth. Perhaps the most consistent finding of the literature has been the inability to detect a systematic positive or negative relationship between democratic regimes and economic growth. As a result, a large number of cross-national empirical studies have concluded that regime-type may have little if any systematic causal impact upon economic growth rates.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Hristos Doucouliagos and Mehmet Ali Ulubasoglu, “Democracy and Economic Growth: A Meta-Analysis,” *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 1 (2008): 61-83.

<sup>3</sup> These studies include Doucouliagos and Ulubasoglu, “Democracy and Economic Growth”; Adrian Leftwich, ed., *Democracy and Development: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996); Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development*; Adam Przeworski and Fernando

One area of contention in this debate has been over how to define and measure political regime-types. One approach taken by Adam Przeworski and his colleagues has been to define regime-type dichotomously as democratic or nondemocratic, based on whether a government holds periodic elections and experiences alternation of political parties in power.<sup>4</sup> Using this approach, they found competitive multiparty democracies and non-CMD regimes to perform roughly the same on economic growth. Many studies using a more graded measure of democracy have come to similar conclusions. A recent meta-analysis of seventy-six of these studies found no direct effect between democracy and growth, although some indirect effects may give democracies an advantage.<sup>5</sup>

Aside from cross-national statistical studies, single-country and comparative case studies also have contributed to the debate. Many of these studies have focused on East Asia, the region experiencing the fastest economic growth overall in the post-1950 period. Case studies of authoritarian governments in Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan have credited these states' ability to centralize authority, coordinate economic activity, and promote export-oriented economic production through state control of banks, state-owned enterprises, and/or state-business cooperation.<sup>6</sup> Stephan Haggard argued these authoritarian states' ability to insulate technocratic decision-makers gave them an advantage over economically less successful countries in Latin America, such as Mexico and Brazil.<sup>7</sup> This theme was further developed by Peter Evans, who found the "embedded autonomy" of South Korean bureaucratic decision-makers to have given the country an advantage in fostering elite consensus in developing competitive industrial advantages compared to the more fragmented and contentious political environments in countries such as Brazil, India, and Senegal.<sup>8</sup>

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Limongi. "Political Regimes and Economic Growth," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7, no. 3 (1993): 51-69; Larry Sirowy and Alex Inkeles, "The Effects of Democracy on Economic Growth and Income Inequality: A Review," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 25, no. 1 (1991): 126-157; and Gizachew Tiruneh, "Regime Type and Economic Growth in Africa: A Cross-National Analysis," *Social Science Journal* 46 (2006): 3-18.

<sup>4</sup> Przeworski et al, *Democracy and Development*.

<sup>5</sup> Doucouliagos and Ulubasoglu, "Democracy and Economic Growth."

<sup>6</sup> These case studies include Jon S.T. Quah, "Singapore's Model of Development: Is It Transferable?" in *Behind East Asian Growth: The Political and Social Foundations of Prosperity*, ed. Henry S. Rowen (New York: Routledge, 1998); Robert H. Wade, *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); and Jung-En Woo, *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Stephan Haggard, *Pathways from the Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrializing Countries* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

These comparative and individual case studies support the argument that sustained rapid growth is more likely to take place in a single-party state than in a competitive multiparty democracy. In fact, single-party states may have a comparative advantage when it comes to sustaining rapid growth due to leadership continuity. According to this logic:

The politics of the high-growth systems have shared certain features. All have stressed hierarchical authority; have had relatively inexplicit ideological commitments; maintained one-party dominant electoral systems; circumscribed political expression in many circumstances. All have maintained relatively open, export-oriented economies with substantial ties to Western markets and capital, and all shown concerted attention over an extended period to problems of mobilizing and distributing resources efficiently. What these states have had in common are periods of rule by innovative and powerful authorities who have shown relative success in launching vigorous economic growth and a broadly similar strategy for doing so (deferred consumption, market pricing, export orientation, individual incentives).<sup>9</sup>

Larry Wade and Alexander Groth, for example, have claimed that although most high-growth regimes lacked genuine multiparty competition, they had restraints in the sense of being secular, nontotalitarian, and nonmessianic.<sup>10</sup> The governments of these countries also supported the private business sector both directly and indirectly through the provision of infrastructure. In addition to elite cohesion and low levels of factionalism, these governments experienced continuity of political leadership and an active mix of evolving policies aimed at “shaping and channeling the economic, cultural and social order.”<sup>11</sup>

By contrast, Adrian Leftwich has argued that rapid growth can take place in either authoritarian or democratic states.<sup>12</sup> In his analysis, high economic growth rates in Singapore, Malaysia, and Botswana in fact were products of democracy, as these states held regular multiparty elections, even if they were not fully competitive and despite the fact that a single party held on to power for several decades in each of these countries. Similarly, Chalmers Johnson found that Japan was able to generate rapid economic growth under a single-party democratic regime, although he attributed much of the country’s economic

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<sup>9</sup> Larry L. Wade and Alexander J. Groth, “Politics, Policies, and Rapid Economic Growth in Developing Countries,” *Policy Studies Journal* 7, no. 4 (1979): 783.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 784.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Leftwich, *Democracy and Development*.

success to the quality of its bureaucracy and the technocratic and pragmatic approach it took to developing successful policies for promoting high value-added manufactured exports and national competitiveness more generally.<sup>13</sup>

