Societal-System Analytics and the Problem of Factionalism in Emerging (and Declining) Democracies*

Monty G. Marshall
Center for Systemic Peace

Benjamin R. Cole
Simmons University

ABSTRACT

For over twenty years the U.S. Government's Political Instability Task Force (PITF; originally known as the State Failure Task Force) conducted extensive analysis and modeling of political instability and democratic transition events. The two most recent phases of this research have identified the Polity indicator of 'factionalism' (PARCOMP=3) to be the most statistically powerful, precursive condition in modeling the onsets of serious political instability (Goldstone et al. 2005; Goldstone et al. 2010). This paper reports on the authors' six-year analysis of the factionalism condition, which sought to document and confirm instances of factionalism in the contemporary period (since 1955) and identify common factors behind successful factionalism management strategies. The analysis began with a comprehensive review and accounting of every change in the Polity dataset since 1955. Through this review and documentation process, we found that transitions toward democracy that occurred in countries outside the global West (which occurred much earlier) were relatively rare and usually short-lived prior to 1985 but more recent transitions toward democracy have taken place far more frequently and, so far, have tended to persist (the so-called 'third wave of democratization'). Among these 'third wave' transitions, democratic regimes have been relatively stable in former one-party systems and have taken place almost exclusively in countries with little or no serious armed conflict during the contemporary period. We note that military regimes tend to precede

Social Evolution & History, Vol. 22 No. 1, March 2023 25–56
 DOI: 10.30884/seh/2023.01.02

volatile democratic transition experience due to the factionalism management strategy such regimes employ. One-party regimes, we hypothesize, are more successful at managing factionalism in the democratic transition process and, so, have more stable and less violent transitions. We note that established, long-standing democracies are not immune to political instability situations but that these disruptions tend to be shorter in duration and involve more limited violence. This paper introduces a theoretical model of the factionalism condition and offers some preliminary quantitative analysis of the relationship between factionalism outcome and pre-transition regime type.

Keywords: *polarization, factionalism, democracy, autocracy, instability, conflict, militancy, transition, Polity*

The problem of factionalism in new or incomplete democracies is not a new finding, by any means. In fact, it is probably the most widely accepted, and least understood, problem in the process of democratization. Very early on, in 'The Federalist No. 10,' James Madison (1787) makes several prescient observations in this regard, among these are 1) the link between 'domestic faction and insurrection,' 2) the opportunity afforded by factionalism for 'adversaries to liberty' to declaim popular government, 3) the dynamics of 'instability, injustice, and confusion' that factionalism introduces into public councils are the 'mortal diseases under which popular governments have everywhere perished,' and 4) the 'friend of popular governments' must act with due diligence to pursue any plan which 'provides a proper cure' for factionalism 'without violating the principles of liberty and diversity.'

> By faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.

Madison goes on to propose that '[t]here are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects.' When considering these core tenets of political factions, it is important to note the common descriptors of 'anti-state' (or 'anti-society') contentiousness woven into Madison's conceptualization of 'faction.' Factions are understood to present a clear challenge or threat to the viability of the governing authority regime. Fac-

tions are generally understood to be created and maintained through a process commonly termed 'polarization.' Lesser forms of political factions normally operate within the political process as interest groups compete with other groups for influence in the formulation and implementation of public policies. Here, we distinguish between the more complex form, termed 'polar factionalism,' and the more common forms of political opposition, termed 'interest factionalism.'[1] In this study, we focus specifically on the problem of (polar) factionalism in emerging or declining democracies.

This study reviews all cases of factionalism, as identified in the *Polity5* data series, covering all major independent countries (*i.e.*, those with total populations greater than 500,000 in the most current year: 167 countries in 2018) over the contemporary period (1955–2018) in order to better understand the condition of factionalism and its effects on the continuity of and capacity for effective governance. The operant condition of factionalism will be defined in more detail below. We use a particular form of macro-comparative analysis, called 'societal-system analytics,'[2] to examine both the proximate 'causes' of factionalism and two prominent methods by which state authorities have attempted to control its effects: one-party states and direct military rule. According to *Polity* coding conventions, the observable condition of (polar) factionalism cannot occur in fully institutionalized autocratic regimes as the effective repression of oppositional organization, mobilization, and action precludes its active expression in political behaviors. What we found in re-examining the *Polity* codings for periods of autocratic rule in all countries was that the condition of factionalism is latent, that is, autocratic authority is the primary mode of governance in countries where social groups are deeply divided. In autocratic regimes, social groups are primarily organized into two groupings: an 'in group' that is relatively well organized, controls the authority levers of the governance regime, and is favored by public policies and an 'out group' that is subject to the regime's authority but is generally discriminated against and excluded from both meaningful political participation and effective access to the benefits of public policies and resource allocations. That is, autocratic regimes emerge as a 'stakeholder' social grouping manages to assert 'rule by force' authority over 'non-stakeholder' groups and maintains its relative political power through an unequal allocation of benefits and resources. According to our analysis, factionalism often activates along the included/excluded fault lines that may precede and/or result from the institutionalization of unequal access to political influence

enforced by autocratic regime authorities. It is important to note that, while ethnic group identity is an essential and persistent marker in inter-group differences and domestic political conflict, ethnic or racial differences are not the only factors constituting factionalism; in fact, while ethnic group identification and organization are often prominent in factional mobilization, polar factions most commonly are characterized by coalitions and alliances across multiple identity groupings. One of the principal traits of factionalism are what might be considered 'unnatural alliances' of identity groups that share similar political status, whether that similarity connects them to the 'in group' or 'out group' within the prevailing status quo. The operant condition coded as factionalism can and does occur in both nominally autocratic and democratic regimes, its occurrence in nominally democratic or democratizing regimes may provoke a move by the military to 'arrest' the democratic process and unseat elected government. On the other hand, effective repression of overt, oppositional political action by regime authorities does not preclude the mobilization of opposition to the regime; in fact, repression may stimulate oppositional mobilization while driving it underground and forcing it to operate covertly. This 'conundrum of factionalism' complicates its analysis: factionalism may be an essential and enduring potential in social systems and state politics. Indeed, the genesis of factionalism in individual countries can often be traced to the formation of the state and may explain its predisposition toward autocratic authority. The conceptualization of factionalism as a systemic potential may help to explain why it occurs so rapidly and extensively when repressive autocracies begin to fail, reform, or democratize too quickly.

The factionalism condition is found in 106 of the 167 countries listed currently in the *Polity5* data set during the study period, 1955–2018. Of the recorded periods of factionalism, nearly two-thirds lead into an onset of political instability, as it has been defined by the US Government's Political Instability Task Force (PITF) 'problem set'; the other third are either managed short of an onset of instability (as defined by the PITF) or move toward improved political integration (*i.e.*, democratic consolidation). The PITF conceptualization of political instability is unique among macro-comparative, empirical studies of instability in that it combines cases of 'adverse regime change' (operationally defined as a six-point or greater drop in a country's POLITY score or a 'total or near total collapse of central authority') and 'ethnic and revolutionary wars' (defined as systematic and sustained episodes of political violence resulting in greater than 1,000 battle-

related deaths) in a single political instability event 'problem set.'[3] The PITF is a major US Government initiative established in 1994 to identify the empirical precursors of political instability in all countries of the world during the contemporary period (since 1955). As stated in its seminal 'Phase V' report on its global model forecasting onsets of political instability, the twenty-year PITF research effort found that '[o]ne of the most striking results is the extraordinarily high relative risk of instability onsets in partial democracies with factionalism.'[4] This finding provided the impetus for the more focused study of factionalism that informs the present study. According to the PITF study, the presence of factionalism presents a very high, risk factor for the onset of political instability, in general, and the greatest risk for the onset of an 'adverse regime change' (which may be understood as an attempt to prevent or forestall the onset of civil war by repressing dissent). Factionalism was also found to be an important risk factor for the onset of instability in the PITF sub-system forecasting models for Sub-Saharan Africa and Muslim countries (Goldstone *et al*. 2003).

