Levelling the Political Playing Field: How Nonviolent Resistance Influences Power Relations After Democratic Transition[1]

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Abstract

Nonviolent resistance (NVR) is being used successfully as a strategy to depose dictators and achieve political change around the globe. This study explores how NVR not only advances democratic transition but also has a long-term effect on political power relations after transition. Bringing together the literatures on nonviolent resistance and political regimes we develop a framework to analyze the effects of different modes of resistance on post-transition power relations in four different aspects: cabinet politics, party politics, peaceful turnover of power, and the political influence of civil society. Based on the in-depth analysis of two African democracies (Namibia and Benin), each resulting from a different mode of transition, we show that NVR levels the political playing field by fostering frequent elite replacement among government ministers, increasing the chances for peaceful political turnovers, inducing a more competitive and diverse party system, and creating a more inclusive environment for civil society organizations.

Introduction

Nonviolent resistance is being used successfully as a strategy to depose dictators and achieve political change around the globe. The most recent example is Sudan, where on 11 April 2019, the Sudanese people nonviolently deposed the long-standing regime of Omar Al-Bashir, following the blueprint of many other successful nonviolent movements like the Arab

[1] We thank the two reviewers whose comments helped improve and clarify this manuscript.

rebellions in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, Serbia's Otpor movement in 2001, or the Polish Solidarity Campaign of the 1980s. Contrary to the sobering outcomes of most armed rebellions and coups d'état (Lyons 2016), recent research has shown the remarkable potential of such nonviolent campaigns. Nonviolent campaigns generally have been more successful in reaching their goals (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011), even under unfavorable conditions (Chenoweth and Ulfelder 2017).

This is also clearly visible when it comes to democratization. Within the so-called 'third wave of democratization' starting in 1974 (Huntington 1991), there are many instances of nonviolent struggle leading to democratic transitions. Compared to violent movements, NVR not only proved to be more effective in inducing regime change and democratic transition (e.g. Kim and Kroeger 2019; Pinckney 2018; Celestino and Gleditsch 2013; Chenoweth and Stephen 2011; Ackerman and Karatnycky 2005), but also in fostering the subsequent stability of democracy (Bethke 2017; Bayer, Bethke and Lambach 2016) and its quality (Bethke and Pinckney 2019; Edgell and Bernhard 2019; Pinckney 2018; Kadivar, Usmani and Bradlow 2020).

However, while these studies offer a wealth of theoretical speculation about the causal mechanisms linking NVR and democratization, empirical research on how these mechanisms work is relatively scarce. Some pioneering work was done by Pinckney (2018). Based on case studies of Brazil, Zambia and Nepal and supplementary quantitative analysis, he shows that the influence of NVR on democratization and democratic consolidation is a mainly indirect one consisting of three mechanisms (Pickney 2018: 44). First, NVR induces elite circulation that brings new leaders with democratic preferences into positions of power. Second, it fosters the spread of skills and attitudes of civic engagement within the broader population, and third, it establishes an accountability mechanism for the new political leaders. In a similar way Kadivar et al. (2020) explore how NVR contributed to 'substantive democratization' in Brazil through three mechanisms. First, during the struggle practices of self-organizing become deeply internalized and enable democratic reforms. Second, 'movement veterans' go into politics and subsequently use state offices to deepen democracy while, third, the process of democratic deepening is further supported by a capable civil society resulting from the intense struggle.

In sum, existing empirical studies on causal mechanisms focus either on spaces for and empowerment of civil society or forms of elite and

leadership change. They thereby build on the pioneering work of Gene Sharp, who argues that nonviolent struggle has 'lasting effects both on the nonviolent struggle group itself and on the distribution of power between the contenders in the conflict and within the wider system' (Sharp 2005: 424). Consequentially, Sharp argues that nonviolent action and political violence 'may contribute to quite different types of societies' (2005: 430). In other words, the means determine the ends and 'how one chooses to fight' shapes 'what one wins' (Ackerman and Rodal 2008: 119).

In this article we investigate Sharp's assertion that the mode of resistance has a big influence on post-conflict power relations. We expect that political power is more dispersed in cases of NVR-induced democratization than in other democracies. We further build on Dorman's argument that the impact of (mostly violent) liberation struggles cannot be found so much 'in post-liberation institution-building, but in the relationships and alliances formed during those difficult years' (2006: 1092). We focus on two kinds of power relations: first, power relations among political elites, specifically political parties and government ministers, and how this influences the occurrence of peaceful political turnovers; second, the freedom and autonomy of citizens and civil society to participate in politics. We hypothesize that there is a higher degree of multipartyism, more elite circulation, better chances for peaceful political turnovers, and higher levels of civic participation in democracies induced through NVR and that such democracies see less concentration and personalization of power overall. In order to test this assumption, we analyze the post-transition power structures in two African democracies, Namibia and Benin, which resulted from an armed liberation struggle and a nonviolent resistance campaign respectively.

The paper proceeds as follows: In a first step we bring together the literature on political regimes and nonviolent resistance, and develop a relational approach to explain the effects of different modes of resistance on post-transition power structures. In this section we also develop our hypotheses about how NVR contributes to a levelled political playing field and consequently a more stable democracy. In section two we present our criteria for case selection and our methodology to assess post-transition power structures. Section three contains the empirical analysis. The results from the analysis are critically discussed in the fourth section of this paper. Finally, section five concludes the paper and highlights some avenues for further research.

A relational approach towards nonviolent transitions

Our theoretical model builds upon the literatures on democratic transitions and regime types on the one hand and on nonviolent resistance on the other. We define a political regime as an 'institutionalized set of fundamental formal and informal rules structuring the interaction in the political power center (horizontal relation) and its relationship with the broader society (vertical relation)' (Skaaning 2006: 13). Following Ulfelder (2010), we identify four crucial stakeholders for the stability and persistence of a regime: the government, the opposition, the security forces, and citizens. The key horizontal relationships are (1) civil-military relations between government and the security forces, and (2) competition between government and opposition (see Fig. 1).[2] Vertical relationships are those between citizens and the government (3), the security forces (4) and the opposition (5). In this paper, we focus on the relations between government and opposition and the relations between the government and the citizenry.[3] We omit the entire field of civil-military relations whose role in democratization is extensively covered elsewhere (see e.g. Tusalem 2014; Kuehn 2017).