As these studies illustrate, there is some ambiguity over what features constitute a democratic or nondemocratic regime. Recognizing these complexities, scholars also have examined the issue of whether the type of democracy (or nondemocracy) matters for economic growth. One major finding is that democracies with parliaments have achieved better growth performance than those with presidents.<sup>14</sup> Among nondemocracies, authoritarian regimes with binding legislatures have faster growth than those with nonbinding legislatures,<sup>15</sup> and overall there is more variation in economic growth rates across nondemocracies than among democracies.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps because of the failure to find a strong and robust empirical link between regime-type and economic growth performance, much of the literature over the past two decades has focused on institutions, policies, and factor movements (rather than regime-type) to explain rapid growth performance. Case studies have found that exports of natural resources (minerals, metals, and fuels), human capital accumulation, and total factor productivity growth can drive rapid economic growth in developing countries.<sup>17</sup> In East Asia, an area relatively low in natural resource exports, the World Bank attributed rapid growth to public policies and government institutions that enhanced education, savings, and efficient investments,<sup>18</sup> although Paul Krugman argued that increases in production inputs (working hours, number of laborers, capital investment) played a greater role than productivity increases.<sup>19</sup> Others have argued that rapid East Asian growth benefited from a high degree of government-business cooperation, suppression of labor, and a unified legitimating ideology.<sup>20</sup> These features may have helped to reduce the problem

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<sup>13</sup> Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy 1925-1975* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982).

<sup>14</sup> Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, *The Economic Effects of Constitutions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Wright, "Do Authoritarian Institutions Constrain? How Legislatures Affect Economic Growth and Investment," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (2008): 322-343.

<sup>16</sup> Erich Weede, "Political Regime Type and Variation in Economic Growth Rates," *Constitutional Political Economy* 7, no. 3 (1996): 167-176.

<sup>17</sup> Carlos Alejandro Ponzio, "Globalisation and Economic Growth in the Third World: Some Evidence from Eighteenth-Century Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37 (2005): 437-467, and Yan Wang and Yudong Yao, "Sources of China's Economic Growth 1952-1999: Incorporating Human Capital Accumulation," *China Economic Review* 14 (2003): 32-52.

<sup>18</sup> World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> Paul Krugman, "The Myth of Asia's Miracle," *Foreign Affairs* 73 (1994): 62-78.

<sup>20</sup> Xiaoming Huang, *The Rise and Fall of the East Asian Growth System, 1951-2000: Institutional Competitiveness and Rapid Economic Growth* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).

of capital flight so common in developing countries. In much of East Asia, leadership continuity and the presence of at least some constraints on political executives also may have played a crucial role in signaling “the government’s ability to credibly commit not to interfere with private property rights [which] is instrumental in obtaining the long-term capital investments required for countries to experience rapid economic growth.”<sup>21</sup>

## Theorizing Sustained Rapid Economic Growth

Although the literature is divided on how political regime-types impact economic growth, this essay argues that competitive multiparty democracies may unfortunately have a disadvantage in sustaining rapid, accumulation-driven growth due to leadership discontinuity and greater difficulty in maintaining a politically insulated technocracy. Moreover, single-party states are likely to have an advantage in mobilizing labor and capital for rapid economic growth, even if they do not provide an advantage in increasing total factor productivity. In this essay, I apply the definition of competitive multiparty democracy (CMD), established by Adam Przeworski and his colleagues, as one in which there are periodic elections and alternation between political parties in power.<sup>22</sup> The CMD can either have two major political parties or more than two parties, but the important point is that a single party does not stay in power for a long continuous period.

There are two hypotheses I seek to test in this essay. The first hypothesis [H1] is that *on average non-CMD regimes will be more successful in generating sustained rapid economic growth than CMDs*. The second hypothesis [H2] is that *among non-CMD regimes, single-party states are more likely to experience rapid growth than military regimes or monarchies*. Here, I follow the typology developed by Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell in dividing non-CMD regimes into the primary categories of (a) monarchies, (b) military regimes, and (c) single-party states.<sup>23</sup> Following their work and the insights of Barbara Geddes, I expect military regimes to be the least conducive to sustained rapid growth because of their fragility and low life expectancy compared to single-party states.<sup>24</sup> Over the last several decades, single-party regimes and monarchies

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<sup>21</sup> Witold J. Henisz, “The Institutional Environment for Economic Growth,” *Economics and Politics* 12, no. 1 (2000): 2.

<sup>22</sup> Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development*.

<sup>23</sup> Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell, “Pathways from Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 1 (2007): 143-156. Hadenius and Teorell note there are also a small number of other nondemocratic regimes, including occupied countries, countries in civil war, “no-party states,” and theocracies.

<sup>24</sup> Barbara Geddes, “What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 115-144, and Hadenius and Teorell, “Pathways from Authoritarianism.”

have experienced much greater leadership continuity than military regimes.<sup>25</sup> Among monarchies and single-party regimes, I expect the latter to be more capable of generating rapid growth because the party's members generally represent a larger and more diverse set of constituents than a royal family. Since a royal family may enjoy a certain degree of inherent legitimacy regardless of economic growth performance, the single-party regime may have both greater demand and capacity to sustain broad-based long-term growth.

In my analysis, two major forces propel sustained rapid economic growth. The first force is the expansion of total factor input (labor, financial investment, infrastructure, and land). The second is an increase in total factor productivity (labor, human capital, management, and innovation). I argue that in low- and middle-income countries, *ceteris paribus*, a country with a single-party regime will have an advantage in mobilizing total production inputs. This idea goes back to the classic economic development logic articulated by Walt Rostow, who argued that a strong centralized state was necessary for the sustained “take-off” stage in which rapid economic growth would transform a society from traditional to modern.<sup>26</sup> During this stage, science, technology, and modern production methods would diffuse throughout the entire economy and society, making growth an almost automatic process. Rostow's stage conception of development also draws at least implicitly on the classic work of Friedrich List. In List's theory of national development, “unity of labor” takes precedence over “division of labor” as a force for diffusing productive inputs and processes.<sup>27</sup> A single-party state is likely to have an advantage in this process because its concentration of authority provides more capacity to shape the economy and align incentives toward long-term development goals. This capacity manifests itself in three dimensions: (a) mobilizing labor inputs, (b) mobilizing capital inputs, and (c) leadership and policy continuity.