Our systematic review of cases of factionalism has resulted in three new contributions to our understanding of factionalism: 1) a key event mapping of governance/policy changes leading to an overt condition of factionalism; 2) an identification of the main factions that constitute the political construct for the condition of factionalism; and 3) a key event mapping all governance/policy changes leading out of factionalism to a more repressive autocratic regime, political separation of contending factions (through armed conflict, 'faction cleansing,' or the formation of separate polities) or toward greater political integration and democratic consolidation. Some of the policy implications of this research are straightforward. Factional divisions in developing societies tend to persist over time; identifying the main factional divides in each country will inform policy makers of the special conditions and sensitivities of societies and help improve the effectiveness of assistance initiatives. Mapping pathways into the heightened social tensions that characterize factionalism will improve our understanding of the linkages between political change and political risk. Perhaps, most importantly, mapping pathways out of factionalism and distinguishing these pathways according to the quality or favorability of alternative outcomes will help to identify points of leverage, inform remedies, and assess policy performance. As the persistence of factionalism is a key attribute of divided societies, the temporal elements of political integration and conflict management (*i.e.*, the problem of marginalization and the pace and course of societal-system inclu-

sion/incorporation) looms large. The relative age of the country is also a determining factor. Whereas the political dynamics of limited enfranchisement and displacement, that is, the exclusion or marginalization of social groups to limit their participation and/or the voluntary or involuntary relocation of individuals outside the effective polity (*e.g.*, through frontier expansion) may have helped defuse factionalism and prolong the period of 'incremental integration' in historical cases, contemporary cases occur in a changed political culture wherein state-building is expected to take place under conditions of universal enfranchisement and globalization. Thus, the study will necessarily examine the key roles played by political organizations, in particular the one-party system, and the 'politically-activist military.'

UNDERSTANDING THE *POLITY* CONCEPTUALIZATION OF 'FACTIONALISM'

The concept of 'factionalism' used here may be thought of as the organizational manifestation of the societal dynamic commonly referred to as 'polarization.' The polarization dynamic or process has long been an integral concept in the study of social conflict and inter-group relations, particularly in European scholarship. The origins of the conceptualization and problemation of polarization in social relations and conflict theory may be traced to Karl Marx and specifically to his economic theory regarding the formation and opposition of social classes, commonly known as 'class analysis.' Although Marxist economic theory, in general, and the use of class analysis in conflict theory, more specifically, have lost much of their salience and relevance in the contemporary 'global systemic' framework populated by modern, complex societies, the core notion of social polarization as both a critical precondition for political instability (and violence) and a major impediment to societal development has not. Indeed, a major European Union-funded research initiative, the Polarization and Conflict (PAC) project, was charged with the systematic inquiry of the problem of polarization and the emergence of 'social clustering' (or 'social cleavages') beginning in 2001.[5] The PAC identified three specific aspects, and project taskings, related to the study of polarization:

- *Inequality*: '[I]n many important cases the basis of polarization are social as well as economic. We wish to develop measures of income-based social polarization where individual identification to a particular group depends of a mix of income and a second characteristic defining a social cleavage in this particular society.'

- *Social exclusion and discrimination*: 'The existence of polarization often reveals that some social groups are excluded and, intentionally or unintentionally, discriminated against. The excluded fraction of the population appears to face income and social opportunities significantly inferior to the rest of the society.'
- *Income and social mobility*: 'On an intuitive basis, a polarized society seems to go hand in hand with a lack of income and social mobility.'

The lines of inquiry on the study of polarization and conflict, specified in the PAC mission statement above, link the European research consortium to another well-established field of inquiry in the problems of polarization in inter-group relations, that is, experimental social psychology. Social psychology research on group polarization emphasizes the attitudinal and emotional aspects of the polarization dynamic in inter-group relations and, especially, inter-group conflict. Seminal works in this field of inquiry include Sherif and Sherif (1953), Moscovici and Zavalloni (1969), and Tajfel and Turner (1979).

While the social, economic, and psychological inquiries into the nature and dynamics of group polarization offer valuable insights into the macro-social phenomenon of polarization, Madison's political perspectives on the problem of faction in emerging democracies and its links to insurrection (above) are key to the operationalization of the concept of factionalism provided in the *Polity5 Dataset Users' Manual*. In the *Polity* scheme, 'factional' is the middling classification (3) on a 5-category ordinal scaling of the 'competitiveness of participation' (PARCOMP) which ranges from 'repressed' (1) to 'competitive' (5). Factional polities are 'polities with parochial or ethnic-based political factions that regularly compete for political influence in order to promote particularist agendas and favor group members to the detriment of common, secular, or cross-cutting agendas' (Marshall and Gurr 2018: 27). PARCOMP is one of six component variables used to characterize a regime's 'pattern of authority' and one of two variables used to characterize the quality of popular participation (the other is PARREG 'regulation of participation'). A similar definition of polarization is found in Stewart *et al.* (2020: 1), 'Polarization is a social phenomenon in which a population divides into belligerent groups with rigidly opposed beliefs and identities that inhibit cooperation and undermine pursuit of a common good.'

In general terms, the *Polity* conceptualization of 'factionalism' refers to *an advanced, macro-systemic stage of group polarization that transforms political behavior in distinct ways that are both systematic*

and sustained. Factionalism transforms the conventional politics of deliberation to the unconventional 'anti-system' politics of disruption. In conventional political dynamics, there is always a 'factional' group or groups that promote uncompromising agendas (radicals) or practices (extremists); these groups often remain isolated and obscure but may gain prominence during periods of high or increasing social tensions. Under some conditions, interest and policy differences among individuals lead them to mobilize contending organizations or parties; similarly, such differences may lead to splits among groups within an established political organization or party. These micro-level dynamics of group formation and re-formation are integral to the democratic, deliberative process. However, under certain circumstances and situations, the congregation of divergent political groups into larger, contentious groups that promote a claim that control of the political authority of the state is the best or only remedy to ongoing contention over fundamental political policies and cultural values may occur. These large groupings may become institutionalized and persist over long periods as one or the other gains political control (ruling group) and acts to limit the ability of political contenders to act openly and/or effectively (opposition group). The controlling influence of factions is normally mitigated by moderate groups that design and implement inclusive and cooperative responses/solutions to common demands/problems and gain legitimacy/agency/constancy through superior performance outcomes. Under duress, moderate groups may gravitate toward more radical or extreme positions or form alliances/coalitions with radical/extreme groups, or they may lose popular support and, thereby, their political relevance may become greatly diminished. As groups polarize, they tend to focus group identity and organization on key/core issues (poles) and submerge other factors that distinguish the group politically. Macro-level or 'polar' factionalism, then, is distinguished by systematic, or patterned, acts of contention between groups promoting diametrically opposed viewpoints or policy responses; such systematic contention tends to persist over time as points of contention are associated more with symbolic group identity and less with practical issues affecting group interests. In the advanced condition of 'polar factionalism' the number of relevant (main) factions will approach two and the issues of contention will become 'compacted' and difficult to define and disaggregate, apart from the emotive symbolic issue(s) that are used to mobilize, and maintain, group identity and inter-group polarization.[6]

SOCIETAL-SYSTEM ANALYTICS: THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION PROCESS MODEL

The problem of factionalism can be better understood by situating the condition within its greater systemic, or processual, context. American political science generally eschews the use of a systems approach in political analysis, preferring to emphasize the efficacy of political power, for obvious reasons: it stands as the world's most powerful country and arose from a long tradition of Western power politics. Clearly, under prevailing conditions of general ignorance and anarchy, the use of superior force to settle disputes between actors looms large. However, in the face of exponentially increasing complexity as the logical result of the scientific and technological 'revolutions' that have transformed human relations over the past few centuries, the blind reliance on power (militancy) and force (open warfare) as conflict management strategies has come to be commonly understood to be the principal threat to humanity and the continued well-being of human societies.[7] Societal-system analytics (Marshall 1999, 2014/2016) provides a comprehensive, dynamic systems approach to understanding political behaviors in complex, adaptive, social organizations; it builds on the seminal works of Ted Robert Gurr and his macro-comparative 'politimetric' approach to empirical research on political conflict (Gurr 1972).[8] The empirical foundations of the societal-systems analytics approach were derived from extensive research and analyses supporting three, well-known, global data surveys: *Polity* (political regime authority), *Minorities at Risk* (social identity), and *Major Episodes of Political Violence* (armed conflict). These three data compilations became the empirical core for the global research and modeling efforts of the Political Instability Task Force introduced earlier in the current study. Global macro-comparative research and analysis enable researchers to identify commonalities across the 'universe of analysis' as well as differences among constituent units and regional subsystems, thus reducing analytic biases that result from partial analyses. Global data collections also enable us to examine changes and trends over time. A global trend relevant to the current study derives from the *Polity* data: the democratization of regime authority has progressed steadily since the year 1809 (except for a devastating downturn that plagued Europe between the two World Wars, 1919–1939), replacing autocratic authority as the predominant mode of governance in 1990 following the end of the Cold War.[9]