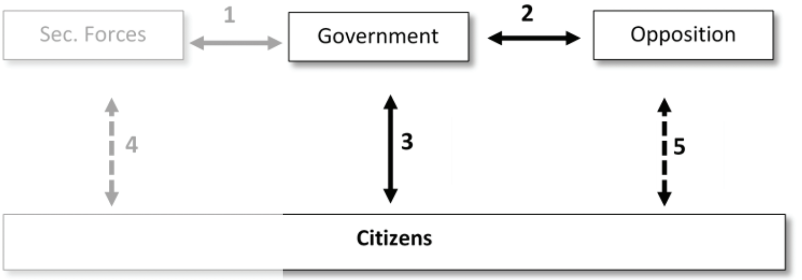

Figure 1: Democratic Regimes: A Relational Model

The key distinction between democratic and non-democratic regimes is mainly based on the question how these vertical and horizontal relations

[2] 'Opposition' is not limited to 'formal' opposition parties that can typically be found in parliamentary democracies but should be understood as all political parties that are outside the regime coalition.

[3] The model is described in more detail in our upcoming volume, 'Nonviolent resistance and democratic consolidation' (Lambach et al. 2020).

are structured. According to Boix, Miller, and Rosato (2013: 9) a regime can generally be described as democratic if political relations are marked by contestation (horizontal dimension) and participation (vertical dimension). Contestation is given if the executive is directly or indirectly elected in popular elections and is responsible either directly to voters or to a legislature and if the legislature is directly chosen in free and fair elections. Participation is further understood as a minimal level of suffrage (i.e. the right to vote). We assume that from this admittedly low benchmark, democracies can vary to great degrees in terms of quality and chances for participation. Thus, we see this minimal definition as the starting point from which democratic deepening (e.g. Fung and Wright 2003) is possible. Deep and radical forms of democracy are far more demanding and thus require ongoing contestation, struggle and reform.

In our less maximalist reading of democracy, the relationship between government and opposition is one of the defining differences between democracies and autocracies. Liberal democracies rely on political pluralism that is reflected in multi-party systems. However, we cannot infer anything from the simple fact that multiple parties exist about the quality or the specific relations between government and political opposition within a multi-party system. The relation is determined, first, by the relative strength of the opposition versus the ruling party and, second, by the degree of polarization between the two. To capture both, scholars of party systems distinguish dominant-authoritarian, dominant, non-dominant, and pulverized systems (Sartori 1976). All of these are multi-party systems, but they vary greatly in the degree of dominance and oppositional checks of the government and thus in the quality of democracy.

Similarly, the vertical relation between the government and citizens is of central importance for a democracy, since democratic governments are legitimized through elections. Thus, a democratic government has to show sufficient levels of responsiveness and accountability for a credible claim to represent the people who are the 'sovereign' (Bardi, Bartolini and Trechsel 2015). Free, fair and regular elections are one way to influence the government and to hold it accountable. Lobbying, petitioning and protest are other options that are used by citizens to influence the course of government outside of election times (e.g. Costain and McFarland 1998). These mainly relate to notions of empowerment and inclusion of all major sectors of society – in short, to have a well-functioning democracy, societies need to create a leveled political playing field. This ties back to Tilly's

argument that polities can be regarded as democratic if 'relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultation' (Tilly 2007: 13-14). In a similar way, Mahatma Gandhi distinguished western 'nominal' democracy from his ideal of 'purna swaraj' or 'integrative' democracy (Pantham 1983: 165), with the latter marked by substantial individual empowerment and requiring not only political equality and freedom but also economic and cultural independence (Chabot and Vinthagen 2015: 520). In other words, more substantial direct forms of democracy, such as Barbers 'strong democracy' (2004), forms of 'radical' (e.g. Mouffe 1992) or 'deliberative' democracy (e.g. Fishkin 2011) would need an even playing field not just in political but also in economic and cultural terms.

Minimal understandings of democracy often focus on procedural political equality such as general suffrage (Beitz 1983), but downplay the importance of other factors like education and political efficacy that determine if citizens feel capable of making political decisions and exercising their right to participate. In order to level the political playing field, democracies need institutions and office-holders that allow for such participation and ordinary citizens who are capable of using these opportunities (Levitsky and Way 2010).

We believe that NVR can help level the broader political playing field, not only the electoral one. In terms of our relational model, NVR changes the relations between government and opposition and between political elites and the ordinary citizen. It works through both of its semantic components: nonviolence, which can minimally be defined as 'the lack of an intent to harm or injure another' (Bond 1988: 81), and resistance, i.e. acts of defiance and opposition. This double feature is often depicted by the metaphor of 'two hands of nonviolence' by Barbara Demings (1971): While the one hand is raised in a 'stop gesture', the other is still stretched out. In essence, the first ends cooperation under the given circumstances and disrupts the life of the wrongdoer, while the second offers cooperation in future and symbolizes the faith that both adversaries, as humans, are capable of finding constructive solutions. According to Vinthagen (2015), NVR further has the ability to enact utopias. In other words, creative and constructive resistance can contribute to the realization of formerly unthinkable solutions. Specifically, we expect that NVR affects horizontal and vertical regime relations in four ways that are conducive to democratic quality: elite replacement, political turnover, multipartyism, and the empowerment of civil society.

Horizontal relations

NVR movements have to be large to achieve their goals. Consequently, they are more politically heterogeneous than their armed counterparts (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Schock 2005). To achieve the support they need, most NVR movements rally around a single issue and the lowest common goal. Since these movements show highly diverse preferences on most issues but are united primarily by a single goal that is based on a rejection of the status quo, such movements are also called 'negative coalitions' (e.g. Beissinger 2013). Due to their decentralized, less hierarchical structures, NVR movements tend to produce a variety of political leaders with modest influence and power and thus counter the emergence of singular authority figures who are able to centralize power in election campaigns. Similarly, since the movement is more diverse, it is difficult for single activists or factions turning into political candidates or parties after the transition to monopolize the revolutionary credentials. Last but not least, NVR movements do not possess the coercive means to suppress rivals and to prevent defection. Taking this into consideration, NVR movements often tend to be ill-prepared and sometimes even unwilling to fill the political power vacuum they created through their actions. This means that they level the democratic playing field by ousting the autocratic leadership and delegitimizing former elites. Since NVR movements lack the means and the will to monopolize power, these movements often disintegrate and become fertile soil for new parties.