### ***Labor Inputs***

Single-party regimes presumably have more capacity to force workers to work longer hours and increase labor participation rates compared to competitive multiparty democracies. Whereas workers in a multiparty democracy may pressure different political parties, demanding a five-day workweek, an eight-hour working day, paid vacations, sick leave, and other improvements to working conditions, the single-party state can require six-day or seven-day workweeks. It can also set conditions so that ten-hour, twelve-hour, or

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<sup>25</sup> Hadenius and Teorell, “Pathways from Authoritarianism,” and Jan Teorell, *Determinants of Democratization: Explaining Regime Change in the World, 1972-2006* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Walt W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

<sup>27</sup> Friedrich List, *The National System of Political Economy* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1885).

longer working days become common and in which employers do not have to compensate employees for illnesses or injuries. Under these conditions, the intensity of labor input is likely to be considerably higher than in a multiparty democracy under which there will be more space for labor unions to organize and campaign.

Unlike in multiparty democracies, single-party regimes experience less pressure to prioritize human rights and they can ban the formation of independent labor unions. Competitive multiparty democracies, on the other hand, generally guarantee at least some basic level of labor and human rights protection. This places restrictions on the state's ability to coerce and control the population. Single-party regimes also may have an additional advantage in the difficult task of enforcing compulsory education and punishing truancy. Under a multiparty democracy, certain groups may resist compulsory schooling and the state may not enforce punishment of truancy. Single-party states, however, may take compulsory schooling more seriously as a means to condition the population to accept the one-party regime as well as to develop human capital for national productivity. If one-party states can school their entire population, they can also conscript them for national security purposes or labor-intensive infrastructure projects. In some cases, they may also use compulsory education as a tool to encourage and increase the participation of the female labor force.

In summary, single-party regimes may have more tools available to control their populations by determining the education curriculum, working conditions, and movement within (or out of) the country. Competitive multiparty democratic regimes do not have as much capacity to control their populations because they must allow a certain degree of autonomy and independence in media, education curriculum, and movement. If the media is open and pluralist and people are more aware of preferred alternatives elsewhere, they may be less convinced about the merits of their own government and national culture. They may also emigrate or campaign to bring changes to their government, depending on the degree of political space that is open for resistance.

### ***Capital Inputs***

Single-party regimes may also have an advantage when it comes to accumulating and directing financial capital into economic projects, such as connectivity infrastructure and export-oriented production. The concentration of political authority into few hands can sometimes enhance the task of attracting foreign investment capital and lend credibility to promising a hard-working labor force. The single-party regime also can devote all of its energies to economic growth as a single goal rather than have to balance between competing short-term demands and objectives in order to win elections. Additionally, it presumably is less concerned about the distribution of the fruits of growth, so it may object less to a disequalizing pattern of growth in which a small portion of the population disproportionately benefits at the expense of losses in the health, environment, and leisure time of the labor force.

In the absence of genuine multiparty competition, states also can move faster in making decisions and in bringing about structural changes due to the concentration and centralization of power at the top. In multiparty democracies, power tends to be more decentralized and deconcentrated, making the state slower to adapt, adjust, and transform. A single-party regime may have more tools to insulate a technocratic managerial corps from processes of political contestation that are inevitable in competitive multiparty democracies.<sup>28</sup> Lastly, one-party states are likely to generate higher rates of savings among residents because they provide less than democracies in the way of welfare-state services to the population. In some cases, single-party states have mobilized compulsory savings, as in Singapore's Common Provident Fund (CPF). State-owned or state-controlled postal banks likewise can direct investment and household savings into priority areas, such as infrastructure.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Leadership and Policy Continuity***

A third dimension that may advantage single-party regimes in achieving and sustaining rapid economic growth is leadership continuity. A long tenure in power not only may increase the experience of political leaders but also create a degree of political stability and predictability for the population and foreign investors. Having more time on its hands due to the absence of having to prepare for competitive elections, a one-party state with leadership continuity may place a higher priority on improving public administration to reduce clientelism and corruption, an important prerequisite for rapid economic growth.<sup>30</sup> Leadership continuity and technocratic insulation also may make it easier for the regime to apply selective and strategic trade and economic policies as opposed to blanket opening or protection.<sup>31</sup>

In summary, this section argues that single-party states are likely to have an advantage over competitive multiparty democracies in sustaining rapid economic growth. This, however, does not make sustained rapid growth in low- or middle-income democracies impossible. It only means that it is more difficult to achieve in multiparty democracies, and may require specific ideological or institutional arrangements to sustain policy continuity, insulate technocratic management, maintain a long-term perspective, and so forth. In this regard, parliamentary regimes appear to have advantages over presidential ones because they may be more conducive to long-term consensus-building and the reduction of friction between the executive and legislative branches of

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<sup>28</sup> Haggard, *Pathways from the Periphery*.

<sup>29</sup> Woo, *Race to the Swift*, and Eduardo Borensztein and Jonathan D. Ostry, "Accounting for China's Growth Performance," *American Economic Review* 86, no. 2 (1996): 224-228.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Evans and James Rauch, "Bureaucracy and Growth: A Cross-National Analysis of the Effects of 'Weberian' State Structures on Economic Growth," *American Sociological Review* 64, no. 5 (1999): 748-765.