The problem of factionalism is a nearly universal phenomenon in the development of modern societal-systems: of the 167 countries covered in the *Polity* data series, only 34 countries have not been coded with some form of factionalism since coverage began in 1800 (of these, only 14 countries have not experienced periods of autocratic rule).[10] Three main traits account for most of the 34 non-factional countries: continuous autocratic rule (10), ethnically homogenous (14), or recently independent (10). Factionalism as an observable condition is specific to the process of democratization. As stated previously, factionalism is the essential form of inter-group relations under autocratic authority systems; its presence in a societal-system both 'rationalizes' the emergence of autocratic regimes and 'justifies' the persistence or resurgence of autocratic authority. Figure 1, 'The Political Participation Process Model,' presents a simple, linear schematic of six 'steps' in the escalation dynamics of political participation in the general, systemic, political process. The 'steps' leading from 'conventional politics' to 'open warfare' are distinguished by scope and degrees of 1) divisive/derisive rhetoric; 2) dramatic/disruptive political action; 3) 'unnatural' alliances between/among political actors and/or social identity groups; and 4) sporadic acts of extremism and directed violence. Macro-political transition through the step process may be viewed as deviance away from an 'optimal' societal condition of conventional politics. Transitional dynamics are generated with the emergence, or reemergence, of systemic problems that stimulate societal tensions and dissent over public policy and the distribution of resources and status. Macro-political transitions between steps may be gradual or cascading changes in the general qualities of political interactions that have been 'unleashed' by substantive changes in governing authority or 'triggered' by high profile, symbolic events that increase tensions and conflict. The public/private attitude of governing authority is a key contributor to transitional dynamics and the governing regime's approach to the societal integration of social groups and its capacity for conflict management are crucial factors in determining scope and degree of deviance driving the transitional dynamic through the escalatory sequence.

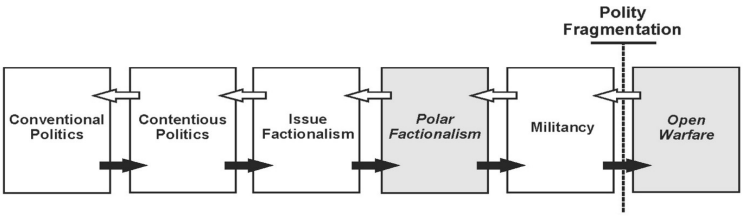

Fig. 1. The Political Participation Process Model

While movement across the sequence is linear, it is not unidirectional; the direction of movement depends on the efficacy of conflict management and resolution. There are two fundamental, directional dynamics in the political process: a 'social ordering' or 'sociational' dynamic that reflects increasing cooperation among constituent groups (termed *democratization*, presented as light-colored arrows in figure 1) and a 'disordering' or instrumental dynamic that reflects an increasing reliance on coercion between or among contending groups (termed *autocratization*, presented as dark arrows in the diagram). The *Polity* scheme recognizes that democratic and autocratic authority are alternative strategies of conflict management that are coterminous and simultaneous and are institutionalized within a 'polity' to varying degrees at any point in time; the *Polity* scheme codes both types of authority patterns (DEMOC and AUTOC) and, as a statistical convenience, combines these coded values into a single regime score (POLITY) which captures the general pattern, or quality, of authority characteristic of that 'polity' (Eckstein and Gurr 1975; Marshall and Gurr 2018). The emotive content of the macro-political transitional dynamic should not be discounted or underestimated. The emotive content of political communication drives the political escalatory dynamic, whereas the de-escalatory dynamic is driven by shared values and rationality. The self-organizing, self-regulating, and self-correcting principles inherent in complex, societal-systems tend to limit deviation in macropolitics as a function of the demonstrated durability of the polity over time. In addition, societal-systemic deviance is inherently self-limiting as it necessarily stimulates higher consumption of energy and resources and, simultaneously, diminishes and distorts societal-systemic networks and interactional/transactional densities that are essential for effective social enterprise. If a macro-political transition deviates too strongly, it may overpower the inter-group compact that underscores

social integration in an existing societal-system and lead to *polity fragmentation*: a disintegration and division of the societal-system into two or more separate(d) societal-systems. In the *Polity* scheme, *de jure* fragmentation (secession) creates a new, independent state and *de facto* fragmentation indicates that the separated, (autonomous) territorial group is no longer considered an integral participant in the polity. The polity fragmentation that concurs with open warfare is considered a state, or societal-system, failure.

The six-step escalatory sequence presented in Figure 1 can be characterized, briefly, as follows:

1. **Conventional politics** – negotiated, cooperative, non-discriminatory outcomes; some issue-based contentious politics leading to compromised outcomes; some sporadic violence, usually personal, or some organized, private crime. Disputed policies affecting key, common interests trigger transformation to

2. **Contentious politics –** protest and political agitation; heightened social tensions lead to periodic confrontations with risk of escalation to sporadic violence; political violence and organized crime become both opportunistic and practical (funding militants). Discriminatory interactions and/or policy responses create perception of group exclusion (lack of responsiveness/denial of concessions) trigger transformation to

3. **Issue Factionalism –** characterized by increased politicization, mobilization, and polarization of political action regarding specific issues of contention; opposing positions become entrenched and begin to be linked with similar issues; individuals and groups begin to coalesce toward articulated, uncompromising positions and/or platforms; political agitation; rejection of and withdrawal from conventional politics by radical groups; militant organizations form around rhetoric of forcing change/defending group interests; provocative violence by sociopaths; continued lack of societal-system responsiveness; progressive exclusion of dissident groups from political authority and public policy; some symbolic triggers (attack on group identity symbols); encouragement/support from external sources (material, moral, rhetorical). Accumulation of disputed/unresolved policies signal transformation to

4. **Polar Factionalism –** emerges as polarization matures pitting coalition dominated by advantaged political elites and their support(ed) groups against 'unnatural alliance' of relatively-disadvantaged oppositional elites and their support(ed) groups; group loyalty and group boundaries are policed and material issues are discounted in

favor of symbolic issues reinforcing group identity (mass demonstrations/counter-demonstrations; organized strikes/boycotts; rejection of conventional political procedures, such as, elections, legislative sessions; erosion of due process; open belligerence; campaigns of dramatic (terrorist) acts; heightened risk of violent riots and armed clashes; some 'free agents' exist that act as balancers, spoilers, opportunists, shifting relational capabilities of polarized groups; 'micro-factionalism' may occur within polar groupings that undermine group capabilities for political action (and may lead to de-escalation). Progressive atrophy/damage to inter-factional trust leads to expanding scope of rhetoric/action and escalation of threat of force to 'resolve' differences due to dwindling conventional interactions, hardening of stylized postures, and diminishing faith in negotiated solutions induce support for

5. **Militancy** – emerges as loss of faith in negotiated solutions, combined with increasing emotional content of accumulated oppression/repression grievances, discounts status of conventional/moderate politicians/activists and elevates status of militants (buoyed by demonstrations of power/defiance); rationalization of and acquiescence to militancy, combined with deficits in administrative and policing capacity, encourages opportunistic (organized, criminal) action operating under veil of justification ('economics of defiance'); government 'crackdown' further limits viability of conventional politics and failure of regime leadership to support crackdown increases possibility of military coup; repression fuels emotive dynamics of defiance/revenge and, coupled with opportunistic crime and political violence, create environment of 'lawlessness' and heightened insecurity and low level insurgency. General deterioration in capacity/willing-ness to engage in negotiated politics (often 'enforced' through increasingly indiscriminate government repression) elevates perceived salience and/or necessity of revolutionary rhetoric and violence; enforced isolation and rejection of engagement strengthen group separatism, reinforced by systematic and sustained strategic action to prepare for

