

The Legacy of Western Overseas Colonialism on Democratic Survival

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Using an original dataset that covers the period from 1951 to 1995, we consider the enduring effects of Western overseas colonialism on the democratic survival of postcolonial democracies. We treat colonialism as a holistic phenomenon and differentiate the relative effects of its legacies with regard to the level of economic development, social fragmentation, and the relationship between the state and civil society. We find that Western overseas colonialism, a factor often overlooked in recent large-*n* studies, continues to have an effect on the survival of democratic regimes. We further find that the legacy of specific colonial powers has an important effect on survival as well. Unlike previous studies, we find that former Spanish colonies outperform British colonies when colonialism is conceptualized holistically. However, when we break colonial legacy into separate components (development, social fragmentation, and the relationship between the state and civil society), we find that the advantages former British colonies enjoy are attributable to the legacy of the state/civil society relationship. Moreover, we show that at least in the case of former British colonies, time spent under colonial rule is positively associated with democratic survival.

Decolonization was one of the landmark developments of the postwar era. Colonialism and its legacies were once a central concern of political science, playing an important role in the rise of the development and dependency paradigms. The failure of democracy in many post-colonial environments was also one of the reasons that “authoritarianism” became the most important term in the study of regimes in the 1960s and 1970s. The continued fragility of some post-colonial democracies in the 1990s suggests that the omission of this factor from the larger literature on regime change should be rethought.

Authors' note: We wish to thank Glenn Adler, Thomas Callaghy, and Nicolas van de Walle for assistance in categorizing the more problematic cases in Africa. Mark Hayward provided advice on methodological issues. James Mahoney and two anonymous readers commented extensively on the manuscript. This led to a number of improvements in the original draft.

Despite the long-held belief that past experience with colonialism has a deleterious effect on a country's prospects for democracy, colonial legacies have not received substantial attention in the latest discussions of democratization. Perhaps this is due to the eclipse of dependency theory and its far too pessimistic prognosis for postcolonial countries. However, given the prominence of a number of factors associated with colonialism in contemporary explanations of why democracies fail, we believe that colonial legacies have been neglected in the most recent literature.

The most recent studies to take up the issue of colonialism's legacy in a systematic fashion (i.e., Hadenius, 1992; Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens, 1992; Lipset, Seong, and Torres, 1993) are now a decade old. Because of this, they did not take full account of the experience of the so-called third wave of democratization, nor were they able to study these issues making use of the improvements in data and methods of large-*n* analysis of the last decade. Thus one of our purposes will be to revisit those issues using improved data and new techniques for analyzing them.

The most recent large-*n* studies on colonialism suggest that its legacies might be diminishing. These studies also made a number of other observations that changed our understanding of the legacies of colonialism. First, many of them suggested that certain colonial powers had prepared their dependencies for democracy better than others, complicating the previous picture of colonialism as something that had a blanket negative legacy for democracy. Second, they also suggested, again contrary to earlier beliefs, that longer periods spent under colonial rule were positively correlated with successful postcolonial democracy.¹ We also intend to revisit and test these findings.

The large-*n* cross-national literature on democratic survival of the last decade (Gasiorowski, 1995; Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi, 1996; Power and Gasiorowski, 1997; Przeworski and Limongi, 1997; Gasiorowski and Power, 1998; Bernhard, Nordstrom, and Reenock, 2001) has not investigated issues of colonial legacy in great detail. At best, such studies have included a variable for British colonialism as a control in studies geared toward understanding the other dimensions of survival over a range of cases. Yet these studies have placed great stress on certain independent variables (notably level of development and social fragmentation) that are integral to a colonial legacy. In underplaying colonial legacy, we believe that these studies have omitted an important factor that helps to explain why some democracies survive and others perish. By making colonial legacy the central independent variable in this study, we will be able to determine whether colonialism continues to have an effect. We also will study colonialism in greater depth by disaggregating its effects into three components whose impact can be assessed individually. Specifically, we look at the relative contribution of economic development, social fragmentation, and the relationship between the state and civil society on the duration of post-colonial democracies.

We return to some of the classic questions raised, and not necessarily answered in a definitive fashion by earlier studies of colonialism's legacy for democracy. We test whether there is a general colonial legacy, whether certain colonial powers better prepared their former possessions for democracy, and whether time spent under colonial rule is really beneficial for post-colonial democratic prospects. In these

¹ We do not believe that we can claim that colonialism was beneficial for democracy. To do so would require the construction of a counterfactual that would demonstrate that the state of democracy in what is today the post-colonial world would be worse if there were no colonialism. We are in no position to do that. Our comparisons are between countries that experienced European overseas colonialism and those that did not. It is important to emphasize that discussion of the merits of a particular form of colonialism in this paper only addresses the issue in comparison to other forms of colonialism. Similarly, talk about the duration of colonial rule addresses only the merits of a short versus a long colonial experience.

investigations we also examine the effects of colonialism both as a whole and broken down into the individual components listed above.

We address these questions using an original dataset that includes 136 episodes of democracy from the period 1951–1995. We use event history techniques to test whether these factors have positive or negative effects on the *duration* of democracies.² In this regard, this study moves beyond previous large-*n* studies that have investigated colonial legacy using cross-sectional samples or panel studies.

Colonialism and Democracy

Our investigation focuses on Western overseas colonialism (at times we refer to it simply as “colonialism”). We define a Western overseas colony as a territory outside of Europe ruled by a European power. From this we additionally excluded the British settler colonies that enjoyed broad privileges of home rule.³ This definition also excludes from our consideration European internal colonies (the Habsburg, Russian, German, and Soviet empires, as well as British rule in Ireland). It also excludes all cases where the colonial power was non-Western (e.g., Japan, the Ottoman Empire). The way in which we categorized our cases is summarized in Figure 1.

We believe that there are good reasons to demarcate European overseas colonialism as a unique historical phenomenon that merits special study. First, both the mainstream literature on development and the radical critique of that literature (dependency and world systems theory) has treated these regions of the globe as different. In doing so, we follow one of the few points of agreement between these two contending views of global development. Second, European internal colonies did not experience modernity as an imposition in the same way that overseas colonies did. The overseas colonies were exposed to elements of modernity such as the state or capitalism by their conquest by the Europeans.⁴ In addition, other elements of the colonial conquest, such as the introduction of Christianity or European languages, were far more culturally foreign to what we call the European overseas colonies. In general the populations of the European internal colonies were more prepared for their colonial experience as they shared the developmental and cultural heritage of their colonizers to a much greater degree. This is even truer for British settler colonies which tended to be populated by bourgeois fragments (Australia being an obvious exception) for whom the developmental mode and culture of the ruling country was second nature.

The end of European overseas colonialism brought hopes that areas that had been subject to it would be able to assimilate the positive aspects of modernity, like democracy and development. This hope did not bear out. The literature suggests a multitude of reasons why colonialism turned out to be detrimental for democracy. For our purposes, we will divide them into three categories. Some of these relate to issues of development, others to social fragmentation, and others to the post-

² It is important to note that we are not investigating the impact of colonialism on whether countries make a transition to democracy or what level of democracy they have attained, but rather whether they survive once having made such a transition.