<sup>31</sup> List, *The National System of Political Economy*.

government. Presidential regimes may be additionally handicapped because leaders are usually restricted to only one or two terms in office.<sup>32</sup>

## Historical Experience

Our analysis of which regimes have been more successful in generating rapid growth begins by examining all countries that have sustained high growth over a period of at least a decade between 1960 and 2009. Although researchers are often advised to select cases based on an explanatory variable,<sup>33</sup> this initial method of selecting cases based on the dependent variable is an appropriate choice when the aim is to identify explanatory variables and eliminate certain possible explanations.<sup>34</sup> As students of rapid economic growth know well, “there is much to learn from outliers.”<sup>35</sup> Here, I apply John Stuart Mill’s “method of agreement” to assess which political regimes (explanatory variable) were present in combination with the outcome of rapid economic growth. In other words, if I were unable to find competitive multiparty democracies to coincide with actual cases of rapid economic growth, it would disprove or infrim the hypothesis that they are conducive to sustaining rapid growth.

I use three different measures of sustained rapid economic growth. First, I compare countries able to maintain a growth rate averaging over 7 percent annually for two or more consecutive decades. Second, I examine countries that have been able to double per capita incomes within the space of a decade. Third, I include countries that have sustained an average annual economic growth rate above 7 percent for a single decade. I follow the definition of “rapid growth” established by the Commission on Growth and Development, which set the minimum threshold of 7 percent growth because “at that pace of expansion, an economy almost doubles in size every decade.”<sup>36</sup> According to the commission, this rate of growth can allow most developing countries to catch up to industrialized states within two or three generations because “it is easier to learn something than it is to invent it. That is why advanced economies do not grow (and cannot grow) at rates of 7 percent or more, and why lagging economies can catch up.”<sup>37</sup>

This study covers five decades and relies on income and population

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<sup>32</sup> Mark P. Jones, “A Guide to the Electoral Systems of the Americas,” *Electoral Studies* 14, no. 1 (1995): 5-21.

<sup>33</sup> Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, “The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 2 (1980): 174-197.

<sup>35</sup> Commission on Growth and Development, *The Growth Report: Strategies for Sustained Growth and Inclusive Development* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2008), 19.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

data from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI) database, which unfortunately excludes the high-growth economy of Taiwan.<sup>38</sup> With the exception of the territory of Hong Kong, I included only countries that were independent and sovereign over each full decade examined. The economic growth rates reported are "real," meaning they control for inflation of the local currency over time. Table 1 identifies the countries that sustained an average annual economic growth rate of 7 percent or higher over the course of two or more decades. As table 1 reveals, sustaining rapid growth for a long time is not easy and only a small number of countries have met this criterion over the last fifty years. In confirmation of my theoretical expectations, there were no competitive multiparty democratic regimes able to sustain rapid growth over two consecutive decades compared to eleven non-CMD regimes. Among the multidecade top performers in this dataset (which excludes Taiwan), eight were Asian economies (Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Kuwait, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam) and three were African countries (Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, and Ivory Coast). Noticeably, no multidecade, sustained, high-growth economies during this time were located in Europe, the Americas, or the Caribbean. Among the eleven long-term rapid growth economies, four maintained rapid growth for three consecutive decades (Botswana, Hong Kong,

Table 1. Countries Sustaining Rapid Growth over Two or More Decades (1960-2009)

Country	High Growth Phase	Open Elections	Leadership Continuity
Botswana	1960s-70s-80s	Not competitive	Botswana Democratic Party
Cambodia	1990s-2000s	Not competitive	Cambodian People's Party
China	1970s-80s-90s-2000s	No	Chinese Communist Party
Equ. Guinea	1990s-2000s	No	Teodoro Obiang Ngeuma
Hong Kong	1960s-70s-80s	No	UK Colony
Ivory Coast	1960s-70s	No	Felix Houphouet-Bogny
Kuwait	1990s-2000s	No	Emirs of Kuwait
Singapore	1960s-70s-80s-90s	Not competitive	People's Action Party
South Korea	1960s-70s-80s	Not competitive	Military Dictators
Thailand	1960s-70s-80s	Sometimes	Military Dictators (mostly)
Vietnam	1990s-2000s	No	Vietnamese Communist Party

Data Source: Income and population data are taken from the World Bank.

Note: Dataset excludes Taiwan.

<sup>38</sup> World Bank, "World Development Indicators On-Line Database" (2011) <http://www.worldbank.org> (accessed March 31, 2011).

South Korea, Thailand) and two sustained rapid growth over four decades (China and Singapore). Although not part of the WDI dataset, Taiwan also sustained high growth over at least three decades prior to democratizing. In summary, the data in table 1 support my first hypothesis that political regimes with leadership continuity have an advantage at generating rapid economic growth over competitive multiparty democracies in which different political parties alternate in power.