6. **Open Warfare –** emerges as militants establish secure base(s) of operations (defensible territory, protective population, secret and dispersed networks, and/or cross-border refuge) and viable capital support and supply network (often through foreign trade in contraband goods or direct support from foreign states); regime politicians/administrators mainly manage internal/local politics (little or no formal/substantive interactions or negotiations with polar group); in lieu of sufficient foreign support and/or defensible economic base,

opportunism (organized crime) finances and black market activity supplies war effort; militants dominate and direct political action.[11]

The Polar Factionalism step in the sequence designates the nexus between autocratic (private) and democratic (public) authority dynamics and can be viewed as a vortex between the reformation and retrenchment of private authority in the public domain. Both 'democratic consolidation' (reformation) and 'adverse regime change' (autocratic retrenchment) have, historically, tended to occur at this critical juncture. As such, it should be considered a societal-system crisis when it emerges under either an autocratic, democratic, or 'anocratic' (mixed) authority system. In the *Polity* scheme, the condition of (polar) factionalism (*i.e*., PARCOMP=3) is coded when autocratic authority recedes or reforms and allows oppositional political participation to occur in the public space. In terms of the quality of political participation, there are two variants of the factional condition in the *Polity* scheme: 'open factionalism' (when the regime does not overtly restrict oppositional activity; PARREG=2, 'multiple identity') and 'restricted factionalism' (when the regime restricts certain oppositional groups or actions in order to diminish oppositional strength; PARREG=3, 'sectarian'). As the quality of political participation moves from Militancy to Open Warfare, a crisis of state occurs as an oppositional faction acts to reject the central authority of the regime through force of arms, defend and control its territorial base, and form a *de facto* separate polity, termed *Polity Fragmentation*.

The general quality of political participation in any societal-system under any type of regime will periodically fluctuate across time (escalate and deescalate). In general terms, the older and more coherent regimes (that is, well-institutionalized democracies or autocracies) will tend to experience shorter and milder deviations from their normal equilibrium point and the newer, more ethnically diverse, poorer, and less institutionalized, anocratic (mixed authority) regimes will experience the wildest and most frequent fluctuations and the longest and most violent disturbances within their societal-systems. Figure 2, 'Regime Authority and the Political Process,' adds regime authority systems as an overlay to the political participation dynamic represented in Figure 1. Democratic authority is based on voluntary compliance with legitimate laws, rationality, open information, cooperation, free association, active exchanges among constituents, and innovation (sociation); it gains strength toward the left end of the political process model and consolidates its natural equilibrium in Conventional Politics. The stability of democratic authority systems de-

rives from its effectiveness in recognizing, deliberating, designing, and implementing workable solutions to common issues and shared problems; the principal functions of democratic governance must focus on conflict management (as opposed to enforcement) and societal integration (to counter discriminatory practices). The failure to address and/or resolve highly valued issues of contention pushes the system toward Contentious Politics and Issue Factionalism, where disputes tend to fester and add emotive content to deliberations. Thus, a 'crisis of democratic authority' (CD in figure 2) occurs in Issue Factionalism. The failure to resolve long-standing and highly valued problems allows such conflicts to accumulate and further raise the emotive content of political competition as multiple, unresolved conflicts are absorbed into the politics of group division and push competition toward Polar Factionalism, further straining the sociational basis of democratic authority. It is also during periods of Polar Factionalism that the influences of both democratic and autocratic authority traits comingle to the greatest degree: democratic regimes are challenged by proponents of autocratic resolutions to seemingly intractable conflicts and 'weak' autocracies feel compelled to adopt some democratic practices in their attempt to shore up regime legitimacy and weaken oppositional challenges. This 'commingling' of authority traits produces 'incoherent' regime authority that Gurr (1974) termed 'anocracy.' Research has consistently shown that anocracies are far more prone to experience political instability outcomes than either 'coherent' autocracies or democracies.[12]

As already mentioned, autocratic authority finds its natural equilibrium in Polar Factionalism as it 'treats' social divisions with discriminatory policies and acts to enforce political discrimination and dampen dissent through an effective 'monopoly on the use of force' by regime authorities. Establishing and maintaining superior force (instrumental) capabilities and acting coercively to restrict the mobilization and resource capacities of 'non-stakeholder' oppositional groups serves to stabilize autocratic authority systems as the 'threat of enforcement' is economically superior to the 'act of enforcement,' which leads to the consumption, and destruction, of vital resources, stimulates the mobilization of opposition to the regime, ands introduces tensions within the ruling group. Of course, autocratic authority requires a major investment in the 'security apparatus' and, so, elevates and politically activates the institutions of enforcement, especially the military, police, and other internal security and intelligence organizations. Autocratic authority is necessarily hierarchical as deliberation and debate within the lead-

ership weaken perceptions of the system's viability and resolve, thus, creating opportunities and 'inviting' challenges to its instrumental authority. A 'crisis of autocratic authority' occurs when the 'threat of enforcement' fails to control active dissent against the regime and pushes the system to Militancy (the 'act of enforcement,' CA in Figure 2). The politicization of the regime's military forces, at once, poses a special challenge to the regime as 1) the military leadership may stage a coup to change the regime leadership; 2) disagreement within the military may induce fractures in the military leadership or force structure and neutralize its enforcement capabilities; 3) rival force structures within the military may fight each other to gain primacy; or 4) an activist military may initiate Open Warfare with opposition forces and induce Polity Fragmentation or a collapse of central authority. Of course, at any stage in the Political Process, a change in political tactics may shift an escalatory dynamic to a de-escalatory dynamic, reduce the emotive content of political conflict, and push toward a return to authority equilibrium or transition. In brief, social conflict increases political tensions and the emotive content of political messaging. This, in turn, motivates political action and pushes societal-systems toward the right along the political process continuum. The resolution of social conflicts calms tensions and increases political rationality and cooperation allowing societal systems to move toward a more stable authority equilibria.

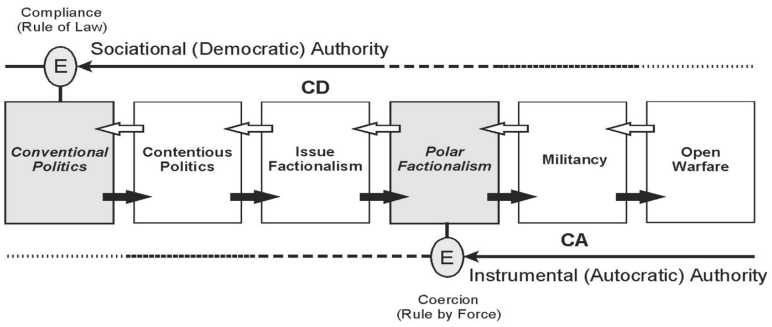

Fig. 2. Regime Authority and the Political Process

GENERAL AND REGIONAL PATTERNS IN THE FORMATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FACTIONALISM

What we found in our review of factionalism cases is that societal factions tend to form early in the state-building process and tend to persist over time. The repression of factionalism is the most common form of conflict management, at least historically. However, repression does not cure factionalism; it represses it. By repressing opposition, ruling elites may drive opposition underground but, in doing so, they also tend to institutionalize the opposition and make it more attractive to all individuals who harbor grievance and resentment toward central authorities or economic and political elites (the three groupings perceived as colluding in the 'capture' of the state). Then, when the (former) repressive system begins to open political dialogue and/or liberalize political mobilization and action, the repressed voice of the opposition tends to demand fundamental changes in the authority system that are viewed as threatening to the established elites. In many such cases, the authorities have used their special relationship with the military to put an end to the democratic experiment and re-impose autocratic rule, again repressing the opposition. In fact, outside the Western democracies, countries that have been independent for the longest time (such as Latin American countries) have institutionalized both polarized factions and an activist military that has viewed its main political responsibility as arbitrating factionalism, that is, forcibly assume administrative authority whenever contending groups reach an impasse or stalemate. This pattern is also evident in other older countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, and (pre-war) Germany.