³ We considered whether to treat the three Spanish colonies of the Southern Cone as settler colonies. Consideration of this hypothesis in preliminary models suggested that the three Southern Cone states behave more like the rest of the Spanish patrimony than the British settler colonies. For that reason, we treat them as Spanish colonies.

⁴ Abernethy points out that European colonialism of the early modern period was the first form of empire in which globally dispersed territories were ruled from a remote center. Earlier and many later empires (including those we characterize as European internal colonialism) involved the imposition of rule on neighboring peoples and the creating of large geographically contiguous territories. He attributes this to the birth of modernity in the West (2000:8–9).



Key
 EIC – European Internal Colony
 BSC – British Settler Colony

Fig. 1. Codings of Colonial Legacies

colonial relationship between the state and civil society. These will be the components that we use to disaggregate the effects of a colonial legacy.

Colonialism has long been associated with underdevelopment. Given the strong correlation between higher levels of development and democratic stability (Przeworski and Limongi, 1997), it should then follow that on average post-colonial countries should have greater difficulties in maintaining democracy. This is because colonialism creates patterns of development that often leave countries highly dependent on exports from monocrop agriculture or resource-extractive industry. This has left many post-colonial economies vulnerable to volatile prices for primary goods on the world market (Furtado, 1965:193ff.; Robinson, 1979; Tomlinson, 1999:367). The resulting boom and bust cycles disrupt development. Given the well-demonstrated effect that negative growth has on the survival of democratic regimes, it also works to disrupt democratic survival (Gasiorowski, 1995; Bernhard, Nordstrom, and Reenock, 2001).

Second, colonialism has been associated with high levels of ethnic and religious fractionalization. This is because in many cases colonial powers drew territorial boundaries for administrative or military reasons. Diamond (1998) succinctly describes the effect of this in Africa: "Hence, some large ethnic groups were split between colonial states, while others with little in common, save in some instances a history of warfare and enmity, were drawn together into the new state boundaries." Given that ethnic fractionalization has been shown to complicate the establishment of stable democracy (Diamond, Linz, Lipset, 1995:42–43; Bernhard et al., 2001), post-colonial democracies, all things being equal, should have greater difficulty in maintaining democracy in the long term. In addition, if colonial rule was built upon status differentiation and economic stratification that was ethnically based, this further complicates the problem of social fragmentation in the post-colonial environment (Abernethy, 2000:365).

Last, there are a number of legacies of colonialism that have affected the relationship between the state and civil society. The most basic of these considers colonialism's effect on political actors, arguing that authoritarian rule by colonial powers left both elites and the population-at-large unprepared for democracy (Kasifir, 1983:34; Young and Turner, 1985:27; Diamond, 1988:6–7; Chirot, 1996:374–376; Brown, 1999:710). Others focus on the state, arguing that the structural legacies of colonial rule in combination with the homogenizing impulses of nationalist movements led to a strongly predatory state (Young, 1994:278–280; Abernethy, 2000:367).⁵

Some (Chirot, 1986:112–113, 117–118; Diamond, 1988:7; Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens, 1992:72; Chazan, Lewis, Mortimer, Rothschild, and Stedman, 1999:123–124) ground a civil society argument in terms of class actors. They argue that colonial economic development distorted the social structure in ways that (a) increased the power of classes that have been resistant to democracy while (b) weakening those classes whose struggles for political influence and incorporation have been historically associated with the establishment of democracy. With regard to the first, cooperation with the colonial powers left traditional ruling classes in place at the moment of national liberation.⁶ And with regard to the second, dependent development left post-colonial countries with a smaller bourgeoisie and a smaller working class (due to the more capital-intensive nature

⁵ For instance, Young argues that the colonial state that developed in Africa was particularly authoritarian in structure and that this state tradition carried over into post-colonial times. Among the reasons he cites are: (1) the scramble for colonies in Africa in the period after 1875 required European colonizers to rapidly demonstrate their control, (2) the costs of the colonial project necessitated rapid extraction of resources to finance it, and (3) European expansion in Africa coincided with both the availability of modern (and thus brutal and rapid) means to establish political control and the advent of modern theories of "scientific" racism.

⁶ See, for instance, Moore on decolonization in India (1966:371).

of production). It is the rise of political actors associated with these social classes that historically has led to the emergence of a civil society and a public space in other polities. Another variation of this argument notes how post-colonial economies geared toward the export of agricultural or primary products are predicated on forms of production, for example, plantations or enclaves devoted to extraction of natural resources, which are labor repressive in Moore's sense.⁷ Such patterns of development also impede the emergence of an expansive and active civil society because they are predicated on restrictive upper-class alliances cemented by the power of a prerogative and repressive state.

Another factor that is directly pertinent to the state/civil society argument revolves around continued responsiveness of the state to outside influences. In such explanations the state (or at least elements within it) may become autonomous from and unresponsive to actors and interests in civil society due to the dependence of the national economy on foreign actors. This is possible because, despite the end of direct foreign political control, foreign capital often continues to play an important role in the economy. Not only can a prerogative state defend external interests at the expense of domestic actors, it can also lead to the overthrow of democracy when democratization or particular outcomes of the democratic process threaten the interests of foreign capital. This can also occur when domestic political developments are perceived as being antithetic to the security interests of regional hegemony (Rueschemeyer et al., 1992:261–262).

In conclusion, the vast preponderance of studies that take up the subject of the relationship between colonialism and democracy argue that its effects were negative.⁸ They offer an array of evidence in support of this and specify several different, not necessarily exclusive, mechanisms for why this is so. In the next section we turn away from a general consideration of colonialism and discuss whether specific European colonizers have an effect on a former possession's prospects for democracy.

Colonizers and Their Legacies

While many have argued that colonialism has a negative impact on democracy, there is also a sense that the legacies of individual colonial powers have unique effects on the democratic potential of their former colonies. Much of this discussion has contrasted the British legacy with that of other colonial powers. These comparisons have led many to argue that past association with Britain, as opposed to other colonial powers, is more conducive to democracy (Blondel, 1972:169; Huntington, 1984:206; Lipset, Seong, and Torres, 1993:169). The evidence gathered in support of this proposition has been substantial. Weiner (1987:19–20) noted that since World War II all continuous post-colonial democracies were former British colonies. Some large-*n* studies have also found positive correlation between British colonial legacies and democracy (Bollen and Jackman, 1985; Lipset et al., 1993). Diamond (1988), writing on Africa, also asserts that the French colonial legacy has a somewhat less pronounced positive effect as well.⁹ However, anyone who has studied British colonialism in specific times and places (especially

⁷ See Young (1994:178–179) for a discussion of this in Africa.

⁸ However, evidence from large-*n* studies has not consistently found this. Bollen (1983) showed a correlation between peripheral (e.g., dependent) status in the world economy and authoritarian political systems without singling out the causal mechanism. However, subsequent work, including his own, has not replicated this finding. Also see Muller (1985).

⁹ Three former British colonies have had substantial success with democracy—Botswana, Gambia (which broke down in 1994 after twenty-plus years of democracy), and Mauritius. Whereas the record in Francophone Africa has been less distinguished, Diamond takes the argument even further. He suggests that French and British cultural transfer has an effect where democracy has broken down, claiming that pressure to restore democratic rule is often stronger in former French and British colonies.

in Africa and the Middle East) can attest to the less than universal nature of these generalizations. Such skepticism is even more warranted with regard to French colonialism.