Contrary to NVR movements, armed movements often establish hierarchical structures that replicate state institutions and are therefore better prepared and more willing to take over power. Due to the smaller numbers involved in armed struggle and the higher risks associated with it, participants in armed insurrections tend to develop an 'ethos of a secret elite vanguard' (Zunes 1994: 419) and feelings of being entitled to rule due to past deeds (Bayer and Pabst 2018). While the former typically leads to group closure amongst the veterans and mistrust against the outgroup, the latter undermines the democratic principle of equal citizenship. Garton describes the feelings of entitlement of Australian World War I veterans in drastic terms. Driven by war propaganda, these veterans were encouraged to think that they had achieved a special citizen status above those who had not served. In their eyes 'it was the turn of (implicitly lesser) citizens to bear the brunt of hardship' (Garton 1996: 64).

Violent struggles can seriously influence horizontal regime relations by limiting elite turnover in several ways. First, veterans of armed struggles

tend to appoint their confidants and former comrades and thus put past merits before actual qualifications. Second, by relegating non-participants in the armed struggle to second-class citizens democratic debate and political competition are stunted. Third, armed struggle typically leads to political polarization between the former enemies which is hard to overcome and requires reconciliation and confidence-building measures. Fourth, former armed movements often possess a de facto veto power in the form of coercive means which allow them to suppress rival movements and political opponents if necessary. As Deonandan (2007: 238) concludes, 'most of the revolutionaries who gained power, be it by insurrection or negotiation, tend towards one-party dominance'.'

In contrast, NVR avoids the worst excesses of polarization. According to Gandhi the political adversary has to be seen as someone 'whose sense of humanity could be awakened through the use of non-violence' (Dalton 2012: 96). Consequentially, Gandhi saw it as a duty of the resister to 'liquidate the antagonism, not the antagonist' (Bose 1948: 221). Gandhi therefore understood democracy as a program of 'transformation of relationship ending in peaceful transfer of power' (cited by Johnson 2006: 27) rather than merely about seizing power. For Galtung, Gandhi's theory of nonviolence is therefore 'based on the idea of recognizing the human being in the other, appealing to that human being not only for compassion with one's own plight, but also for self-interest in a better future, to be enjoyed together' (Galtung 1989: 3). In other words, NVR, as a 'reversible action' (Galtung 1996: 271), works by ending cooperation on unequal terms but provides the ability to renew cooperation on more equal terms without having to go through the process of post-conflict reconciliation. In this sense, NVR has the ability to decrease social distance (Schock 2013: 284) and to facilitate dialogue on more equal terms (Vinthagen 2015).

We therefore assume that transitions induced by NVR lead to a more pluralistic political system by levelling the horizontal relations between a) political parties and b) government and opposition.

These leveled horizontal relations should be observable in three aspects:

Hypothesis 1: Elite circulation and replacement are more frequent in NVR-induced democracies than in democracies evolving from violent resistance.

Hypothesis 2: NVR-induced democracies are better able to achieve peaceful turnovers of power than democracies resulting from armed resistance.

Hypothesis 3: NVR-induced transitions foster political systems that feature

a higher number of political parties relative to transitions brought about by violent rebellion.

Vertical relations

Starting with Etienne de la Boétie's 'Voluntary Servitude' (1997 [1553]) the concept of NVR has always contained the idea of countering the duality of domination and submission. It is therefore no surprise that Sharp's strategic approach (1973a, 1973b, 1973c) begins with a part on 'Power and Struggle', where Sharp articulates his critique of assumptions that power is intrinsic to the powerholder. In contrast, Sharp articulates a pluralistic concept of power by claiming that 'obedience is at the heart of political power' (1973: 16). Subordinates can undermine power if they 'reject passivity and submission' (Sharp 1973a: 64). Acts of disobedience against authority engender a process of personal empowerment (Sharp 1973b) and a redistribution of power. Other authors similarly state that NVR can be used to challenge power asymmetries (Dudouet 2008) and be employed as a 'counterpower' (Gee 2011). According to Sharp (2009), every resistance campaign has constructive and lasting elements. Campaigns create or take over organizations like civic associations or trade unions to support the struggle. These institutions become so-called 'loci of power' which become important 'places' in the post-transition geography of power. These loci of power contain the power wrested from the authoritarian regime and oppose any attempt to shift the balance of power back to ruling elites, building a first line of defense against any authoritarian backlash.

Focusing on the Habermasian 'ideal speech situation' as a prerequisite for democracy, Vinthagen argues that NVR can tackle the problem of a 'lack of interest in dialogue shown by those in dominant positions of power' (Vinthagen 2015: 165), by forcing the powerful to the negotiating table and approximating the ideal speech situation through levelling the political playing field (Vinthagen 2015: 135). Finally, successful NVR campaigns can influence vertical relations between political elites and ordinary people by serving as 'history lessons' (Hilton and Liu 2017), which illustrate that peaceful political change is possible even if it seems to be against great odds. Narratives of successful resistance can become 'mnemonic resources' (Della Porta et al. 2018: 3) for renewed mobilization and thus constitute a culture of resistance and participation.

Against this background, we argue that NVR helps to create a more even playing field between political elites (be it the government or the

opposition) and ordinary citizens by breaking or undermining hierarchies. Specifically, we expect that:

Hypothesis 4: Civil society organizations enjoy more autonomy and have more political influence in democracies induced by NVR compared to democracies that came about by violent resistance.

Methodology and case selection

To test our assertion that NVR leads to a more even political playing field, we use a comparative case study design. According to George and Bennett (2005: 5, 17) case studies are suitable for a 'detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode' and allow us to 'develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events.' The case studies serve two purposes. First, they explore and test how average effects identified by quantitative studies work in individual cases. Second, they highlight if and how quantitative measurement strategies miss important nuances of complex case-specific political developments.