It appears that having a colonialism or frontier outlet for dissent may have dampened factionalism in the oldest democracies. Perhaps most importantly, the democratization process taking place in the United States and European countries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries benefitted from limitations placed on the scope of political enfranchisement. Women, minority groups, and 'non-stakeholders' were often denied enfranchisement and the right to vote or otherwise participate in national politics. In the United States, the first country to adopt democratic authority, the right to vote in elections was limited to a relatively small proportion of the general population: white, male, property holders (less than 2 per cent of the population voted in the first election process). The political elites at that time considered that, by limiting suffrage to major stakeholders and dis-

couraging the formation of political parties, a stable, governing consensus could be best maintained; the problem of factionalism was generally understood to be a destabilizing threat to effective governance. Enfranchisement was expanded very slowly through the nineteenth century; women did not gain the right to vote until 1920 in the United States. The more wealthy (imperial) European states also moved toward the adoption of democratic authority practices in the late through the nineteenth century but did not move toward universal enfranchisement until the early twentieth century. The principal mechanism for dampening factionalism in the imperial European states was 'colonialism,' which allowed (or even encouraged dissenting populations) to emigrate to foreign holdings. On the other hand, exploiting group rivalries and sowing social divisions, often by showing favor to disfavored local minorities, within local populations were key tactics used by imperial forces in establishing and maintaining control in foreign territories. In 'post-colonialism' democratization dynamics in newly independent countries, an important 'outlet' for factionalism more likely involves the emigration of threatened populations who take their skills and capital with them. This capital flight tends to exacerbate the social tensions that fuel factionalism and lessen the ability of the state to appease oppositional demands due to the loss of entrepreneurs and innovators who might network across social groups. When elites prefer flight to fight, the military tends to be a weaker societal actor and the 'repressive response' to factionalism tends toward a cyclic capture of the state by successive, personalistic leaders who can command a 'critical mass' of loyalty in the armed forces (conventional forces and/or local militia); these cycles can be characterized by ad hoc rise of charismatic opposition leaders or an alternation of what Gurr (1993) has termed 'communal contenders' or competing ethnic identity groups.

This cyclic capture of the state tends to happen in poor and recently independent countries emerging from (relatively) long periods of autocratic rule. In the former-Soviet, and socialist, countries, factionalism is characterized by competition between the former party apparatchiks and 'reformers' over control of the political agenda and the privatization process. Factionalism is the most likely outcome of the transition process mainly because the opposition, while strongly institutionalized, is poorly mobilized and organized (mainly in reaction to the status quo) and, so, has promoted a cacophony of localized interests rather than a broader, inclusive agenda or strategy of socio-political change. The lack of mobilization and organization of the opposition has been even

more pronounced in the poorer countries of Africa where a dearth of economic integration has precluded the formation of mass-based parties and an even more localized political perspective. Identity and personality politics are far more likely to characterize factionalism in the poorer and less developed countries.

In Latin American, in particular, and, to a lesser degree, post-socialist countries, the military has become less activist and, so, less likely to arbitrate political deadlock. The result has been a raft of resignations by (and prosecutions of) executive leaders and, in Latin America, the ascendancy of socialist and populist leadership that tends to favor moderated shifts in political policies and priorities rather than a messianic agenda of disappropriation of ruling elites. Post-factionalism in older states has often resulted from a political crisis that is resolved by a transfer of executive authority to an opposition party or movement, that is, a non-coercive and non-repressive response by the ruling elite to an opposition challenge. This response is often facilitated by the decentralization of authority in former one-party-dominant states and a split of the one-party apparatus into multiple, competing factions. It appears that a non-coercive, non-repressive response by ruling elites to a political crisis is the key to defusing factionalism. The unwillingness or inability of the military to arbitrate the crisis 'forces' political compromise and, very often, a transfer of authority to an alternate elite or a broadened coalition.

Examples of factionalism and post-factionalism help to illustrate political participation dynamics:

- **Comoros** was factionalized by a perceived dominance of the political agenda by local elites of Grand Camore, with elites on the islands of Anjuoan and Moheli dissenting. Attempts to repress dissension tended to increase activism. Factionalism was overcome by a power-sharing agreement that created competition between island and federal administrations. The issue of the nature of future relations with France was instrumental in defining factionalism; external mediation and a change in tactics by France contributed to movement past factionalism.
- **Albania** was factionalized by the emergence of a former-socialist 'splinter group' headed by a charismatic leader: Sali Berisha. Berisha gained the presidency through election but quickly lost legitimacy during the period of privatization (failed 'pyramid' financial schemes). The socialist apparatus tried to cure factionalism through suppression of the Berisha-led opposition, but this tact contributed to increasing factionalism within the Socialist Party itself (between old elites and young reformers). To defuse party splits, a reconciliation

process was begun that eventually resulted in the re-election of Berisha and a peaceful transfer of executive authority. Regional pressure both from the EU and the US-led military action in Kosovo was instrumental in raising the stakes for cooperation and incentives for reconciliation.

- **Argentina** began to move past factionalism among the conservative military hierarchy, populist *Peronistas,* and traditional civilian parties when the military government lost crucial legitimacy due to its 'rally round the flag' gamble on the Falklands/Malvinas War. Factionalism/deactivism within the military (only the Army favored continuation of military government) forced, first, a return to elected, civilian government (the Radical Civic Union, UCR, government's attempt to adjudicate past military abuses increased factionalism) and, second, an amnesty and accommodation with the Peronist *Justicialist* Party (JP). Factionalism with the JP during a subsequent economic crisis pushed it to seek reconciliation with the UCR.
- **El Salvador**, **Guatemala**, and **Nicaragua** lapsed into factionalism between parties representing traditional landed elites and peasant/workers resulting in the outbreaks of civil wars; they moved to post-factionalism as a result of negotiated settlements of their civil wars, including reconciliation and integration of former rebel groups in conventional politics and security organizations.
- **Ghana** first fell into factionalism when the military government lifted its ban on political parties in 1979, allowing a return to civil administration under the traditional elite's People's National Party (PNP) which was opposed by a coalition of populist, labor, and professional parties and triggering coups led by junior military officers led by Lt. Rawlings in 1979 and 1982. Rawlings established a one-party state under his National Democratic Congress (NDC). The inability to quell rising dissent led the NDC to promulgate a new constitution and lift the ban on parties again in 1992, triggering a return to factionalism between the ruling NDP and the opposition National Patriotic Party (NPP). Factionalism began to wane as the NPP gained representation in 1996 elections and a victory in the 2001 elections.
- **Mexico** and **Taiwan** followed similar trajectories through continuous, incremental changes from one-party (Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, and *Kuomintang,* KMT, respectively) to one-party dominant to restricted competition and, finally, to competitive, multiparty systems. Neither country experienced open warfare; however, Mexico experienced two episodes of open factionalism and Taiwan had none. Mexico lifted its ban on opposition parties in 1977 and trig-

gered factionalism led by the opposition National Action Party (NDP). A brief respite occurred as a result of gains won by the NDP in 1997 legislative elections; those gains were consolidated when the NDP candidate won the 2000 presidential elections, and a peaceful transfer of executive authority took place. Taiwan followed a similar path although it managed to avoid the rise to polar factionalism. The defeated Republic of China *Kuomintang* (KMT) government led by Gen. Chiang Kai-shek fled the Chinese mainland and took refuge on the island of Taiwan in 1949, declaring martial law over the indigenous population. The KMT instituted a one-party state and banned all opposition. After Chiang Kai-shek died in 1975, the KMT began to ease some restrictions and the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was formed in 1986; martial law was lifted in 1987. The transition to multi-party politics led to a peaceful transfer of executive power to the DPP following elections held in 2000.