In table 2, I adopt a different approach to measuring rapid economic growth. The table displays only countries that have been able to double per capita income (PCI) over the span of a decade. The fastest growth decade on record over the last half-century was Oman’s in the 1960s, when it quadrupled PCI in just ten years. Equatorial Guinea in the 1990s and 2000s and Azerbaijan in the 2000s more than tripled PCI, while Turkmenistan in the 2000s and Botswana in the 1970s came close to tripling PCI. Aside from the small country of Equatorial Guinea, China distinguished itself as the only other country to double PCI in more than one decade. China is unique in having doubled PCI for three decades (1980s, 1990s, and 2000s) in a row. What also stands out in this comparison is that thirteen of the fifteen cases of PCI doubling were non-CMD regimes. The two multiparty democratic exceptions were countries with very small populations: Malta in the 1970s (350,000 people), which

Table 2. Countries that Doubled Per Capita Income (PCI) in a Decade

Rank	Country	Decade	PCI Growth	Regime-Type
1	Oman	1960s	300%	Monarchy
2	Equatorial Guinea	1990s	294%	One-party
3	Azerbaijan	2000s	252%	One-party
4	Equatorial Guinea	2000s	238%	One-party
5	Turkmenistan	2000s	183%	One-party
6	Botswana	1970s	164%	One-party
7	China	2000s	132%	One-party
8	Malta	1970s	128%	Multiparty Democracy
9	China	1990s	125%	One-party
10	Japan	1960s	123%	One-party
11	Armenia	2000s	109%	Multiparty Democracy
12	Saudi Arabia	1970s	108%	Monarchy
13	China	1980s	106%	One-party
14	Angola	2000s	105%	One-party
15	Belarus	2000s	101%	One-party

Data Source: Income and population data are taken from the World Bank.

experienced continuous leadership under Prime Minister Dominic Mintoff from 1971 to 1983, and Armenia in the 2000s, with a population of only three million people.

Thus far, we have found substantial support for our first hypothesis that non-CMD regimes with leadership continuity have an advantage in sustaining rapid economic growth. There were no competitive multiparty democracies that sustained rapid growth over two or more decades and only two were able to double PCI in a single decade. Our next approach will be to soften the criteria for “rapid” economic growth by looking at countries that maintained a 7 percent or higher average annual GDP growth rate over the course of a single decade.

Table 3 displays the rapid growth countries by decade over the period from 1960 to 2009. In line with our theoretical expectations, during the 1960s, the majority of countries to sustain rapid economic growth were not multiparty democracies. Only two (Israel and Japan) of fifteen high-growth regimes could be labeled CMDs, although Japan was actually ruled by a single party for four continuous decades. In the 1970s, the number of high-growth countries almost doubled to twenty-eight. A strong majority (twenty-one) of these countries were clearly nondemocratic, while an additional three (Botswana, Malaysia, and Singapore) were single-party democracies and two (Dominican Republic and Thailand) experienced a regime transition during the decade. The only high-growth states to sustain competitive multiparty democracies in the 1970s were the small Mediterranean islands of Cyprus and Malta.

During the 1980s, we see the same connection between non-CMD regimes and rapid growth. Among nine rapidly growing economies, Thailand was the only one to experience competitive multiparty elections, yet this was only for a brief interim between periods of military rule. Although Botswana and Singapore held elections, a single dominant party has ruled both countries continuously since the time of their decolonization in the 1960s. The other rapidly growing economies lacked competitive multiparty democracy.<sup>39</sup>

In the 1990s, once again, we see a pattern resembling previous decades. Nine of eleven rapid-growth states had non-CMD regimes in power for at least twenty years. Among these nine states, in every case except the Maldives, the ruling party or leader in power during the 1990s was still in control in 2010. Lebanon was one of only two putatively multiparty regimes with rapid growth. Although it had a democratic structure of government, a fair amount of its economic growth was due to reconstruction and recovery from its fifteen-year civil war (1975-1990). None of the other top ten high-growth states had

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<sup>39</sup> As mentioned earlier, Taiwan was also a military dictatorship during the decade of the 1980s, and should be included among the top ten most rapidly growing economies of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. It is absent from these charts only because the WDI dataset does not include Taiwan.

Table 3. Countries with Sustained Rapid Economic Growth by Decade (1960-2009)

1960-69	Country	Average Annual Growth	PCI Growth	Polity II Score	Regime
1	Oman	22.8%	300%	-10	Monarchy
2	Iran	11.6%	N/A	-10	Dictatorship
3	Japan	10.4%	123%	10	Democracy
4	Hong Kong	10.3%	85%	N/A	Colony
5	Singapore	9.5%	80%	7, -2	One-party
6	Israel	9.1%	60%	10, 9	Democracy
7	Togo	9.1%	66%	-6, -7	Dictatorship
8	Ivory Coast	8.7%	44%	-9	Dictatorship
9	South Korea	8.3%	69%	-7, 3	Mixed
10	Mauritania	8.1%	N/A	-4, -7	Dictatorship
11	Panama	8.1%	55%	4, -7	Mixed
12	Thailand	7.8%	50%	-7, -2	Dictatorship
13	Spain	7.8%	78%	-7	Dictatorship
14	Greece	7.6%	83%	4, -7	Mixed
15	Nicaragua	7.4%	45%	-8	Dictatorship
1970-79	Country	Average Annual Growth	PCI Growth	Polity II Score	Regime
1	Botswana	15.7%	164%	7	One-party
2	Jordan	15.2%	N/A	-9, -10	Monarchy
3	Saudi Arabia	14.2%	108%	-10	Monarchy
4	Cyprus	13.6%	N/A	8, 0, 7	Democracy
5	UAE	12.6%	N/A	-8	Monarchy
6	Brunei	12.2%	N/A	N/A	Monarchy
7	Malta	11.1%	128%	N/A	Democracy
8	Gabon	9.9%	63%	-9	Dictatorship
9	Hong Kong	9.6%	82%	N/A	Colony
10	Singapore	9.2%	84%	-2	One-party
11	Seychelles	9.2%	81%	N/A	Dictatorship
12	Syria	8.8%	70%	-9	Dictatorship
13	Lesotho	8.5%	72%	-9, -7	Dictatorship
14	Brazil	8.5%	67%	-9, -4	Dictatorship
15	South Korea	8.3%	74%	3, -8	Dictatorship
16	Dom. Rep.	8.2%	46%	-3, 6	Mixed
17	Paraguay	7.9%	63%	-8	Dictatorship
18	Indonesia	7.8%	60%	-7	Dictatorship