We use the cases of Benin and Namibia. Benin's *Rénouveau Démocratique* (democratic renewal) in 1990 represents a paradigmatic case of an NVR movement leading to a democratic transition. In contrast, Namibia's double transition towards independence and democracy in 1990 serves as a representative case for an armed struggle leading to a political transition. Beyond the different modes of resistance, both cases share many similarities. Both are 'third wave' transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa at the same time. In addition, both cases also score similarly on indicators of economic and human development.[4]

In Benin, pro-democracy protests emerged in 1988 and intensified in 1989. The country was then ruled by Mathieu Kérékou and his *Parti de la Révolution Populaire du Bénin* (PRPB, Socialist Unitary Party). Although the regime had first brought some stability to a country 'famous for successive military coups' (Koko 2008: 4), it had since antagonized ever growing proportions of the population. With the regime making feeble attempts at political reforms, the opposition finally rallied under the call to 'Rise up to get rid of Kérékou and his clique' (Houngnikpo and Decalo 2013: 12). The year 1989 began with work slowdowns (Seely 2009: 39) and later

[4] In 2018 Benin was ranked 163rd on the Human Development Index, while Namibia was ranked 130th.

saw a general strike of 'overwhelming national proportions' (Koko 2008: 44). In July 1989, employees from 13 out of 16 state ministries were on strike (Bierschenk 2009: 3). The mainly urban protests in Porto Novo and Cotonou were complemented by tax boycotts (Akindes 2015: 54).

Lacking popular support, Kérékou officially announced the end of Marxism-Leninism as a state doctrine and called for the appointment of an *Assemblée Nationale des Forces Vives de la Nation* – the National Assembly of the Active Forces of the Nation – by the end of 1989. What was originally meant as a symbolic act to introduce some minor reforms was hijacked by the opposition and developed its own dynamic. The opposition successfully coordinated their actions and gained the upper hand in the National Conference, whose delegates finally declared themselves to be a constituent assembly, worked out a new constitution, put into place a provisional government and set the terms for democratic elections (Seely 2009: 42). The transition ended with the first peaceful electoral turnover on the African mainland, making Benin the first of the new democracies in Africa (Decalo 1997) and up to now one of Africa's most advanced and stable ones. So far, Benin witnessed six presidential and eight parliamentary elections which have all been rated as mostly free and fair (Houngnikpo and Decalo 2013: 14). The polls resulted in four peaceful political turnovers. Since large segments of the society participated in these acts of nonviolent resistance, Benin's peaceful campaign for democracy is frequently referred to as the 'People's Revolution' (Koko 2008: 43) or a 'revolutionary constructive resistance' (Vinthagen and Johansen 2019), and became a role model for democratization in the region (Seely 2009).

Our second case is Namibia's double transition which also occurred in 1990. The former German colony of South-West Africa had been placed under South African trusteeship by the League of Nations after South African troops occupied the territory during the First World War. However, resistance against what was perceived as renewed colonialism – this time by South Africa – soon began to emerge (Dedering 2009). The contract labor system introduced by South Africa led to new labor organizations and coordinated resistance (Cooper 1999). The resistance movement gained broader support and became more violent when international lobbying for independence failed at the United Nations and South Africa began implementing its Apartheid policy in Namibia. In 1959 riots broke out in Windhoek, and 68 people were killed in an incident that later was called

'Namibia's Sharpeville' (Rocha 2018). This brutal act of oppression further radicalized the Namibian resistance.

Several members of the resistance movements went into exile (Katjavivi 1988), and in 1960 the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) was founded. In 1966 it began its armed struggle for the independence of what later became known as Namibia. The struggle lasted for over two decades and resulted in the loss of some 20,000 lives. The conflict finally ended in 1990 with Namibia's independence and transition to democracy under United Nations supervision. The case of Namibia is one of the few successful democratic transitions after armed struggle. Due to the heavy international involvement in the peace settlement and the following democratic transition, some speak of democracy as the byproduct of independence (Hartmann 2009). Nevertheless, Namibia today counts as one of the most stable democracies in Sub-Sahara Africa. Since 1989 Namibia has held seven parliamentary and six presidential elections. All of these were won by the former National Resistance Movement SWAPO which had transformed itself into a regular party just prior to the elections for the Constituent Assembly in 1989. Given this astonishing electoral dominance, Namibia is sometimes critically labeled as a form of democratic authoritarianism (Melber 2015).

Empirical Analysis

Horizontal Relations

To explore how modes of resistance shaped subsequent horizontal power relations in the newly established democracies of Benin and Namibia, we analyze post-transition cabinet politics, party politics and political turnover of power.

Cabinet Politics

Cabinet politics are a microcosm of how democratically elected presidents in Benin and Namibia manage elite relations. This concerns the frequency of cabinet changes, but also whether appointments are based on merit and qualification of candidates or determined by clientelist ties. To analyze cabinet politics, we rely on detailed data on cabinet changes, which covers the time period from democratic transition in the respective country until

December 2019.[5] Specifically, our cabinet data records the tenure of all ministers, including their appointments, reassignments and dismissals.[6]

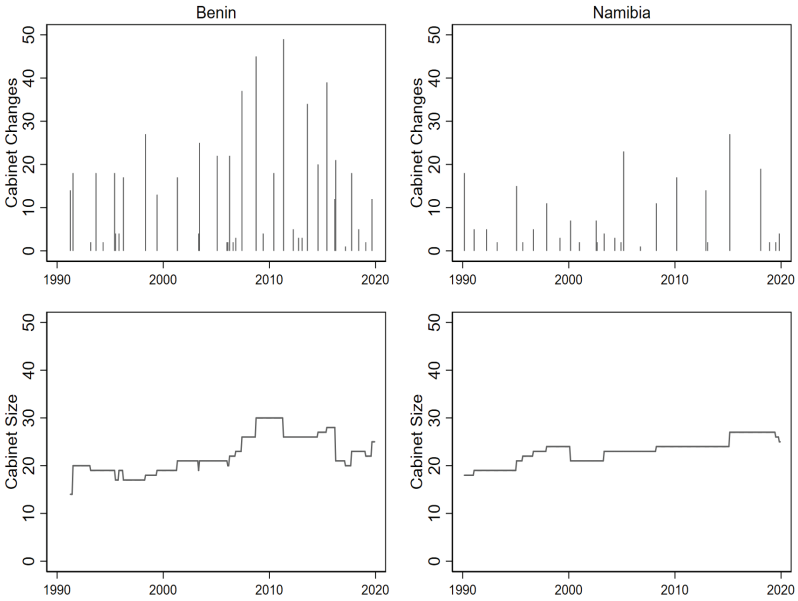

Figure 2: Cabinet Changes and Cabinet Size in Benin and Namibia

Generally, Namibia and Benin show different patterns of cabinet politics. The first difference is in the total number of ministers that served for the respective countries. Between March 1990 and December 2019, a total of

[5] The main sources used to code the cabinet changes were the Africa Research Bulletin, Keesing's Record of World Events and the British Broadcasting Corporation World Broadcast Information Service. The data collection focused on ministers with full cabinet rank. Thus, deputy ministers, regional ministers or minister of the state were not recorded, unless reliable sources indicated that they held a full minister rank in the cabinet. For biographical data of Namibian ministers, we also draw on Melber et al. (2016).