- **Former socialist countries in Eastern Europe and newly independent republics of the (former) Soviet Union** almost invariably experienced factionalism as a result of the debate over the future political course of the post-communist state and economic issues relating to privatization (elite corruption) and dismantling of the welfare state; the residual presence of ethnic-Russians in the former-Soviet republics has also been an important factor. Similarly, the fragmentation of the former-Yugoslavian regime into ethnic republics led to the appearance of factionalism among rival ethnic groups in Croatia and Bosnia.
- **Advanced and Long-Standing Democracies** have not been immune to the rise of factionalism in the contemporary period. France experienced a factionalism episode from 1947 to 1958 as it sorted through residual tensions from its defeat by German forces in the Second World War and the consequent erosion of its military control over foreign territories, particularly in Indochina and Algeria (mainly among moderates, communists, and Gaulists). The United States experienced a return to factionalism in 1967–1974 (fueled by its anti-war and civil rights movements) and, again, since 2016 due, at least partially, to lasting social tensions between the majority European-Christian elites and constituent minority groups (especially African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native groups). An earlier episode occurred in 1854–1865 that resulted in its devastating Civil War. Belgium has seen a rise in factionalism between Francophones and its Flemish community since 2007 and the United Kingdom has been almost equally split over issues with its 'Brexit' withdrawal from membership in the European Union. Marshall (2017) identified ten

cases of factionalism in advanced or long-standing democracies during the study period. Of these, four cases, Cyprus, France, Solomon Islands, and Venezuela, experienced subsequent adverse regime changes and three cases, India, Israel, and Sri Lanka, experienced civil warfare. The United States experienced serious political violence during its factionalism period in the late 1960s and came very close to having an adverse regime change event in early 2021; Belgium and the United Kingdom (both ongoing cases) had not experienced a political instability event as of the end of 2021.

The above illustrations are emblematic of the processes toward a reduction in the reliance of opposition political parties and ruling elites on overt uses of coercion/manipulation to gain advantage in political competition. This can occur as an intended result of a sincere transition to open and competitive politics or as an unintended result of a split in a ruling party or coalition that allows an opposition to gain advantage in an election. The disposition of the military is crucial in determining whether ruling elites can exercise an option to repress the opposition or negate the election results. Repression is far less likely to occur in the post-Cold War international political environment; most cases where repression has been used recently are relatively isolated countries, many of them land-locked.

FACTIONALISM AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY

As the formation, mobilization, and institutionalization of factionalism parallels the process of state formation in a polity, it is appropriate to discuss a 'development' of political factionalism that corresponds both to the evolution of the state and to the development of civil society. We have asserted that factionalism is an integral condition in a continuum characterizing the political participation process in complex societal-systems. Factionalism ranges from a simple, single-issue type (Issue Factionalism) through a multi-faceted form of social polarization (Polar Factionalism); it is the highly emotive form of multi-issue factionalism that stands as the gateway to, and from, political instability outcomes. Factionalism is a natural and common feature of sociopolitical interactions in modern societal-systems and favors the emergence and persistence of autocratic authority systems. It is also a symptom of decline in democratic authority systems and tends to push weaker and transitioning authority systems towards incoherent, or mixed, authority practices that severely limit a regime's ability to manage conflicts and respond to both internal and external challenges. Untreated and/or unresolved factionalism leads a societal-system to-

ward greater militancy and the active use of force as the governing authorities feel compelled to 'treat' the factional condition with repression rather than seek compromises that ameliorate social tensions with effective resolutions to the social conflicts that drive dissociation and disintegration in complex societal-systems under stress. We have noted that 'effective' repression can only stall the escalation to militancy and open warfare for as long as the regime can maintain its repressive capabilities, principally through the threat of enforcement action or very limited amounts of active repression tactics. Active repression quickly consumes repressive capacities and weakens all social actors, making political stability increasingly tenuous and the possibility of regime authority, and even, societal-system collapse more likely. Figure 3, 'Onset and Outcomes of Factionalism in the Political Process,' provides a schematic representation of the escalatory process and its principal outcomes.

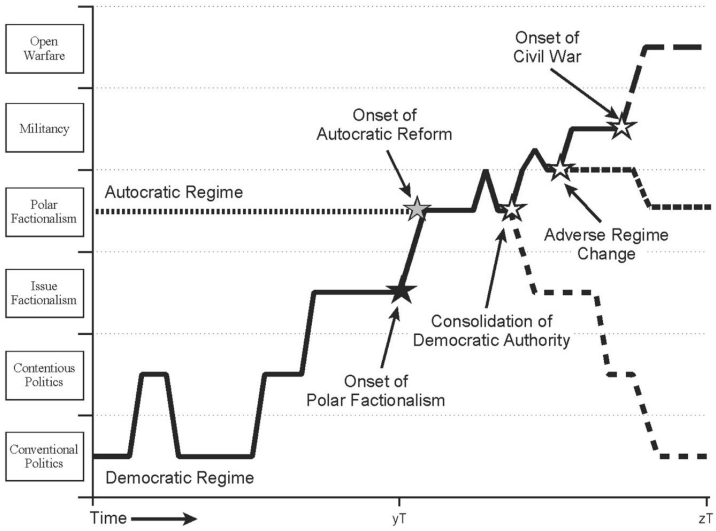

Fig. 3. Onset and Outcomes of Factionalism in the Political Process

The graph in Figure 3 places the political process continuum, from Figure 1, as the x-axis (vertical) and change over time as the y-axis (horizontal). There are two graph lines beginning at some arbitrary point in time: the top (dashed) line represents a stable autocratic regime, and the bottom (solid) line represents a stable democratic authority regime. In general terms, an autocratic system is most stable

when it rules over a divided societal-system in which one cohesive, (national) identity group maintains social order in contention with other non-cohesive social groups by means of a highly unequal distribution of resources and the threat of instrumental (coercive) enforcement of the status quo. The autocratic administrative regime draws support from an 'in group' and partners with a high-capacity security apparatus; the regime uses emotive messaging to disturb and disrupt social networking among 'out groups' and intercedes strategically to limit 'anti-regime' collective action. Group discrimination can be intentional or unintentional, or some combination of both. Autocratic authority is strongly favored in fractured societal-systems; the actions of an autocratic regime create the potential for Polar Factionalism but the power of the regime forces oppositional factions to remain latent in their contention with regime authorities ('latent factionalism'). It is in the interests of the leadership of an autocratic regime to avoid any escalation into Militancy as that presents real challenges both from the regime's opponents, which the most likely source of rising tensions in the societal-system, and rival leaders within the regime's support group, particularly within the security forces (raising the potential for coups against the regime leadership).

In order for democratic authority to gain precedence in a societal-system, factionalism must be (at least temporarily) resolved so that social differences do not drive social divisions. In nearly all newly established societal-systems, autocratic authority systems can be seen to have disciplined relations of core groups to gain the necessary social cohesion to support a transition in authority structures and practices.[13] Structures are fungible so the emphasis in authority transitions must be placed on improving the quality and increasing the density of inter-group relations and interactions, that is, societal integration. Democratic authority systems are superior in their capacity to manage the complexities of social conflicts as their system capabilities increase and they shift tactics away from costly enforcement measures to proactive exchange and transaction scenarios that support voluntary compliance with the rules of law and maximize non-discriminatory allocations of system resources. In brief, autocracies are severely limited in their capacity to manage complexity; democratic authority is only limited by the strength of the regime's management capabilities coupled with the perceived legitimacy of its codified rule sets. Rising societal-system complexity induces democratization pressures and necessitates systemic resiliency as the dynamics of political participation become more responsive to changes in system properties and

conditions over time. Autocracies begin to reveal the full dimensions of its latent factionalism at the point labeled Onset of Autocratic Reform; democracies display the limitations of its capacity to manage social conflicts at the corresponding point labeled Onset of Polar Factionalism. Societal-system disorder brought about by rising systemic stress and emotive energy equivocates the diametric attraction of societal-system authority, such that neither democratic nor autocratic proponents enjoy an inherent advantage. System resilience will favor the regime's established authority patterns and the lack of resilience will allow authority practices to become mixed or incoherent, that is, anocratic. Anocratic regimes tend to 'bounce' in and out of factionalism over extended periods of time; some may persist in a condition of factionalism over long periods through a targeted exclusion of opposition groups (*e.g*., South Africa during Apartheid, Sri Lanka, and *Bumiputra* Malaysia). The average duration of an episode of Polar Factionalism during the study period, 1955–2018, is about eight years.