Table 3. Countries with Sustained Rapid Economic Growth by Decade (1960-2009)

19	Malaysia	7.7%	60%	4	One-party
20	Ivory Coast	7.6%	22%	-9	Dictatorship
21	Thailand	7.5%	49%	-7, 2	Mixed
22	China	7.4%	43%	-8, -7	One-party
23	Ecuador	7.4%	45%	0, -5	Dictatorship
24	Cameroon	7.3%	49%	-7, -8	Dictatorship
25	Tunisia	7.2%	56%	-9	Dictatorship
26	Kenya	7.2%	47%	-7	Dictatorship
27	Algeria	7.2%	34%	-9	Dictatorship
28	Nigeria	7.0%	19%	-7, 7	Dictatorship
1980-89	Country	Average Annual Growth	PCI Growth	Polity II Score	Regime
1	Botswana	11.5%	97%	7, 8	One-party
2	Oman	9.8%	58%	-10	Monarchy
3	China	9.8%	106%	-7	One-party
4	Bhutan	9.6%	N/A	-10	Monarchy
5	Swaziland	8.6%	45%	-10	Monarchy
6	South Korea	7.7%	90%	-8, 6	Dictatorship
7	Singapore	7.5%	54%	-2	One-party
8	Hong Kong	7.4%	64%	N/A	Colony
9	Thailand	7.3%	62%	2, 3	Mixed
1990-99	Country	Average Annual Growth	PCI Growth	Polity II Score	Regime
1	Equ. Guinea	20.2%	294%	-7, -5	Dictatorship
2	China	10.0%	125%	-7	One-party
3	Lebanon	9.7%	51%	N/A	Democracy
4	Maldives	9.1%	N/A	N/A	Dictatorship
5	Eritrea	8.1%	N/A	-6	One-party
6	Singapore	7.6%	45%	-2	One-party
7	Kuwait	7.5%	N/A	-7	Monarchy
8	Vietnam	7.4%	66%	-7	One-party
9	Cambodia	7.2%	N/A	1, -7, 2	One-party
10	Malaysia	7.2%	45%	4, 3	One-party
11	Ireland	7.1%	69%	10	Democracy
2000-09	Country	Average Annual Growth	PCI Growth	Polity II Score	Regime
1	Azerbaijan	18.2%	252%	-7	Dictatorship
2	Qatar	15.9%	34%	-10	Monarchy

Table 3. Countries with Sustained Rapid Economic Growth by Decade (1960-2009)

3	Myanmar	13.4%	N/A	-7, -8	Dictatorship
4	Equ. Guinea	12.9%	238%	-5	Dictatorship
5	Turkmenistan	12.7%	183%	-9	Dictatorship
6	Angola	12.6%	105%	-3, -2	Dictatorship
7	China	11.0%	132%	-7	One-party
8	Kuwait	9.5%	N/A	-7	Monarchy
9	Ethiopia	9.3%	61%	1	One-party
10	Chad	9.1%	61%	-2	Dictatorship
11	Bhutan	8.9%	69%	-10, -6	Monarchy
12	Belarus	8.5%	101%	-7	Dictatorship
13	Cambodia	8.3%	72%	2	One-party
14	India	8.3%	67%	9	Democracy
15	Armenia	8.2%	109%	5	Democracy
16	Uganda	7.8%	45%	-4, -1	Dictatorship
17	Tajikistan	7.7%	79%	-1, -3	Dictatorship
18	Uzbekistan	7.5%	60%	-9	Dictatorship
19	Kazakhstan	7.5%	93%	-4, -6	Dictatorship
20	Panama	7.5%	46%	9	Democracy
21	Cuba	7.4%	N/A	-7	One-party
22	Argentina	7.4%	28%	8	Democracy
23	Vietnam	7.4%	68%	-7	One-party
24	Mozambique	7.3%	59%	6	One-party
25	Sudan	7.3%	51%	-7, -4	Dictatorship
26	Mongolia	7.3%	57%	10	Democracy
27	Nigeria	7.2%	38%	4	One-party
28	Laos	7.1%	55%	-7	One-party
29	UAE	7.0%	17%	-8	Monarchy
30	Bahrain	7.0%	N/A	-9, -7	Monarchy
31	Malawi	7.0%	13%	6	Democracy

Data Sources: Income and population data are taken from the World Bank. Polity-II scores are from Monty G. Marshall and Kurt Jagers, “Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2009” (2011) <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm> (accessed March 30, 2011). According to Polity-II, country scores between 6 and 10 represent consolidated democracy; scores between -6 and -10 designate consolidated autocracies; and scores between -5 and +5 reflect in-between cases, or “anocracies.”

multiparty democracies. The only rapidly growing economy in the 1990s with a competitive multiparty democracy was Ireland (the “Celtic Tiger”), ranking eleventh. When compared to the 1970s, the 1980s were definitely a “lost decade” from the perspective of rapid economic growth, as were the 1990s. Over these twenty years, sometimes referred to as the “neo-liberal era,” only about one of every sixteen (6.6 percent) countries in the world was able to sustain rapid economic growth for at least one decade.