[6] An appointment refers to a person gaining a cabinet position and becoming a minister, with their respective portfolio specified in the appointment. Reassignment refers to the relocation of a person from one portfolio to another. Dismissal refers to the removal of a minister from the cabinet.

70 different individuals served as ministers in Namibia. By contrast, overall 264 different individuals served as ministers in Benin between April 1991 and December 2019. This difference cannot be explained by variation in the size of the government. As shown in Fig. 2, despite some fluctuation, there is no substantial difference in cabinet size between the two countries. Instead, cabinet changes occurred much more frequently in Benin than in Namibia. Whereas governments in Benin implemented 564 changes to their cabinet (285 appointments, 193 dismissals, and 86 reassignments), only 215 of such changes occurred in Namibia (107 appointments, 35 dismissals, and 73 reassignments).

Another way to look at this pattern is to compare the time in office of ministers in Benin and Namibia. To account for 'censoring' of the data (i.e. some ministers are still in office at the end of December 2019 and thus their tenure fate is unknown), we calculate the median survival time of ministers. This measure describes how many months 50% of all appointed ministers stay in the cabinet. After democratic transition, the median survival time of ministers in Benin is 25 months, i.e. little more than two years. In Namibia, the median time in office for ministers is 59 months, or almost five years. Again, this indicates a much higher frequency of elite circulation in Benin relative to Namibia.

Such a pattern can also be observed when we look at the political careers of the members of the first post-transition governments in Benin and Namibia. As analyzed in detail by Melber, Lakromrey, and Welz (2016), the first democratic government of Namibia appointed by President Sam Nujoma on 22 March 1990, was dominated by leading figures from the armed resistance movement. Of the 18 ministers appointed in the first government, only two did not have a background in the armed movement. Moreover, half of these 16 SWAPO ministers went on to serve for 15 years in the government until the end of the administration of President Nujoma in 2005. Some of them, such as Marco Hausiku or Nickey Iyambo, continued in a ministerial capacity under later presidents Hifikepunye Pohamba and Hage Geingob.

In Benin, we can see a different pattern of elite replacement during and after transition to democracy. In the transition government that took office March 1990, with the single exception of Robert Dossou who had briefly served as minister under Kérékou, none of the newly appointed ministers had ever held a ministerial position, although some individuals

had worked in junior positions in the government or the bureaucracy. The cabinet mostly consisted of highly qualified civilians without any political background, such as Nicéphore Soglo, the former deputy director of the West African Central Bank, who became Prime Minister of the transitional government and later defeated Kérékou in the presidential elections in 1991. Similarly, the former banker Idelphonse Lemon became minister of finance and Paulin Hountoudji, an internationally known philosopher and professor at the national university of Benin, became minister of education. Most members of the transition government also appeared in the first government appointed by Soglo after he became President. However, only three months later Soglo implemented his first cabinet reshuffle, increasing the size of the cabinet from 14 to 19 ministers, changing numerous portfolios, bringing in new and dismissing old ministers. The practice of conducting cabinet shuffles on a regular basis was adopted by all subsequent presidents of Benin.

These differences in elite management appear to be influenced by the different modes of resistance that occurred in Benin and Namibia. In Benin the successful NVR movement used the opportunity of the National Conference to establish a political culture of regular elite turnover and infuse 'fresh blood' into the political system. In Namibia, by contrast, the transition induced by successful violent revolution created a generation of SWAPO cadres who felt entitled to fill political office (Bayer and Pabst 2018). Correspondingly, the 'struggle credentials' (Malaba and Melber 2018: 230) of individuals evolved as the most important factor in cabinet appointments.

Party politics

Regarding party politics, we are interested in how the different modes of resistance in Benin and Namibia affected the playing field of post-transition competition between government and opposition and among political parties. Specifically, we explore political turnover of power and the seat shares of parties in the legislature.

Party politics are very different between the two cases. While the Namibian party system is dominated by SWAPO, Benin has a very diverse and pluralistic party system. SWAPO uses references to the armed struggle to entrench its dominant position, creating a polarized political landscape which is divided between the ruling SWAPO and the former Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA, rebranded as the Popular Democratic Movement in 2017). The DTA took a moderate stance towards the South African occupation and thus was often denounced as collaborators. Most prominently, this shows

when SWAPO politicians use the rhetorical question 'where were you while we fought in the trenches?' to silence criticism from the opposition, especially the DTA/PDM, or even younger generations of SWAPO members (Bayer and Pabst 2018: 12). In contrast, Beninese parties often form alliances prior to parliamentary elections. Furthermore, 'floor-crossing', i.e. leaving one's own party after elections to join another party, happens frequently in Benin, while leaving SWAPO is generally perceived as betrayal and sanctioned by the party. As former Minister of Trade Hidipo Hamutenya once famously said, 'it's cold outside Swapo', meaning that everybody leaving the party will be faced with social and political exclusion (Bayer 2017: 35).

Most importantly, there are crucial differences between Benin and Namibia in terms of how elections generate political turnovers of power. The stability of the new democratic system crucially depends on government and opposition complying with the rules and outcome of the electoral competition. Therefore, Huntington (1991) proposed the so called two-turnover test to assess if political regimes managed to achieve democratic consolidation. The first peaceful turnover occurs when the incumbent party that won the founding election of a new democracy loses a subsequent election and peacefully hands over power to the opposition. The second turnover occurs if the new incumbent party repeats this process again after losing another subsequent election.