We have identified 184 episodes of (polar) factionalism in the *Polity5* data records that began during the study period affecting 106 of the 167 countries covered by the data series in 2018; about half of these countries have experienced multiple episodes (32 episodes were still active in 2018).[14] By our accounting, only eleven (of 106) countries that have been coded factional have not experienced a subsequent political instability event;[15] an additional nine ongoing cases have not yet experienced an instability onset.[16] The increasing potential for escalation to Militancy during periods of Polar Factionalism can be expected to trigger one of three transformative outcomes:

1) **Adverse Regime Change** (*i.e*., consolidation of autocratic authority) – The most likely response by regime authorities to an outbreak of factionalism, brought about through a relaxation of restrictions on oppositional political mobilization, has been for the regime to reassert restrictions and/or mobilize security forces to suppress anti-regime, political action, especially during the Cold War period (before 1991). Of the 136 events recorded in the PITF Problem Set, 114 events were directly linked with episodes of factionalism.[17] In addition, seven episodes of factionalism resulted in the country's occupation by foreign forces.[18]

2) **Onset of Open Warfare** (and/or Polity Fragmentation) – The failure of the regime to effectively manage open conflict during an outbreak of factionalism led to an onset of 'systematic and sustained' armed conflict with anti-regime forces that account for 89 of the 166 events in the PITF Problem Set (*i.e*., 47 of 75 'revolutionary

wars' and 43 of 92 'ethnic wars'). In addition, eight episodes led to territorial secession: Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Sudan, USSR, and Yugoslavia.

3) **Consolidation of Democratic Authority** – The consolidation of democratic authority as a remedy to an outbreak of factionalism stands as a relatively recent phenomenon. Of the 26 cases documented during the study period, only four were recorded to have taken place before the end of the Cold War: Venezuela in 1958, Bolivia in 1985, Honduras in 1989, and Argentina in 1990 (Venezuela experienced a subsequent episode in 2001 that was ongoing in 2018).[19]

In their analysis of the Minorities at Risk data on ethnic conflicts, Gurr and Marshall (2000) found strong evidence that Polity Fragmentation renders affected societal-systems vulnerable to foreign influence, manipulation, and exploitation. In modeling the risks of open ethnic warfare, they found the main risk factor to be foreign support for rebel groups. Conversely, they found that the direct involvement of international organizations lessened the risk of Open Warfare. The systematic research done for the current study very strongly supports the foreign vulnerability prognosis for Polar Factionalism; Marshall (1999) details the 'diffusion of insecurity' across and through complex, regional societal-system networks during 'protracted social conflicts.' In examining the common factors across cases of the Consolidation of Democratic Authority as a remedy for Polar Factionalism, we have identified several important factors: 1) post-Cold War period; 2) little or no Open Warfare (if Open Warfare, then intervention by international organization is necessary); 3) legislature must exert authority over executive (such as enforcing term limits); 4) multiple attempts (factionalism episodes) and/or prior experience with democratic authority; 5) one-party systems; and, in some cases; 6) separation or secession of disaffected territorial social identity groups. The consolidation of democratic authority appears to require some combination of these factors with more being better.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Factionalism appears to be a problem condition not only for emerging democracies but for autocracies and established democracies as well. As modern societal-systems continue to develop and grow more complex, the global trend in governance has steadily moved toward greater democratization as the favored method for managing conflict and fostering social integration. The current study has focused mainly on authority transitions in newly independent countries during the period

encompassing the Cold War and the collapse of the 'colonial world order.' Many of the older, Western democracies have not experienced factionalism during the study period; however, most did experience such episodes during their own democratization processes that took place before the current study. What is clear is that, while the stronger, 'stable' autocratic regimes may be able to forcibly repress oppositional challenges and, thus, forestall the onset of factionalism and the democratic transition process over relatively long periods of time, those periods of 'autocratic stability' are growing shorter as a direct, technological function of societal-system development just as the consequences of 'regime failure' grow more dire. In order to properly comprehend the imperatives of conflict management and social integration in complex societal-systems, one must understand that the problem of 'nationalism' in the twentieth century European and Asian contexts is simply the problem of factionalism playing out at the regional level of societal-system development. We may be witnessing a similar factional dynamic playing out currently at the global level.

The results of this study suggest that policymakers, practitioners, and academics fostering democratic transition in developing countries and regions should consider a graduated approach that emphasizes the building of associative networks and increasing the density and frequency of inter- and intra-group cooperative enterprises and transactions. These provide the structures and linkages through which societal-systems gain the cohesion and coherence to effectively manage conflicts and integrate constituent groups and increase resilience. The condition of active factionalism is most readily recognized by an ever-increasing density of negative, emotive messaging that discriminates along the identity boundaries that distinguish social groupings and stimulates political action. Factionalism is inherent in complex societal-systems and the mismanagement of social tensions and divisions over time invariably leads to political instability and societal-system disintegration (Marshall 2014/2016). We find these outcomes to be, necessarily, a problem of regime failure. Our research strongly suggests that one-party regimes can provide a processual 'bridge' in the authority transition between autocratic and democratic authority systems. Early evidence indicates that one-party regimes may transition to multi-party regimes with lower risks of either active militancy or open warfare than regimes imposed by an activist-military establishment. More research needs to be done to better understand how one-party regimes help to discipline social relations and dampen the "natural" urges to militarize and fragment under societal-system stress.

Clearly, one-party regimes must cut-across social differences and incorporate constituent groups on an equitable basis or they will be similarly challenged and undone by the rise of factionalism (Marshall and Goldstone 2007). By transitioning first to a one-party state or to a hegemonic-party system, societies may be able to slowly open the political process while simultaneously building institutions for peaceful conflict resolution, much as 'limited enfranchisement' worked to reduce contention in earlier democratization processes. The key would seem to center on building a fundamental consensus that favors cooperation in the achievement of super-ordinate goals and rejects the use of violence in the resolution of disputes. By learning to manage factionalism as it emerges, without resorting to violent repression, states may be able to settle divisive policy questions before they take on identity symbolism, and halt polarization before it becomes destructive.

NOTES

[*] Revised and updated paper originally prepared for delivery at the 2012 Joint Meeting of the International Studies and British International Studies Associations in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 22 June 2012. The factionalism study referenced here was funded through the auspices of the US Government's Political Instability Task Force (PITF); it presents the views of the authors and does not represent the views of the US Government.

[1] Factionalism is operationally identified by a code '3' (factional) or code '–77' (interregnum) on the PARCOMP variable in the *Polity* data series (Marshall and Gurr 2018). An 'interregnum' (–77) denotes a period of 'state failure' involving a 'total or near total collapse of central authority' (these include a 'revolutionary change in governing authority' or 'contested territorial secession'). See also, Marshall (2005) for a discussion of the importance of 'political factionalism' in the onset of both 'state formation instability' and 'post-formation instability' in African countries.

[2] For a detailed description of 'societal-systems analytics,' see the two-part 'video book,' *Managing Complexity in Modern Societal-Systems* (Marshall 2014/2016).

[3] The PITF Problem Set can be found on the Center for Systemic Peace Web site at http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr. The PITF Problem Set covers the years 1955–2018 and, also, includes a category of cases termed 'genocide and politicide;' however, the episodes of genocide or politicide invariably occur within periods of political instability and, so, do not denote the onset of political instability.

[4] The PITF global forecasting model for political instability (Goldstone et al 2010, 195) consists of four independent variables: regime type (broken into five categories: autocracy, partial autocracy, partial democracy with factionalism, partial democracy without factionalism, and full democracy); infant mortality; state-

led ethnic discrimination; and a systemic 'neighborhood' effect (armed conflict in 4+ bordering states). The model is reported to be over 80 per cent accurate in distinguishing stable and unstable countries with a two-year lead.

[5] The Polarization and Conflict project published its findings in a Special Issue on Polarization and Conflict in the *Journal of Peace Research* edited by Joan Esteban and Gerald Schneider (Esteban and Schneider 2008).

[6] See, also, Cole (2018). Sunstein, in the *Laws of Fear*, (2005: 98–102) gives a good, brief discussion of the emotive dynamics of group polarization that drive it toward extremism and distorted perceptions of risks. He goes on to identify four main explanations for group polarization in a social context of fear: *persuasive arguments*, '[p]eople's judgments tend to move in the direction of the most persuasive and frequently defended position discussed by the group, taken as a collectivity;' *social comparison*, 'people want to be perceived favorably by other group members… [so] they adjust their positions in the direction of the dominant position;' *confidence breeds extremism*, 'people with extreme views tend to have more confidence that they are right, and that as people gain confidence, they become more extreme in their beliefs;' and *emotional contagion*, '[w]ithin groups, a tendency toward fear breeds its own amplification.'