From 2000 to 2009, however, the number of countries with rapid economic growth exploded from eleven to thirty-one. Once again, in the 2000s, non-CMD regimes had the edge in sustaining rapid economic growth. All ten of the fastest growing economies over the decade from 2000 to 2009 (Angola, Azerbaijan, Chad, China, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kuwait, Myanmar, Qatar, and Turkmenistan) lacked multiparty democracy. Aside from the top ten, among the next twenty fastest growing economies, there was a preponderance of non-CMD regimes making up twenty-five of the thirty-one (81 percent) rapidly growing countries. Although elections were held in certain states, many states witnessed continuous rule by a single party or leader (i.e., Belarus, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and so on). In these countries, opposition parties and the media were severely constrained by the government. There were, however, six rapidly growing economies recognized as sustaining competitive multiparty democracy (Argentina, Armenia, India, Malawi, Mongolia, and Panama) during the 2000s. This represents a significant increase over previous decades and is most certainly a welcome new development.

To recap, from 1960 to 1999, with the partial exception of Japan, all of the countries to experience alternating political parties in power and sustained rapid economic growth (Cyprus, Ireland, Israel, Lebanon, and Malta) for at least a decade were small states on the periphery of Europe. In the 2000s, however, for the first time in five decades, six post-colonial countries in the developing world sustained rapid economic growth under competitive multiparty democracies. In summary, the historical experience provides strong support for my first hypothesis that non-CMD regimes are more likely to sustain rapid economic growth than CMDs.

## **Regression Analysis**

The next step in our analysis is to move from descriptive statistics to OLS multiple regression analysis to see whether regime-type statistically matters for rapid growth after controlling for a range of alternative explanations. To summarize the historical experience, we can view each country as fitting into one of four combinations, based on the presence or absence of rapid growth and competitive multiparty democracy. Using country-decades as our unit of analysis and working with data compiled by the World Bank, we examined data for 670 cases over the last five decades. As table 4 displays, the majority (88.5 percent) of these cases did not sustain rapid growth and this majority

was split almost evenly between CMD regimes (46.4 percent) and non-CMD regimes (42.1 percent). Among the minority (11.5 percent) to sustain rapid growth over at least a decade, most (82 percent) were not competitive multiparty democracies. Among the non-CMD states, about one in five (18.3 percent) experienced rapid growth, while only 4.4 percent of the CMD states sustained rapid growth. The difference is a ratio of about four to one.

Table 4. Comparing Four Regime Outcomes across 670 Country-Decades from 1960 to 2009

Regime Type	High Growth	Low Growth
Competitive Multiparty Democracy	14 (2.1%)	311 (46.4%)
Not Multiparty Democracy	63 (9.4%)	282 (42.1%)

Although there were few competitive multiparty democracies to sustain rapid growth over the last fifty years, we did observe a noticeable increase in their presence during the 2000s. To assess whether this change represents a positive breakthrough for CMD regimes, I utilized OLS regression analysis on the dichotomously defined outcome of achieving or failing to attain rapid economic growth as the dependent variable. The explanatory variable of primary interest is a dummy variable for CMD, taken from José Antonio Cheibub and his colleagues based on criteria developed with Adam Przeworski and others concerning the presence of competitive elections and alternation of parties in power.<sup>40</sup> I also included multiple control variables to cover total factor inputs at the start of each decade. These variables measure each country’s land (in square kilometers), labor (population size), and initial level of economic development (per capita income), taken from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators database. I also controlled for regional effects by using continental dummy variables.

Table 5 displays the results of the regression analysis. Models 1 through 3 cover the periods 1960-1999, 2000-2009, and 1960-2009, respectively. In all three periods, the results are identical. The CMD regime is statistically significant and negatively correlated with rapid growth, even after controlling for other factors. The only other variables that were statistically significant were population size and a regional dummy for Asia, both of which were positively correlated with rapid growth. When we compare the whole population of high- and low-growth regimes and control for other relevant factors, we find that over the last decade, as in previous decades, competitive multiparty democracies are negatively correlated with rapid growth.

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<sup>40</sup> Przeworski et al, *Democracy and Development*, and José Antonio Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland, “Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited Database” (2009) [https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/cheibub/www/DD\\_page.html](https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/cheibub/www/DD_page.html) (accessed May 10, 2011).

Table 5. Regression Analysis I: Rapid Economic Growth 1960-2009

	Model 1 - Rapid Growth 1960-2009	Model 2 - Rapid Growth 1960-1999	Model 3 - Rapid Growth 2000-2009
<i>Regime Variables</i>			
Multiparty Democracy	-0.117 (0.030)***	-0.096 (0.035)***	-0.201 (0.064)***
<i>Control Variables</i>			
Per Capita Income	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Land Size	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Population Size	0.000 (0.000)**	0.000 (0.000)*	0.000 (0.000)**
Africa	0.025 (0.059)	0.016 (0.071)	0.051 (0.112)
Americas	0.024 (0.059)	0.019 (0.069)	0.063 (0.121)
Asia	0.194 (0.061)**	0.161 (0.072)**	0.263 (0.114)**
Caribbean	0.101 (0.071)	0.069 (0.082)	0.194 (0.140)
Europe	0.049 (0.059)	0.055 (0.069)	0.060 (0.114)
Intercept	0.099 (0.058)*	0.087 (0.069)	0.155 (0.109)
(n)	670	490	180
Residual Std. Error	0.30	0.29	0.33
Multiple R <sup>2</sup>	0.12	0.09	0.22

Note: Standard Errors are in Parentheses.

Significance Codes: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.10.