In Benin, post-transition elections produced three peaceful political turnovers after the founding election, which had itself already deposed the former single-party government. After finishing his first term as democratically elected President of Benin, Nicéphore Soglo lost power in the 1996 presidential election to the former president Kérékou, marking the first peaceful turnover. Benin passed the two-turnover test in 2006 when Kérékou handed over power to Thomas Boni Yayi. After two terms in office, Boni Yayi stepped down in 2016 for another peaceful turnover to Patrice Talon, the winner of the presidential elections. In Namibia, by contrast, no turnover of power has occurred since transition. Elections are dominated by SWAPO and other parties are not capable of mobilize sufficient support for their candidates to win elections.

As we show elsewhere (Lambach et al. 2020), when comparing a large number of cases that also include elite-led transitions along with violent and nonviolent ones, there appears to be a substantial effect of NVR on a regime's ability to pass the two-turnover test. Although there is only weak

evidence that NVR advances the probability of a first peaceful turnover, the probability of subsequently achieving a second peaceful turnover is substantially improved if democracy came about by means of NVR.

Differences in party politics also show with regard to the representation of parties in the legislatures of the two countries.[7] In Fig. 3, we compare data on the seat share that the largest and the second largest party acquired in five post-transition legislative elections in Benin and Namibia.

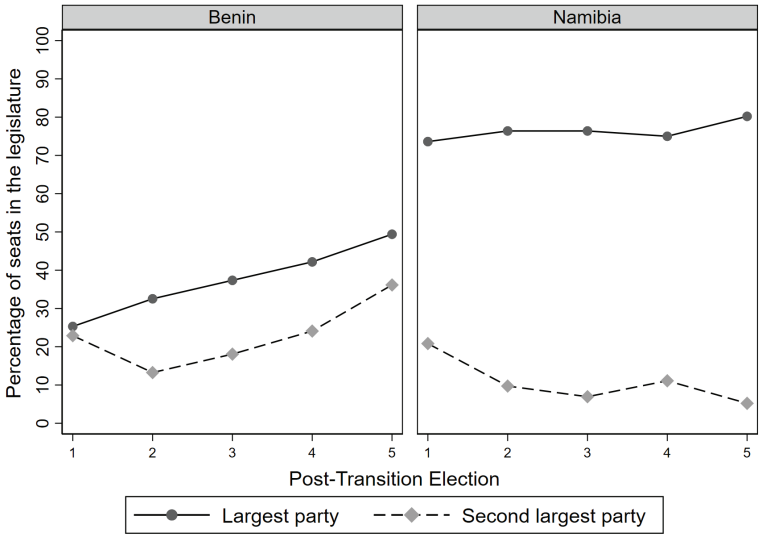

Figure 3: Percentage Share of Seats in the Legislatures of Benin and Namibia

Fig. 3 shows substantial differences in party competition in Benin and Namibia. Both the absolute seat share of the largest party and also the difference between the seat share of the largest and the second largest party are substantially lower in Benin than in Namibia. In Benin, the seat share of the largest party ranges from 25% in the first legislative election after transition in 1995 to almost 50% in the fifth election after transition in 2011. The

[7] Data on legislative elections in Benin and Namibia was collected from Adam Carr's archive, the African Elections Database; and the Inter-Parliamentary Union database.

seat share of the second largest party in these elections often comes close to these numbers, indicating real competition and parliamentary influence. By contrast, in Namibia, SWAPO attains a seat share of more than 70% in every legislative election, peaking at more than 80% in the fifth election in 2014. The second largest parties in each legislative election reported attaining only minimal seat shares, ranging from five to at most 20%.

To provide further details and more systematically compare the party systems that evolved from the different modes of resistance, we calculated the effective number of parties (Laakso and Taagepera 1979) in the legislatures of Benin and Namibia, for five post-transition elections. This measure is calculated as:

$$\frac{1}{\sum s_i^2},$$

where si is the percentage of legislative seats won by the i^{th} party. Accordingly, the measure accounts for the number of parties in a legislature but also for their relative strength. It captures diversity of the party politics in a country and can also identify situations that 'in effect' mimic a single-party system. The results are described in Fig. 4.

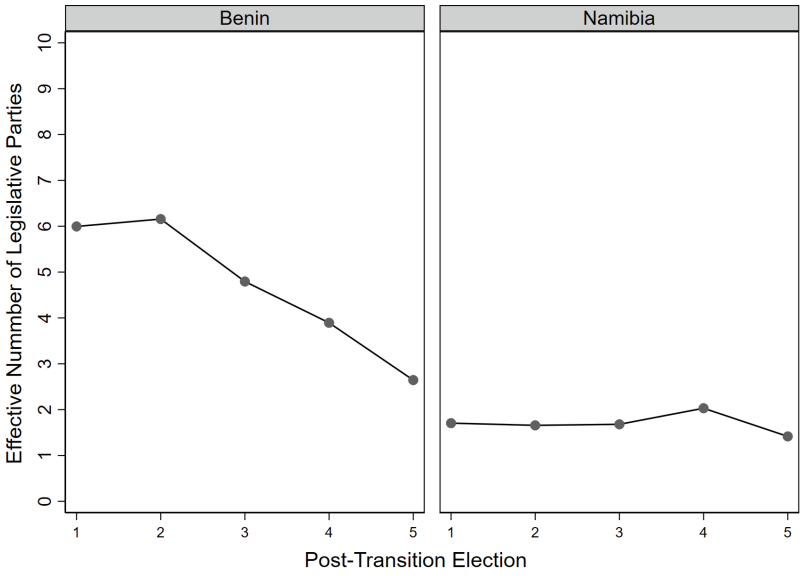

Figure 4: Effective Number of Parties in Benin and Namibia

As shown in Fig. 4, Benin and Namibia substantially differ regarding the development of the effective number of parties in the legislature. In Benin, the legislature resulting from elections in 1995 had six effective parties, i.e. a fragmented legislature. Over subsequent elections, this measure decreased to 2.6, a more moderate level, in 2011. By contrast, the effective number of parties in Namibia hardly reached a comparable level. For the first three legislative elections after transition, it stayed constant at about 1.7, then increased to two in the fourth legislature but fell back to 1.4 in the fifth legislature in 2014.