A number of reasons have been offered to explain British colonialism's positive legacy. First, certain observers have noted that the record of parliamentary democracy has been superior to that of presidential democracy in the post-colonial world, and that the adoption of parliamentarism has been a product of British colonialism (Wiseman, 1990:21).¹⁰ However, in certain areas, especially Africa, many former British possessions have rejected this tradition and opted for presidentialism. Second, others have argued that the British better prepared their colonies for democracy by holding democratic elections for local self-governing bodies, especially parliaments that were granted extensive powers of home-rule in the run-up to independence (Weiner, 1965:204, 1987:19; Lipset et al., 1993:168; Diamond, 1998:8; Abernethy, 2000:367). Related to this observation concerning elections is the contention that, following the loss of a substantial part of their North American empire, the British, unlike other colonial powers, approached contentious issues in their possessions with a greater willingness to pursue reform and compromise with colonial subjects (Smith, 1978:75; Hadenius, 1992:129).

Similar arguments have been made with regard to the French. In comparison with all other colonial powers in Africa, they gave their subjects greater opportunity to express themselves through the vote in the run-up to independence (Morgenthau, 1964; Zolberg, 1966). Collier (1982), however, throws doubt on whether this promoted democracy. She argues that, in combination with other aspects of French colonialism, it helped to produce one-party regimes after independence. Some point to an additional electoral legacy of French colonialism as a net positive in this regard. During the Fourth Republic, colonies sent delegates to the *Assemblée Nationale*. However, Abernethy (2000:368) maintains that the election of local territorial assemblies was more important than this sort of symbolic representation in the metropole.

Third, others have argued that during the colonial period the British created superior infrastructure for independence and democracy.¹¹ Here more developed systems of education, transportation, and communication; greater reliance on rule of law; and more extensive and better trained bureaucracies relying on local personnel (except at the highest levels) have been cited (von der Mehden, 1964:23–24; Moore, 1966:354; Dahl, 1971:171; Weiner, 1987:19; Hadenius, 1992:129–130; Diamond, 1998:9; Brown, 1999:705–706; Abernethy, 2000:406).¹²

Fourth, it has been argued that patterns of colonial administration left independent states with different institutional legacies. For instance, in Africa the British relied on a pattern of “indirect rule,” the French—more “direct rule,” the Belgians—an economically focused “paternalism,” and the Portuguese—a sharply oppressive “assimilationist” approach (Conteh-Morgan, 1997:39–44). Collier (1982:101) argues that while neither Britain nor France produced conditions

¹⁰ Mainwaring and Shugart (1997:457–458) reverse the causal direction of this, arguing that British colonialism is one in a series of contingent background factors that explain the relative success of parliamentarism in promoting democracy in developing countries.

¹¹ The figures compiled by von der Mehden do not show a vast difference between British and other colonies with respect to infrastructure; though on balance the British did better than other European colonizers. While British colonies often surpassed others in terms of post-secondary education, railroads, roads, or newspaper circulation, the differences are not always large, particularly in Africa or in comparison to the French (1964:16–17). Collier's comparisons in Africa present a very similar picture to that of von der Mehden. One interesting aspect that she adds to this discussion is that the British tended to include more ethnic groups in the territories that they demarcated than the French (1982:72). Others though, argue that the boundaries drawn by the colonizer in French-speaking Africa were particularly insensitive to local conditions (Herbst, 2000:25).

¹² Weiner explains the success of former British colonies as a combination of reasons two and three above. He labels them “tutelary democracy.”

conducive for democracy in Africa, it was the British pattern of indirect rule that helps to account for the marginally better performance in sustaining multiparty rule in the aftermath of independence. Bollen and Jackman (1985:34) also argue that indirect rule helps to explain the democratic success of former British possessions in general.¹³ A strong dissenting voice on this point is Herbst, who argues that British adherence to indirect rule is overstated and that differences between French and British rule in Africa may have been less pronounced than others have argued (2000:81–82).

More recently Rueschemeyer et al. have presented a novel thesis which may well require us to reevaluate how we think about this issue. They argue:

The effects of British colonialism ... deviated from this negative pattern in so far as the colonial presence prevented the dominant classes from using the state apparatus to repress the emerging organizations of subordinate classes. Instead it allowed for the gradual emergence of a stronger civil society, capable of sustaining democracy after independence. (1992:9)

This explanation pinpoints the British colonial experience as more conducive to democracy because it left a stronger civil society, one that counterbalanced the power of the state and allowed for the incorporation of subordinate classes into a democratic framework.¹⁴ While Rueschemeyer et al. brought the issue of the relationship between state and civil society to the fore in the understanding of what made the legacy of British colonialism different, it is important to note that some of the other explanations for relative British success discussed above fit nicely into such a framework.¹⁵

Thus, by Rueschemeyer et al.'s account it is the prerogative use of the state by rulers to suppress their subordinates either during or after colonial rule that accounts for the poorer record of post-colonial democracy outside of the former British Empire. The relatively positive legacy of British colonialism was caused by the incorporation of lower-class interests into the polity by denying the upper classes the means to repress and exclude them. It needs to be stressed that this was not a design to assist the colonial lower classes but rather to increase Britain's control over its colonies. The by-product of this centralization was a pattern of social organization that was more capable of limiting prerogative state power and thus more conducive to success.

Nevertheless, large-*n* tests from the 1980s did not always find that British colonialism encouraged democracy. Bollen and Jackman (1985) found that being a former British colony was correlated with a higher level of democracy in both 1960

¹³ However, indirect rule was not the only form of domination in the British Empire. There was direct-rule in most of India, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Singapore, Gibraltar, and Cyprus; self-governing dominions in the settler colonies; various forms of indirect rule in the remainder of India, as well as Malaya and Africa; and an "informal empire" through League of Nations' Mandates in the Middle East. See Cell (1999:236–239) and Balfour-Paul (1999:497–498).

¹⁴ The crucial juncture in their argument, based on a comparison of British colonies and former Spanish colonies in Central America and the Caribbean, came in the 1930s when the Great Depression led to an upsurge in labor mobilization in many countries. Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens point to British control of the state as the key variable. Whereas ruling oligarchies and/or the military elite used the power of the state to suppress popular protest in most of the former Spanish colonies, British control of the colonial state in the Caribbean meant that the use of repression was much more moderate. While protests were often met with force in British colonies, the organizations behind them were not physically liquidated. Further, the British reacted to such situations by reforms that encouraged greater local participation in structures of self-government. As a result, the 1930s saw a flowering of labor movements and associated political parties in much of the British Caribbean (Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens, 1992:231–232, 236–237).

¹⁵ Collier (1982) explores similar themes in her discussion of how British colonialism left more heterogeneous patterns of society and elite configurations in Africa. However, her study is more geared toward explaining the emergence of different patterns of authoritarianism than democratic survival. In addition, a number of the factors highlighted in our discussion above—more rational bureaucratic administration, rule of law, and a history of compromise between the colonial administration and local actors—fall within such a framework.

and 1965. Lipset et al. (1993:160) reproduced this finding for 1975, but did not find former British colonial status to be significant in either 1980 or 1985. Hadenius, using a sample of 132 developing countries in 1988, initially found a positive correlation between former British colonies and level of democracy (and a negative one for former French colonies). However, when he controlled for level of development and percentage of Protestants in the population, the effects disappeared (1992:130–131).