To test my second hypothesis that among non-CMD regimes, single-party states are more conducive to rapid growth than military regimes or monarchies, I conducted a second set of regression analyses on 562 country-decades between 1970 and 2009. I utilized the coding established by Hadenius and Teorell for monarchies, military regimes, and single-party states for the period between 1972 and 2008.<sup>41</sup> Following their lead, I also made a distinction between single-party states such as China and Vietnam, where “all parties but *one* is forbidden (formally or *de facto*) from taking part in elections,” and a “multiparty autocracy” or “limited multiparty regime,” as in Singapore, where there is a single dominant party but also “elections in which (at least some) candidates are able to participate who are independent of the ruling regime.” As Hadenius and Teorell note, the “multiparty autocracy” regime-type corresponds closely to

<sup>41</sup> Hadenius and Teorell, “Pathways from Authoritarianism,” and Jan Teorell, Nicholas Charron, Marcus Samanni, Sören Holmberg, and Bo Rothstein, “The Quality of Government Dataset, version 6Apr11,” University of Gothenburg: The Quality of Government Institute (2011) <http://www.qog.pol.gu.se> (accessed June 7, 2011).

Andreas Schedler’s depiction of “electoral authoritarianism” and what Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way have labeled “competitive authoritarianism.”<sup>42</sup>

As shown in table 6, when we break down non-CMD states into monarchies, military regimes, single-party states, and multiparty autocracies, only the single-party state has a statistically significant and positive correlation with rapid growth (Model 4). Thus, we find support for our second hypothesis that single-party states are more likely to sustain rapid economic growth than other

Table 6. Regression Analysis II: Rapid Economic Growth 1970-2009

	Model 4 - Rapid Growth 1970-2009	Model 5 - Rapid Growth 1970-1999	Model 6 - Rapid Growth 2000-2009
<i>Regime Variables</i>			
Multiparty Democracy	-0.096 (0.040)**	-0.088 (0.047)*	-0.108 (0.075)
Monarchy	0.007 (0.065)	-0.041 (0.074)	0.138 (0.123)
Military Regime	0.003 (0.051)	0.014 (0.055)	0.014 (0.128)
Single-Party State	0.155 (0.059)***	0.096 (0.063)	0.663 (0.163)***
Multiparty Autocracy	0.028 (0.039)	0.008 (0.046)	0.053 (0.072)
<i>Control Variables</i>			
Per Capita Income	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Land Size	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Population Size	0.000 (0.000)***	0.000 (0.000)*	0.000 (0.000)
Africa	0.027 (0.064)	0.013 (0.075)	0.094 (0.116)
Americas	0.027 (0.064)	0.018 (0.074)	0.069 (0.121)
Asia	0.180 (0.066)***	0.132 (0.078)*	0.227 (0.118)*
Caribbean	0.075 (0.074)	0.035 (0.085)	0.148 (0.140)
Europe	0.027 (0.063)	0.028 (0.075)	0.058 (0.115)
Intercept	0.067 (0.066)	0.066 (0.077)	0.057 (0.120)
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(n)	562	387	175
Residual Std. Error	0.29	0.27	0.32
Multiple R <sup>2</sup>	0.15	0.11	0.30

Note: Standard Errors are in Parentheses.  
 Significance Codes: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.10.

<sup>42</sup> Hadenius and Teorell, “Pathways from Authoritarianism,” 145; Andreas Schedler, ed., *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006); and Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, “The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 51-65.

non-CMD regimes. Competitive multiparty democracies were also statistically significant and negatively correlated with rapid growth, while Asia is the only region positively correlated with rapid growth. In order to test whether there has been any change in the twenty-first century, I also split the dataset into cases before (Model 5) and after the year 2000 (Model 6). As it turns out, in Model 6, which includes only the past decade (2000-2009), we notice a subtle difference: the negative impact of CMD regimes on rapid growth is no longer statistically significant.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this essay appear somewhat pessimistic. In comparing long-term rapid growth economies over the last fifty years, only eleven regimes maintained high rates of growth over two continuous decades or more and none of these regimes was a competitive multiparty democracy. Through a decade-by-decade analysis, we also found that over the last fifty years, a strong majority of rapidly growing economies had nondemocratic governments, while only a handful of multiparty democracies sustained rapid growth for at least a decade.

From the results of this study, it appears that leadership continuity may provide an advantage in fostering rapid economic growth over alternation between political parties in power. At the same time, while leadership continuity may have contributed to sustained rapid growth in successful cases, it was certainly not sufficient. In some countries, non-CMD regimes stayed in power for extended periods without sustaining rapid economic growth. Even if authoritarian states were four to five times more likely to generate rapid growth than CMDs over this period, we found that not all authoritarian countries had a growth advantage. Compared to monarchies and military regimes, the non-CMD regimes that grew the fastest were more likely to be single-party states.

A more optimistic finding from this study, however, is the significant increase in the number of multiparty democracies to sustain rapid economic growth in the twenty-first century. These high-growth democracies have emerged in very different regions of the Global South, including Africa (Malawi), Central America (Panama), Central Asia (Armenia), East Asia (Mongolia), South America (Argentina), and South Asia (India). Although non-CMD regimes may possess certain advantages in sustaining rapid growth, this study finds that it is definitely possible for multiparty democracies to sustain high growth rates under certain circumstances. The mere fact that high-growth democracies have recently increased in number may also reflect a degree of learning, reflection, and imitation of what has propelled rapid-growth economies in the past. As the Commission on Growth and Development has observed, while in the past it has been typical for governments in multiparty democracies to “look no further than the next election,” there is now an increasing push for rival political parties to “agree on a bipartisan growth strategy, which they each

promise to follow when it is their turn in power.”<sup>43</sup> In conclusion, although it may be a bit premature to declare a rapid growth breakthrough for multiparty democracies in the twenty-first century, we may now be entering an era where multiparty democracies have greater success in sustaining rapid growth than in the past.

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<sup>43</sup> Commission on Growth and Development, “Growth Report,” 27-28.