In sum, these results underscore the difference in party politics between Benin in Namibia, with a more competitive party system induced by the NVR movement in Benin and a dominant party system evolving from the violent transition in Namibia. In Benin, the legislature is diverse and opposition parties acquire real influence. In Namibia, none of the political parties pose a real electoral threat to SWAPO's dominance and their legislative influence is limited. These factors also contribute to the different capabilities of democracy in Benin and Namibia to produce peaceful turnovers of power.

Vertical power relations

To explore how the mode of resistance shapes vertical power relations between the government and citizens, we analyze measures that capture the autonomy of civil society organizations (CSOs) and their ability to influence policymaking. Specifically, we use data from the Varieties of Democracy (VDEM) database, which provides expert ratings of the CSO sector in countries over time.[8] The data captures the time period from democratic transition of the respective country until 2019. The results for Benin and Namibia are displayed in Fig. 5.

The first indicator captures the extent to which the governments controls the CSO sector, i.e. their foundation and dissolution. The measure ranges from zero to four. A score of zero indicates monopolistic control of the CSO sector by the government. A score of four means that CSOs are unconstrained, i.e. the government does not impede their formation or operation unless CSOs engage in violent rebellion. As shown in the upper-

[8] In the following analysis, we use the indicators 'CSO entry and exit (v2cseeorgs)', 'CSO repression (v2csreprss)', 'CSO consultation (v2cscnsult)', and 'CSO participatory environment (v2csprtcpt)' from version 9 of the VDEM database (Coppedge et al. 2019).

left panel of Fig. 5, Benin and Namibia do not differ much on this measure. After transition, both countries attain the highest level of an unconstrained CSO sector, although it took a little longer to achieve this in Namibia.

The second indicator captures the amount of targeted repression that CSOs are exposed to. Again, the measure ranges from zero to four. A score of zero indicates severe repression, where the government pursues violent measures against members of CSOs. A score of four means that CSOs can operate without any form of repression. As shown in the upper-right panel of Fig. 5, political developments of CSO repression were similar in Benin and Namibia. After transition, both countries attain the highest rating, which indicates that CSOs do not face repression by the government. However, while Namibia manages to sustain this level through the whole time-series, political developments in Benin led to weak repression of CSOs between 2013 and 2015.

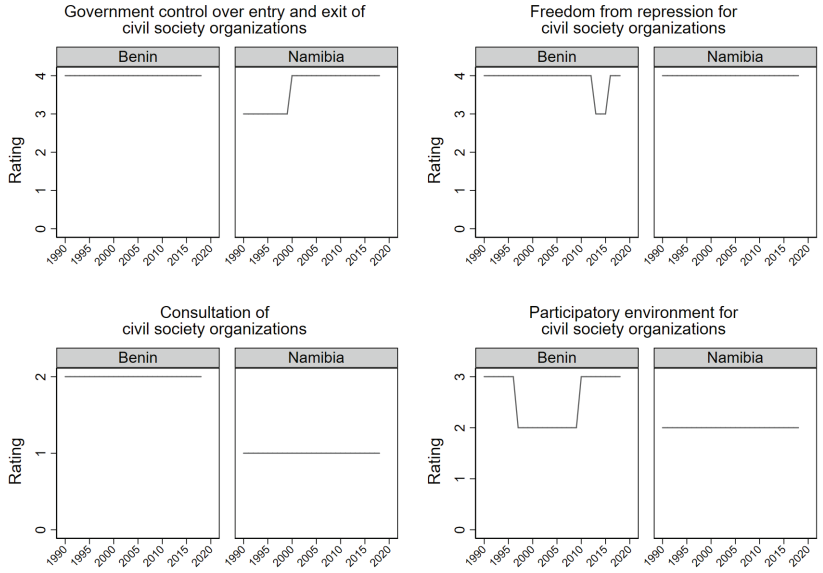

Figure 5: Indicators of Autonomy and Political Influence of Civil Society Organizations

As our third indicator of vertical power relations, we explore the process of CSO consultation. The indicator is scaled from zero to two and measures the extent to which CSOs are consulted in policymaking. A score of zero

indicates that CSOs are not consulted at all and a score of two means that CSOs are recognized as important stakeholders. As shown in the lower-left panel of Fig. 5, Benin and Namibia differ substantially regarding this indicator. While Benin achieves the highest rating of two directly after transition, Namibia attains only a rating of one, which means that CSOs are only occasionally consulted in policymaking.

Finally, as our fourth indicator, we look at the participatory environment for CSOs. This measure captures how citizens are involved in CSOs. The indicator is scaled from zero to three. As shown in the lower-right panel of Fig. 5, Benin achieves the highest rating, which indicates a diverse CSO landscape with broad participation of citizens. Namibia only attains a constant rating of two, which means that a diverse CSO landscape exists, but participation of citizens is weak. However, Benin achieved a rating of two between 1997 and 2009 as well.

In sum, the results highlight an important difference between Benin and Namibia regarding the capabilities of CSOs to influence policymaking. These capabilities appear to be higher in Benin than in Namibia. This finding also corresponds well with qualitative accounts highlighting the involvement of CSO in policymaking in Benin (Heilbrunn 1993: 298) and a corresponding lack of involvement in Namibia (Melber 2015: 51). One particular mechanism that produced this difference is the concept of the 'Estates-General', a consultation process which evolved from the National Conference in Benin (Fomunyoh 2001: 40). The preparatory committee of the National Conference under Robert Dossou fostered the involvement of civil society in the political process by asking the public to send in ideas and proposals to set the agenda for the conference. After transition, this form of public consultation became a routinized practice of governments to attain public approval for their policies. Subsequently, Estates-General were held by different presidents on education reforms, modernization policies of public service, civil-military relations, judicial, health and economic reforms as well as religious matters. Accordingly, Estates-General are a key quality of civil society involvement in policymaking in Benin, which directly evolved out of the NVR-induced transition. By contrast, in Namibia such procedures are not only missing, but instead the ruling party is actively impeding CSO consultation for policymaking. SWAPO subsumes political activity such that many CSO have direct or indirect ties to the ruling party (e.g. veteran associations, and most trade unions like the National Union of Namibian Workers). In consequence, most CSOs are more supportive than critical of

SWAPO. Independent political influence of CSOs is considered as a threat to the ruling party's legitimacy as the sole representative of the people.