How can the discrepancy between the earlier studies and the later ones be explained? It may be that the legacy of British colonialism diminished as nations began to rule themselves. It could also be the product of different samples used in each subsequent study. Bollen and Jackman end their study in 1965 before the overt failure of democracy in many former British possessions in Africa, whereas the later sample used by Lipset, Seong, and Torres picks up this development. It is also possible that Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens' understanding of the British legacy may explain why the newer studies do not reproduce the findings of the older ones. The newer large-*n* studies have coded their data in a way that may not let them get at the difference between the British and other colonial legacies. If Rueschemeyer et al. are correct, democracies with a British colonial legacy should behave more like the established democracies in the sample. Coding for past British colonial status thus may not detect any difference. To ensure that that is not the case we test British versus other colonial legacies in the context of democratic survival. It could be that a British colonial legacy gives no special advantage (e.g., they behave like democracies without a colonial past) but that other colonial legacies present strong disadvantages for democracy. This seems plausible in that Bollen and Jackman and Lipset, Seong, and Torres found a negative correlation between a French colonial legacy and democracy in 1960, 1980, and 1985.¹⁶

Should this study also fail to show any significance for a British colonial past, it might indicate that Rueschemeyer et al.'s generalizations concerning British colonialism may be too sweeping. Their assertion may also reflect a selection bias in that their assessment of the effects of British colonialism is based on the two regions that have the best track record in terms of democracy in the former empire, the settler colonies and the Caribbean. In contrast, in Africa, British colonialism was not so fortuitous for the cultivation of civil society. Young argues that European colonialism in Africa embodied a "denial" of civil society. The imposition of the European notion of Africans as "savage," "child-like," and incapable of "civilized behavior" justified both the limitation of access to public space and the limitation of participation in civic initiatives to white settlers. The enforcement of this cultural construct by means of the colonial state meant that civil society did not begin to emerge in Africa until the interwar era (Young, 1994:ch. 7).

Alternately, some have argued that the poor track record of former British colonies in Africa is a product of the shorter duration of colonial rule there. Huntington (1984:206) and, later, Diamond (1988:6) contrast this with the experience of countries like India and Jamaica where long-term British rule is posited to have implanted democratic values. Von der Mehden (1964) presents an alternate explanation of why this is so. He argues that long-term colonial status resulted in the creation of a superior civil service, especially at the senior level, and in the adoption of the colonial language as a *lingua franca* for the new colonial elite. Testing the length of rule hypothesis, Hadenius (1992:133) found a positive correlation between level of democracy in 1988 and length of colonial rule for British and French colonies. When a number of colonial powers whose legacy is not usually associated with democracy (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, and Ottoman) were added to the sample the correlation disappeared. When Hadenius

¹⁶ However, Bollen and Jackman did not show any statistical correlation for this variable in 1965, and Lipset, Seong, and Torres showed a positive correlation for this variable in 1975.

(1992:134) added a number of control variables and performed a multivariate regression, length continued to be significant and positive for the British, French, Dutch, Belgian, and American former colonies.

The issues left unresolved by the discussion of the legacies of the individual colonial powers are nicely summarized by Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens:

There are two main weaknesses in the recent literature on the relationship between colonialism and democracy, namely the lack of systematic comparison of British to other colonialisms, and the explanation of variation within British colonialism with length of colonization. (1992:266)

In this paper we address these issues directly, but in a new way. Rather than considering colonialism's effect on a level of democracy at specific points in time, this paper is the first to comprehensively look at the ensemble of questions about colonialism in the context of survival over an extended period of time. Further, we hope to advance the understanding of different colonial legacies by disaggregating each into its component parts, as discussed in more detail below.

Disaggregating Colonialism's Effects: Expectations about Colonial Legacies

The purpose of this paper is to consider the legacies of colonialism on democratic survival. To do this we make two sets of comparisons. First we compare former Western overseas colonies to other democracies to understand if colonialism has a general legacy. Second, we compare the former colonies of the major Western colonial powers to each other to understand if different national forms of colonialism have different legacies for democracy. Both of these legacies, the general and the country specific, may have lasting implications for the survival of democratic regimes.

Two of the dimensions that we have identified as central to colonial legacies have received substantial attention in the literature as key factors affecting democratic survival generally. Specifically, lower levels of development and higher levels of social fragmentation have been linked to increased rates of breakdown among democratic regimes. The third dimension of colonial legacies, the relationship between the state and civil society, should also have ramifications for democratic survival. This third aspect subsumes a number of factors discussed above, including the prerogative state left over by some forms of colonialism, the relatively superior state capacity (common language, rational bureaucracy, infrastructure) left over by other forms of colonialism, and how the practices of different forms of colonialism affected the degree to which an autonomous civil society emerged in specific contexts. The state/civil society dimension is more difficult to isolate and thus has not figured in recent large-*n* studies. We shall include this dimension in our study in order to assess the impact of colonial legacies, both from a general perspective and with regard to specific colonial powers, in a more refined fashion.

Colonialism in General

We are interested in whether the experience of being a colony, independent of the colonial power, has a negative impact on democratic survival. We expect that a colonial legacy will have a negative impact on its survival:

H1: *Former Western overseas colonies should experience shorter episodes of democracy compared with democracies that were not subject to Western overseas colonialism.*

To test many of the hypotheses in this paper we run two models, one that tests for the effects of colonialism holistically (where we omit the variables for level of

development, ethnic and religious fragmentation) and another where we control for economic development and social fragmentation to isolate the impact of post-colonial state/civil society relationships on survival. In the case of hypothesis 1, we expect that the introduction of these controls will not negate the legacy of colonialism because of its impact on the state/civil society relationship.

Different Colonial Powers

To address the issues left unresolved regarding the legacies of specific colonial powers and the issue of the impact of the duration of colonial rule, we explore several additional hypotheses. First, we attempt to determine whether a legacy of British rule increases a post-colonial democracy's chances of survival. If this is so, we expect:

H2: *Former overseas colonies with a British colonial history should experience longer episodes of democracy compared with all other former Western overseas colonies.*

In addition, we expect that when we control for economic development and social fragmentation, we will find a positive legacy for British rule, establishing that the British left their colonies with a more positive legacy with regard to the relationship between the state and civil society.

We also test Diamond's contention that French colonial rule also has a positive effect on post-colonial prospects for democracy. If he is correct, we expect:

H3: *Former overseas colonies with a French colonial history should experience longer episodes of democracy compared with all other former Western overseas colonies except the British.*

When we control for economic development and social fragmentation, if Diamond's thesis holds for the state/civil society dimension, we expect that the French colonial legacy will still have a positive impact on survival.

An additional expectation predicted by the literature is that a longer period spent under colonial rule better prepares a country for democracy than a shorter period. This may have an important differential effect on the legacy of colonial rule, both in general and for specific colonizers. If this is the case, we expect that longer periods of colonial rule will have a positive effect on democratic survival.