[7] Dostoyevsky provides a brilliant, early condemnation of the 'great man' thesis in his reflections on the Napoleonic Wars of the early Nineteenth Century in his 1866 masterpiece *Crime and Punishment.* The devastating World Wars and the advent of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons in the Twentieth Century have further underscored the obsolescence of warfare as a conflict management technique.

[8] The term 'societal-system' reflects the proposition that all social identity groups (societies) act as 'polities' and that all higher-order social identity groups (systems) are comprised of multiple 'polities' that are densely interconnected by positive exchanges and transactions and act in concert to identify and accomplish super-ordinate goals (Boulding 1985; Sherif and Sherif 1953).

[9] See, figure 15, 'Global Trends in Governance, 1800–2018,' found on the Center for Systemic Peace Conflict Trends Web page (http://systemicpeace.org/conflicttrends.html).

[10] Two countries managed to avoid overt factionalism through policies of enforced exclusion of majority groups by relatively small ruling groups (apartheid): South Africa and Taiwan; both peacefully transitioned to majority rule.

[11] It is important to note that, in the transition to 'polar factionalism,' the political state either lacks the capacity to properly manage or defuse the contentious political dynamics of the polity (weak polity) or it is captured by private interests and acts openly as a polar faction (private polity).

[12] See, for example, the graphic 'Polity5 and the Onset of Political Instability, 1955–2018' found on the CSP's Polity Project Web page (www.systemicpeace.org/polity/PTfig03.htm).

[13] For a brilliant discussion of transition from autocratic 'hegemony' in the global system, see Keohane (1984).

[14] Ongoing factionalism cases in 2018 include Algeria, Belgium, Bolivia, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom, Ukraine, United States, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Episodes are defined by a continuous coding of PARCOMP=3 or –77.

[15] Bahrain, Bulgaria, Djibouti, Estonia, Timor Leste, Honduras, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Paraguay, Romania, and Slovakia.

[16] Belgium, Bolivia, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Tanzania, Togo, United Kingdom, and the United States.

[17] 'Adverse Regime Change' events are defined by a 6-point or greater drop in the country's POLITY score. The occurrence of a 'state failure' (–77) event is considered a continuation of factionalism in this analysis (8 cases).

[18] Foreign occupation includes Hungary 1956, South Vietnam 1965, Afghanistan 1979, Bosnia 1995, Afghanistan 2001, Solomon Islands 2003, and Iraq 2003.

[19] 'Consolidation of Democratic Authority' events are identified by a 6-point or greater increase in a country's POLITY score resulting with the new regime's POLITY score between 6 and 10.

REFERENCES

Bogaards, M. 2004. Counting Parties and Identifying Dominant Party Systems in Africa. *European Journal of Political Research* 43: 173–197.

Bogaards, M. 2005. Dominant Parties and Democratic Defects. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 6.2: 29–35.

Boulding, K. E. 1985. *The World as a Total System.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Bunce, V. 2003. Rethinking Recent Democratization: Lessons from the Postcommunist Experience. *World Politics* 55 (2): 167–192.

Cole, B. R. 2018. *Democratization and the Mischief of Faction.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Diskin, A., Diskin, H., and Hazan, R. Y. 2005. Why Democracies Collapse: The Reasons for Democratic Failure and Success. *International Political Science Review* 26 (3): 291–309.

Eckstein, H., and Gurr, T. R. 1975. *Patterns of Authority: A Structural Basis for Political Inquiry*. John Wiley & Sons.

Esteban, J., and Schneider, G. 2008. Polarization and Conflict: Theoretical and Empirical Issues, Introduction. *Journal of Peace Research* 45 (2): 131–141.

Feng, Yi, and Zak, P. J. 1999. The Determinants of Democratic Transitions. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43 (2): 162–177.

Goldstone, J. A., Gurr, T. R., Harff, B., Levy, M. A., Marshall, M. G., Bates, R. H., Epstein, D. L., Kahl, C. H., Parris, Th. M., Ulfelder, J. C., Woodward, M., and Lustik, M. 2003. *Political Instability Task Force Re-*

port: Phase IV Findings. McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation.

Goldstone, J. A., Bates, R. H., Epstein, D. L., Gurr, T. R., Lustik, M., Marshall, M. G., Ulfelder, J., and Woodward, M. 2010. A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability. *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (1): 190–208.

Gurr, T. R. 1972. *Politimetrics: An Introduction to Quantitative Macropolitics*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Gurr, T. R. 1974. Persistence and Change in Political Systems, 1800–1971. *American Political Science Review* 68: 1482–1504.

Gurr, T. R. 1993. *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts*. With Contributions by Barbara Harff, Monty G. Marshall, and James R. Scarritt. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Gurr, T. R., and Marshall, M. G. 2000. Chapter 7: Assessing Risks of Future Ethnic Wars. In Gurr, T. R. (ed.), *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century.* Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Gurr, T. R, Woodward, M., and Marshall, M. G. 2005. *Forecasting Instability: Are Ethnic Wars and Muslim Countries Different? Political Instability Task Force*. Paper delivered to the 2005 annual meeting of the APSA, Washington DC. URL: http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/PITFethnicmuslim.pdf.

Higley, J., and Burton, M. G. 1989. The Elite Variable in Democratic Transitions and Breakdowns. *American Sociological Review* 54: 17–32.

Kalyvas, S. N. 1999. The Decay and Breakdown of Communist One-Party Systems. *American Review of Political Science* 2: 323–343.

Keohane, R. O. 1984. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy.* Princeton University Press.

Madison, J. 1787. The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard against Domestic Faction and Insurrection (continued). The Federalist No. 10. *Daily Advertiser* November 22, 1787.

Marshall, M. G. 1999. *Third World War: System, Process, and Conflict Dynamics.* Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.

Marshall, M. G. 2005. *Conflict Trends in Africa, 1946-2004: A Macro-Comparative Perspective*. UK Government: Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (Department for International Development).

Marshall, M. G. 2014/2016. *Managing Complexity in Modern Societal-Systems.* Volume 1: *Structuration* (2014) and volume 2: *Problemation.* Video series. Vienna VA: Center for Systemic Peace. URL: http://www.systemicpeace.org/videobook.

Marshall, M. G. 2017. *Memo: Factionalism in Advanced and Long-standing Democracies.* Report to the Political Instability Task Force, May 15, 2017. URL: http://www.systemicpeace.org/vlibrary/AdvDemFactionalism2017.pdf.

Marshall, M. G., and Cole, B. R. 2014. *Global Report 2014: Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility.* Vienna VA: Center for Systemic Peace.

Marshall, M. G., and Goldstone, J. 2007. Global Report on Conflict, Governance, and State Fragility 2007: Gauging System Performance and Fragility in the Globalization Era. *Foreign Policy Bulletin* 17 (1): 3–21.

Marshall, M. G., and Gurr, T. R. 2018. *Polity5 Project: Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2018*. Dataset and User's Manual. Vienna VA: Center for Systemic Peace. URL: http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p5manualv2018.pdf.

Marshall, M. G., and Gurr, T. R. 2005. *Peace and Conflict 2005: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy*. College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland.

Moscovici, S., and Zavalloni, M. 1969. The Group as a Polarizer of Attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 12: 125–135.

Paolino, Ph. 2005. Voter Behavior in Democratizing Nations: Reconsidering the Two-Step Model. *Political Research Quarterly* 58 (1): 107–117.

Sherif, M., and Sherif, C. W. 1953. *Groups in Harmony and Tension: An Integration of Studies in Intergroup Relations.* New York: Harper & Brothers.

Stewart, A. J., McCarty, N., and Bryson, J. J. 2020. Polarization Under Rising Inequality and Economic Decline. *Science Advances* 6 (50): 1–9.

Sunstein, C. R. 2005. *Laws of Fear: Beyond the Precautionary Principle*. Cambridge University Press.

Tajfel, H., and Turner, J. C. 1979. An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict. In Austin, W. G., and Worchel, St. (eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Ulfelder, J., and Lustik, M. 2007. Modeling Transitions to and from Democracy. *Democratization* 13 (3): 351–387.

Walter, B. F. 2022. *How Civil Wars Start: and How to Stop Them.* New York: Crown.