Discussion

Revisiting our initial assumption, we find support for all four hypotheses, albeit to different extents. Regarding horizontal power relations, we expected, first, a higher frequency of elite turnover in NVR-induced democracies relative to democracies that came about by violent rebellion. This was clearly supported by our analysis of cabinet politics. Post-transition cabinet politics in Benin featured more cabinet changes, involving substantially more individuals, who stayed in office for a much shorter time than in Namibia. The causal influence of NVR is somewhat indirect here. In Benin, the peaceful transition created a political framework that, first, made a substantial elite replacement possible and, second, entrenched a culture of not allowing elites to arrogate too much power in political institutions. In contrast, Namibia only saw the first of these effects when transition swept SWAPO veterans into political office where they used their revolutionary credentials to stay in power. Our analysis, however, does not clearly offer a direct causal link of cabinet reshuffles and elite replacement in the democratic period to public protests and NVR.

According to the second hypothesis, NVR-induced democracies should be more likely to create peaceful turnovers of power through elections relative to democracies resulting from violent transitions. Again, our cases conformed to this expectation, with Benin passing the two-turnover test in 2006. Following the country's tradition of civic activism that was inaugurated by the NVR movement, democracy survived because civil society mobilized against attempts to subvert it from the top. In contrast, Namibia did not even have a first turnover after the founding elections due to the dominant position of SWAPO. However, we have to acknowledge that comparative research on this topic has shown that this positive effect of NVR on peaceful turnovers is not uniform (Bethke 2017; Lambach et al. 2020). Moreover, one-party dominance is not a phenomenon that is exclusive to cases of violent transition.

The third hypothesis on horizontal power relations was that NVR-induced democracies should have a more competitive party-system with a higher number of political parties compared to democracies installed by violent rebellion. This was borne out for our comparison of Benin

and Namibia. Post-transition multi-party elections in Benin resulted in a higher number of effective parties in the legislature compared to Namibia. Moreover, elections in Benin featured a smaller difference in vote share between the winning party and the second largest party in post-transition national elections. However, some of these differences between Benin and Namibia decrease over time due to the consolidation of the party system in Benin, whereas Namibian politics remains dominated by SWAPO.

Finally, our fourth hypothesis about vertical power relations, that CSOs have more autonomy and more opportunities for participation in NVR-induced democracies, finds partial support. CSOs have similar freedoms to operate in both countries but more opportunities to be involved in policymaking in Benin. We argue that this is the result of a civil society that had been energized and mobilized through its participation in NVR, and a political system that was built after NVR-induced transition that highly valued civil society participation. In contrast, CSO involvement in Namibia is limited and/or closely tied to the ruling party.

While the case comparison generally supports our hypotheses, we should not overinterpret these findings, suggestive as they are. The democratic reality is more complex than our relatively straightforward assumptions suggest. For instance, it is not clear whether a higher number of effective parties really does translate into a more democratic politics. Compared to violent transitions, NVR-induced transitions seem to have a levelling effect on the party system by not leaving behind a dominant political actor with the capabilities and the opportunity to monopolize the historical achievement. But NVR-induced transitions may instead foster a volatile and fragmented party system which may also impede democratic development. Moreover, we should be cautious about generalizing these results beyond the individual cases of Benin and Namibia. When we look at a larger sample of post-transition elections, we do not find a substantial difference of the effective number of parties across modes of resistance.[9] In a similar way, too frequent cabinet changes can also be interpreted as indicator of political instability, which is usually detrimental for democratic consolidation.

[9] For the analysis, we only used data on the effective number of parties in the first election after transition and also include top-down transitions. The results indicate that the average effective number of parties is 3.1 with top-down transitions and 3.6 for both violent and nonviolent transitions, respectively (Lambach et al. 2020, chapter 5).

As this discussion shows, this pairwise comparison cannot be used to answer the larger question about the impact of NVR on democratic quality (Lambach et al. 2020), even though the evidence presented here fits with this assumption. Instead, our results suggest that the four mechanisms we posited have some merit and deserve closer attention in further research.

Conclusion

Our findings provide empirical backing for the causal theories of Sharp and others who argue that nonviolent mobilization for democracy contributes to a levelling of the political playing field. Our analysis demonstrated this effect for four aspects of horizontal and vertical regime relations: elite replacement, political turnover, multipartyism, and the empowerment of civil society.

However, generalization of these results beyond our cases of Benin and Namibia is difficult, as some of the findings might be idiosyncratic and products of our case selection. Explaining power relations, political arrangements and institutions in post-transition societies is a complex endeavor. It would be disingenuous to suggest that a single factor – the mode of resistance – explains them completely. Obviously, there are also other factors at work, such as a history of political parties, a legacy of independent civil organizations, previous experiences with democracy, and political culture. As similar as the cases of Benin and Namibia are in terms of structural factors, like human development and economic capacity, comparing a liberation struggle with an anti-regime movement might be nevertheless a comparison of apples and oranges. We thus view our results as a starting point for future research, rather than providing a concluding statement to this line of inquiry.

Nevertheless, our findings have some important implications for research on NVR and democratization. Our analysis underlines the importance of translating theoretical assumptions about the effects of NVR into observable implications about causal processes. The results for Benin and Namibia indicate that the assertations by Sharp and others about NVR having an empowering effect for society, and creating lasting changes in power relations, play out differently depending on the type of power relations that are investigated. This also underscores the importance of disaggregating the empirical analysis about the effects of NVR on democratization. As of now, especially quantitative empirical studies rely too much on crudely measured macro indicators to analyze complex power relations and political

developments. Such indicators may not be appropriate to capture the heterogenous, complex and dynamic effects of NVR.

Specifically related to the literature on NVR, our results highlight that more research is needed on the long-term effect of NVR on political (re-) mobilization. As described above, our own analysis was not always able to clearly establish the causal link between NVR and some aspects of cabinet and party politics because of missing systematic evidence, e.g. how resistance campaigns create settings favorable for a remobilization of civil society. Thus, NVR research can gain from investigating the responsiveness of elites to mass mobilization. Our findings also speak more specifically to the comparative literature on democratization, which often focuses too much on elite interactions. Haggard and Kaufman (2016) have recently offered a novel approach to the study of transition that pays closer attention to the role of citizens, and argues that there are distinct types of transition (elite-led and mass-driven). Our findings can help illuminate the causal mechanisms behind mass-driven transitions.

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