H4: *Former Western overseas colonies that spent longer periods of time under colonialism should experience longer episodes of democracy than those who spent briefer periods under colonial rule.*

We will test this hypothesis for former colonies in general, as well as former British colonies.

Last, a number of observers have posited that conditions of colonialism in Africa were harsher—the state was more predatory, civil society less developed, and the racism more pernicious—and that this has contributed to more frequent breakdowns of democracy there. If this is the case, we expect:

H5: *All former colonies in Africa should experience shorter periods of democracy than all other Western overseas colonies.*

In the case of a significant positive finding, we also test whether this is the product of underdevelopment, social fragmentation, and/or the relationship of the state to civil society.

Research Design

Our hypotheses are structured to gauge the effects of a colonial legacy on the survival of post-colonial democracies. This provides a better test of whether colonialism is significant for a country's democratic prospects than cross-sectional or panel studies. Tests performed on one year or a sample of years provide only a static picture of a country's regime history, omitting substantial information on their path of political development.

We use continuous-time event history methods to model this process by estimating the effects of independent variables on the *hazard rate*,¹⁷ or "the instantaneous probability that episodes in the interval $[t, t + \Delta t]$ are terminating provided that the event has not occurred before the beginning of the interval" (Blossfeld, Hamerle, and Mayer, 1989:31). This technique reveals the impact that each independent variable has on the risk that a democratic regime faces in surviving. Therefore, with this method we can learn precisely how much more "at risk" a democracy was or is due to its specific colonial legacy.¹⁸

This multivariate framework is also important for our purposes because it allows us to investigate the contribution of each of the three dimensions of a colonial legacy while controlling for the presence of the others. To disentangle the effects of these individual dimensions we include direct measures of economic development and social fragmentation along with dummy variables to capture the residual effects of colonial legacy. In certain models, we treat colonialism holistically and thus omit the economic development and social fragmentation variables. In others we include them to isolate the effect of the relationship between the state and civil society on democratic survival.¹⁹

Data and Measurement²⁰

Our unit of analysis is the democratic episode, where "episode" represents a distinct period of democracy in a country's history. We define as democratic any regime that meets Dahl's (1971) minimum criteria for polyarchy, specifically those that permit a high level of contestation with extensive participation by the adult population. We also paid careful attention to questions of sovereignty, not including many cases where, despite competitive elections, full sovereignty was not formally achieved. We also excluded from our set of democracies countries in which internal wars and extensive civil disturbances were contemporary to elections. We used a number of sources in selecting our cases including case histories, *Polity III* (Jagers

¹⁷ We estimated models with a Weibull form because much of the literature suggests there may be a consolidation effect that encourages democratic survival as a democracy ages. As a result, this specification of the hazard rate allows us to test whether the base hazard rate varies over time. This particular form assumes that if the rate does vary over time it will do so by either monotonically increasing or decreasing. Duration dependence refers to the phenomenon of a hazard rate varying over time. If $p < 1$, the dependent variable exhibits negative duration dependence, which suggests that the hazard rate is decreasing over time, suggesting that democracies will be more likely to survive the longer they live. Alternatively, when $p > 1$ there is positive duration dependence, which suggests that the hazard rate is increasing over time, suggesting that democracies will face more and more difficult challenges to survival. When $p = 1$ there is no duration dependence and "older" democracies are equally at risk of breaking down compared with "newer" democracies. The coefficients in the models are estimated using maximum likelihood techniques.

¹⁸ This technique does not allow us to consider cases where a colonial legacy is a factor in preventing countries from ever making a transition to democracy.

¹⁹ This dimension of the colonial legacy is drawn very broadly and is intended to capture a large number of factors that affect the relationship between the state and society. It is possible that colonialism may have had other systematic effects on democratic survival not captured in our discussion and thus not modeled in the three-legacy design we use here. If this were the case, controlling for fragmentation and development might not fully isolate this dimension. However, we did not find candidates for other systematic cross-national elements in the literature on colonial legacy that might serve as additional independent variables for a study of this nature. Enumeration of such factors and inclusion of them into our models, if they exist, would be a step forward in future research.

²⁰ We take parts of the discussion of our operationalizations directly from Bernhard et al. (2001).

and Gurr, 1995), the *Political Regime Change Dataset* (Gasiorowski, 1996), *Freedom in the World* (Freedom House), the *Political Handbook of the World*, and *Classifying Political Regimes* (Alvarez, Cheibub, Limongi, and Przeworski, 1997). The cases and the years of their duration are included in the Appendix.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the duration (in years) of a country's democratic episode(s). Each individual episode of democracy is coded independently. We have used a truncated and updated version of our (Bernhard et al., 2001) dataset that includes all new democracies created in the years 1919–1995. In this study we use only the data from the period 1951–1995. We begin in 1951 because our main independent variable—colonial legacies—is confined to this period and reliable data for level of development (a key independent variable) are limited to this period. Coding of each individual case begins with either a transition to democracy or left censorship for those countries that attained minimal levels of democracy prior to 1951.²¹ An episode ends with either a democratic breakdown or right censoring. Each episode comprises multiple observations (except those episodes that last for only one year) that correspond to country-years. This allows us to incorporate time-varying covariates and allows our independent variables to change from year to year. The subset that we utilized contains 2090 country-year cases, within 136 episodes of democracy and 41 cases of breakdown.

Independent Variables

Our main independent variables are a series of dummy variables that capture various colonial legacies. We also collected information on the length of time spent under colonial rule from various sources including the CIA's *World Fact Book*, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the Library of Congress *Area Handbook Series*, and various country-specific sources. We include several additional variables to control for factors that have been associated with democratic breakdown in the literature. Our economic data come from Easterly and Yu (2001). We collected data on party distributions within the legislature and executive-legislative relations from various sources, including: *The Political Handbook of the World*, the CIA's *World Fact Book*, *The Journal of Democracy*, *The International Almanac of Electoral History* (Mackie and Rose, 1982), *Electoral Studies*, the *Encyclopedia Electoral Latinoamericano y del Caribe* (Nohlen, 1993), secondary accounts, statistical annuals, and consultations with specialists. We utilized data on religious and ethnic fractionalization from the Cultural Composition of Interstate System Members, Correlates of War project (Singer, 1997) that we supplemented by a number of statistical annuals.

a. Colonial Legacy

To assess the effect of colonialism's legacy on democratic survival we coded several dummy variables to reflect a country's colonial past. First we coded a dummy variable to designate whether a country had a Western overseas colonial legacy, regardless of the colonial power. To test our hypotheses about the impact of specific colonial legacies, we coded separate dummy variables for each of the major Western colonial powers that had overseas colonies. We produced separate dummy variables for each of the following colonial powers: Britain, France, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the United States (see Figure 1 for the specific

²¹ For the 27 cases that initiated their episodes prior to 1951 we code their count variable in the data matrix, beginning not at one, but at the relevant number of years that have passed since the beginning of our observation period to account for this left censoring (see Guo, 1993).

codings).²² Finally, to test for Africa-specific effects of colonialism, we coded a dummy variable designating all former colonies on that continent.

b. Time Spent under Colonial Rule

In order to test the various contentions concerning the length of colonial rule and success with democracy we constructed a measure of time spent under colonial rule. Whereas the end of colonial rule was usually quite simple to determine, the beginnings of colonial rule are much harder to pinpoint. We considered a territory to be subject to colonial rule once the European power in question was able to establish control over the vast preponderance of territory in the colony. In cases where there was more than one colonial power in the history of a territory, we attributed colonial legacy to the last power that ruled for fifty years or more.²³ We did this because we felt that the last colonial legacy was, with high probability, the most relevant if it was in place for two or more generations.²⁴

c. Level of Development

In models where we incorporate level of development we used real GDP per capita in 1985 dollars (Easterly and Yu, 2001).

d. Religious and Ethnic Fractionalization

Since we expect that higher levels of ethnic and religious diversity would complicate the process of establishing and maintaining democracy, we used Rae and Taylor's (1970) fractionalization index to capture this dimension. This index produces the probability that two randomly selected persons from one country will not belong to the same social group.²⁵ We calculated this index for both religion and ethnicity in each country. This data was, however, only available by decade and therefore is constant throughout each ten-year period (Singer, 1997, supplemented by statistical annuals).

e. Economic Performance

Given the consistent finding in the literature that economic contraction increases the chances of democratic breakdown, we controlled for this factor. We used the annual change in real GDP per capita for each case, measured as the proportion of change from the previous year in constant 1985 units (Easterly and Yu, 2001).

f. Macro-institutional Structure

In order to control for the possible deleterious effect of presidential systems on breakdown (Linz, 1994; Stepan and Skach, 1994; Przeworski et al., 1996) we included a dichotomous variable for presidentialism (Presidential = 1, and Other = 0). Systems were classified, following Sartori's definition, as *Presidential*,

²² The simplified coding we use here does not capture every nuance of the varieties of colonial status. There are a number of countries that were both colonizers and colonies, e.g., Denmark was a European internal colony under Sweden and a colonizer in the case of Greenland. Three former British colonies in turn acquired modest colonial possessions (e.g., the U.S. in the Philippines, Australia in Papua New Guinea, and South Africa in Namibia). Papua New Guinea and Namibia are classified as having a British legacy despite their transfer to Australia and South Africa. Vanuatu, which was a British-French condominium, has also been classified as a former British colony.

²³ For example, Sri Lanka experienced periods of Dutch and Portuguese colonial rule until Britain took control in 1796. In this case Sri Lanka is treated as spending 152 years (until 1948) under British rule. In the case of the Dominican Republic, Spanish rule ended in 1796 when the French took control of the whole island. In the period from 1796 to 1865 it moved from French, back to Spanish, then Haitian, and finally back to Spanish control again before achieving independence. None of these revolving occupations lasted longer than 22 years. Thus in this case we coded the Dominican Republic as being under Spanish rule for 301 years (1495–1796).

²⁴ We only use this variable in the models that we estimate on colonial subsets, since it is only coded for those episodes that had a colonial past.

²⁵ We used Rae and Taylor's (1970) measure of fractionalization given as, $F = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{n_i}{N}\right)\left(\frac{n_i-1}{N-1}\right)$, where F ranges from 0 to 1.

TABLE 1. Base Model of Democratic Survival

Variable	Base Model	
	Coefficient	Standard Error
Party Fractionalization	- 0.2108	0.0873
Presidentialism	- 0.2180	0.2761
Economic Performance	5.1813**	2.0714
Past Attempts at Democracy	- 0.0349	0.2792
Religious Fractionalization	- 1.5254**	0.6527
Ethnic Fractionalization	- 0.8309	0.7421
Economic Development	0.0006***	0.0002
Constant	3.3046***	0.8438
p (duration parameter)	1.37	
Log-Likelihood	- 71.6	
Number of Democratic Spells	122	
Number of Data Points (country-years as Democracy)	2000	

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$; two-tailed tests.

“if and only if, the head of state i) results from popular election, ii) during his or her pre-established tenure cannot be discharged by a parliamentary vote, and iii) heads or otherwise directs the governments that he or she appoints” (Sartori, 1994:84).

g. Party Fractionalization

In order to control for the possible negative effects that a highly fractionalized legislature could have for democratic survival (Sartori, 1976; Linz, 1978), we used the Laakso-Taagepera index (1979) to calculate the effective number of parties in the legislature.²⁶

h. Number of Past Democratic Experiences

Huntington (1991:47) has argued that past experience with democracy (even if it ended in breakdown) leads to political learning that promotes future success. Whereas we think it is equally possible that chronic breakdowns may be indicative of inherent instability, we nevertheless control for this contingency. To operationalize this potential “democratic learning” effect, we coded the total number of past democratic episodes that a country had prior to, but not including, the current episode.

i. Years Since Independence

In certain models it was necessary to create a variable measuring the number of years since the independence of a former colony. This was created by subtracting the year of independence from the year of the observation in each time series. Dates of independence were collected from *The Political Handbook of the World*.

Results

We present our base model in Table 1.²⁷ This model confirms the general expectations of the literature regarding economic performance, religious fractio-

²⁶ Where the effective number of parties, $EP = 1 / \sum_{i=1}^n P_i^2$, where P_i is the share of seats won by the i th party. We treated any “other” categories as Taagepera (1997) recommends. In cases of countries with bicameral parliaments we calculated this variable on the basis of the lower house. For the justification of our choice of Laakso-Taagepera see Bernhard et al. (2001) for review.

²⁷ All models report failure-time coefficients. A positive sign on a coefficient suggests that as a given independent variable increases, democratic survival is enhanced.

TABLE 2. Models Incorporating Effect of General Colonial Legacy on Democratic Survival

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 2</i>		<i>Model 3</i>	
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Std Error</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Std Error</i>
Party Fractionalization	0.1306	0.1324	- 0.0516	0.0659
Presidentialism	- 0.1739	0.3890	- 0.2858	0.2643
Economic Performance	6.8089***	2.0768	4.6751***	1.8123
Past Attempts at Democracy	- 0.1719	0.3909	0.0513	0.2288
Religious Fractionalization	—	—	- 1.6932***	0.5193
Ethnic Fractionalization	—	—	- 1.4055*	0.6191
Economic Development	—	—	0.0004***	0.0001
European Colonial Powers	16.7965***	1.5930	8.7339***	1.2219
European Internal Colonies	16.6767***	1.6238	8.8286***	1.2565
British Settler Colonies	17.0773***	1.6282	8.7382***	1.3330
Other	- 0.2169	0.5985	- 1.8557***	0.4132
Constant	3.1080***	0.3954	4.1198***	0.7141
<i>p</i> (<i>duration parameter</i>)	1.00		1.58	
Log-Likelihood	- 91.39		- 62.31	
Number of Democratic Spells	123		122	
Number of Data Points (country-years as Democracy)	2012		2000	

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$; two-tailed tests.

nalization, and economic development. In fact, in nearly all of the models that we present in this paper higher levels of economic development, positive economic performance, and lower levels of religious diversity enhanced a democracy's prospects for survival. The ethnic fractionalization variable did not obtain significance in our base model. However, in nearly every other model in which we control for colonial legacy we find that higher ethnic fractionalization reduces the chances that a democracy will survive. We also find that fragmented legislatures and presidentialism generally do not affect the occurrence of breakdown.

The models reported in Table 2 test the proposition that a colonial legacy is harmful to democratic survival. We use all Western overseas colonies as the base category against which we compare the effects of other country classifications on survival. As the positive signs on almost all the other classifications in Model 2 suggest, the vast majority of other democracies significantly outperform countries with Western colonial legacies. The exception to this is the "other" category which has a negative coefficient but is not significant.²⁸ These results suggest that former colonies, independent of their specific colonial power, are less likely to endure than Western colonial powers, European internal colonies, and British settler colonies.

Treating colonial legacy as a single dummy variable, however, obscures the distinct effects of colonialism's three dimensions. To isolate the state and civil society dimension we ran Model 3 controlling for development and social fragmentation. With the controls in the model, colonialism continues to have a deleterious effect. Again all of the other country classifications, except the residual "other" category, out-perform former Western overseas colonies. These results suggest that in addition to the negative legacies that a colonial past has upon a country's economic development and social fragmentation, there is also a negative legacy on the

²⁸ The "Other" category includes Asian colonial powers, independent states, Asian colonies and Burundi (which has an ambiguous colonial legacy according to our coding rules). See Figure 1 for specific countries.

relationship between the state and civil society. These results confirm the widely held belief that colonial legacies have deleterious effects upon democratic survival in a number of ways.

The results above, however, become more nuanced when we examine the legacies of different colonial powers. Table 3 reports the results for our tests comparing countries with British and French colonial legacies to other democracies. In Model 4, we exclude British colonies as the comparison group to gauge the legacy of British colonialism for democratic survival.

British colonies making the transition to democracy are more likely to endure than their French or Dutch counterparts.²⁹ Former British colonies were not, however, any different from former Portuguese or U.S. colonies.³⁰ The former British colonies performed worse than two other groups in our model. As expected, British colonies were less likely to endure than countries without a legacy of Western overseas colonialism (the colonial powers, as well as both European internal and British settler colonies). The most interesting result produced by this model was that former British colonies were more likely to experience a democratic breakdown than Spanish colonies. This is a finding only hinted at in the previous literature on democracy.³¹

To determine whether there is any residual effect of British colonialism beyond underdevelopment and social fragmentation we controlled for both in Model 5. With these controls isolating the state and civil society dimension, we observe that while British colonies are still more likely to endure than French or Dutch, they now outlast the Portuguese and the Spanish. Controlling for the negative legacies of underdevelopment and social fragmentation indicates that there is something else about the British colonial legacy that contributes to democratic survival. *Ceteris paribus*, British colonies have the best rates of survival when compared against other Western overseas colonial legacies. This suggests that the legacy that the British left on the state and civil society in their former colonies has had beneficial effects for democratic regimes compared to other colonial legacies.³²

Model 6 in Table 3 compares the French colonial legacy to those of other colonizers. In this analysis, we use the French colonies as the comparison group, allowing us to compare their legacy both to other colonies and to other nations. The results in Model 6 suggest that the dependencies of almost every other power (Britain, Spain, Portugal, and the U.S.) as well as all other categories of democracy in our dataset are more likely to endure compared to former French colonies. Only former Dutch colonies performed no differently from the French in our model.

²⁹ While there are only two Dutch colonies in the dataset, Indonesia and Suriname, they represent fifteen country-years.

³⁰ It is important to note, however, that the U.S. only had one colony in this dataset, the Philippines, but that this one case represents twenty-seven country-years.

³¹ Based on an analysis of the insaturation of democracies, Arat claims that the British have been “given too much credit.” She maintains that if we consider the number of total former colonies that have experimented with democracy (even if they broke down), the British record does not seem exceptionally good. Almost half of the countries with a British colonial past have never experimented with democracy. In comparison she points out that countries with a Spanish past have all virtually experimented with democracy, even if they have been less stable (1991:61).

³² Models 4 and 5 present some issues that require clarification. The unexpected findings concerning Spanish colonies make intuitive sense when thinking of colonialism as a legacy. The Spanish colonies of South and Central America attained independence much earlier than many of the other colonies studied herein. That they performed better in Model 4 is consistent with the idea that countries further removed from colonialism should be freer of its effects. To examine if this was the case, we ran an additional test, to see if the number of years since decolonization had an effect on the durability of democracy. We only ran this test on the subset of post-colonial democracies, because there is no sensible way to code the countries that were never colonies in terms of “years since decolonization.” The coefficient for the number of years since decolonization was positive, suggesting that as democracies were more removed from their colonial past they may indeed endure longer; however, the variable did not obtain significance.

TABLE 3. Models Incorporating Effects of Country-Specific Colonial Legacy on Democratic Survival

Variable	Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7	
	Coefficient	Std Error	Coefficient	Std Error	Coefficient	Std Error	Coefficient	Std Error
	<i>Comparisons against British Colonies</i>		<i>Comparisons against British Colonies Controlling for Development and Social Fragmentation</i>		<i>Comparisons against French Colonies</i>		<i>Comparisons against French Colonies Controlling for Development and Social Fragmentation</i>	
Party Fractionalization	0.0472	0.0998	-0.0108	0.0672	0.0472	0.0998	-0.0108	0.0667
Presidentialism	-0.5753	0.3744	0.0131	0.2189	-0.5753	0.3744	0.0131	0.2080
Economic Performance	5.6156***	1.6274	4.1310***	1.4427	5.6156***	1.6274	4.1310***	1.4529
Past Attempts at Democracy	-0.0542	0.3893	0.0937	0.2731	-0.0542	0.3893	0.0937	0.2725
Religious Fractionalization	—	—	-2.0828***	0.6887	—	—	-2.0828***	0.7165
Ethnic Fractionalization	—	—	-1.3152***	0.4575	—	—	-1.3152***	0.4681
Economic Development	—	—	0.0006***	0.0002	—	—	0.0006***	0.0002
British	—	—	—	—	1.1397***	0.4400	—	—
French	-1.1397***	0.4400	-0.7255**	0.2867	—	—	—	—
Spanish	0.9911**	0.4933	-1.2732***	0.5153	2.1308***	0.4518	-0.5477	0.6596
Dutch	-1.6738***	0.6067	-1.5353***	0.3599	-0.5341	0.6718	-0.8098	0.5012
Portuguese	0.2668	0.4274	-0.9515***	0.3573	1.4065***	0.3603	-0.2260	0.4461
United States	0.2932	0.3470	-0.2655	0.2684	1.4329***	0.3077	-0.4600	0.4022
European Colonial Powers	14.6260***	1.5973	6.3052***	1.2491	15.7657***	1.5926	7.0307***	1.4409
European Internal Colonies	14.5552***	1.6019	6.3774***	1.2276	15.6949***	1.6003	7.1029***	1.4027
British Settler Colonies	14.9664***	1.6155	6.0663***	1.4807	16.1062***	1.6062	6.7918***	1.6712
Other	-0.2696	0.5571	-2.0839***	0.3752	0.8701	0.6181	-1.3584***	0.4956
Constant	3.3412***	0.3569	4.0150***	0.6218	2.2014***	0.5406	3.2896***	0.7402
<i>p</i> (duration parameter)	1.19	1.96	1.96	1.19	1.19	1.96	1.96	1.19
Log-Likelihood	-82.86	-82.86	-82.86	-82.86	-82.86	-82.86	-82.86	-82.86
Number of Democratic Spells	123	123	123	123	123	123	123	123
Number of Observations (Country-years as Democracy)	2012	2000	2000	2012	2012	2000	2000	2012

****p* < 0.01; ***p* < 0.05; **p* < 0.10.

TABLE 4. Expected Duration in Years of Democracies with Different Colonial Legacies Across Levels of Economic Development

<i>Colonies</i>	<i>Level of Development</i>			
	<i>\$1,000</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>	<i>\$4,000</i>
British	28.1	52.0	96.4	178.7
French	13.6	25.2	46.7	86.5
Portuguese	10.8	20.1	37.2	69.0
Spanish	7.9	14.6	27.0	50.0
Dutch	6.0	11.2	20.8	38.5

Note: All continous control variables are set at their means, ordinal or dichotomous variables are set at their modal values. These values are as follows: Effective Number of Parties—3; Parliamentary System; Economic Performance—2% growth; Previous Attempts—0; Religious Fractionalization—.369; Ethnic Fractionalization—.349.

When we control for development and fragmentation in Model 7 only the former British colonies do better than the French. The variables for all other colonial legacies do not achieve significance (though the coefficients on the Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese are negative). The groups of democracies that did not experience Western overseas colonialism all do better than the French, except for those in the other category which do worse. Whereas the general effect of French colonialism on democratic survival seems poor, at least in the state/civil society dimension there is some indication that it may be better, certainly no worse, than that of most of the other former colonial powers (with the exception of the British).

The implications of these results to this point can also be illustrated by considering the expected duration of post-colonial democracies according to their colonial legacies. One benefit of using event history techniques is the ability to calculate the expected duration of a democratic episode given different independent variable values. Once the model has estimated the relationship between the explanatory factors and the hazard rates, one can simply fill in hypothetical values (within the range of the data) for each of the variables in the model and predict an expected duration for the episode under those given conditions.

Table 4 displays the expected duration for five specific colonial legacies across various levels of economic development. To estimate the differences in the expected durations of each of the colonial groups we set the independent variables to the values listed at the bottom of the table. We then varied the level of development across four values for each of the different colonial legacies.

The difference between the British and the other colonial legacies on survival is dramatic. The British colonial legacy is quite conducive to survival compared with the others. From the point of view of statistical significance, the performance of the other three is not different from that of the French. Still, based on the expected durations, the French do marginally better than the others, but still lag far behind the British with regard to encouraging survival. These results do not lend much support to Diamond's claim that the French legacy is similar to the British. Finally, it is important to recall that in generating this table, we have set the values for all independent variables other than development at their means, and then compared the effects of different colonial legacies across levels of development. Historically speaking, development diverges strongly both across and within the former empires. In this case, countries with a Spanish legacy seem at a disadvantage. However, in the real world, former Spanish possessions are, on balance, more socially homogeneous and economically developed than the former possessions of other colonizers. This is why in our holistic test of survival former Spanish colonies even outperform the British.

In Table 5 we test the contention that longer periods under colonial rule are better for a country's long-term democratic prospects than a short period. Because

TABLE 5. Models Capturing the Effects of Years under Colonial Rule on Democratic Survival for Specific Colonial Subsets

Variable	Model 8		Model 9		Model 10		Model 11	
	Coeff.	Standard Error	Coeff.	Standard Error	Coeff.	Standard Error	Coeff.	Standard Error
Party Fractionalization	0.0840	0.1031	-0.0161	0.0722	0.1951	0.1342	0.0810	0.0927
Presidentialism	-0.3079	0.3624	-0.2739	0.2800	0.4627	0.3832	0.6259***	0.1867
Economic Performance	7.8715***	2.5663	5.2778**	2.2534	4.6723**	2.3513	1.2367	1.7542
Past Attempts at Democracy	-0.2970	0.2870	0.0929	0.2959	-0.7309***	0.1832	-0.3296**	0.1537
Years Under Colonial Rule	0.0063***	0.0023	0.0003	0.0015	0.0127*	0.0066	0.0052*	0.0029
Religious Fractionalization	—	—	-1.7410**	0.6885	—	—	-2.0130***	0.5085
Ethnic Fractionalization	—	—	-1.4932**	0.7454	—	—	-0.8928*	0.5212
Economic Development	—	—	0.0004***	0.0002	—	—	0.0008***	0.0002
Constant	2.2648***	0.4508	4.0538***	1.0558	1.3357*	0.7489	2.5975***	0.7351
<i>p</i> (duration parameter)	1.08		1.48		1.50		3.10	
Log-Likelihood	-71.07		-55.21		-30.20		-13.61	
Number of Democratic Spells	81		80		41		40	
Number of Data Points (country-years as Democracy)	914		911		533		530	

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

it does not make sense to include countries that have no colonial legacy in a test of the effects of duration of colonial rule, these tests were performed only on the subset of postcolonial democracies. It has been posited that the differential success of former British colonies is a product of the length of rule, with those subject to British rule for longer periods of time having an advantage in terms of maintaining democracy. We performed these tests both on the complete subset of post-colonial democracies and on the subset of all former British colonies.

The results of Model 8 in Table 5 for all former colonies suggest that the greater the years spent under colonial rule, independent of the colonizer, the better the chances are for democratic survival. In Model 9 we introduce control variables for development and social fragmentation. With these controls, the length of colonial rule variable is no longer significant. The results are more consistent across models when we apply this test only to the former British colonies in our dataset. For former British possessions there is a positive association between years under colonial rule and democratic survival. This beneficial legacy holds for the subset of British colonies, both on its own (Model 10) and with controls for both development and social fragmentation included (Model 11). This result reinforces our earlier finding that the British colonial legacy has elements that partially mitigate the negative effects of underdevelopment and social fragmentation.³³

Last, we consider whether African colonies faced unique negative legacies that differentiate them from other post-colonial democracies. Specifically we test Young's (1994) argument that an African legacy was particularly damaging for democratic survival. To test for an "Africa effect," we compared African colonies against all other colonies. In Model 12 in Table 6 non-African colonies serve as the group to which African colonies and the other democracies are compared. The results suggest that African colonies are less likely to survive in comparison to all other colonies. This confirms that there is indeed an "Africa effect."

However, the Africa effect is no longer significant when controls for economic development and social fragmentation are added (Model 13). Our results provide no evidence that there is any unique colonial legacy with regard to the state/civil society relationship in Africa. In fact, it suggests that the essence of the Africa effect is the degree of underdevelopment and the extent to which European colonial powers carved out borders without regard for ethnicity or religion in their rush to partition the continent.

Conclusions

This study has both answered enduring questions about the nature of colonialism and its effect on democratic survival and further refined our understanding of colonialism's legacies by disaggregating it into its component parts. We found that a colonial past generally diminishes a democracy's prospects for survival. When we consider post-colonial democracies as an undifferentiated group, the negative legacy of colonialism seems to be a product of underdevelopment and higher levels of social fragmentation, and the relationship between the state and civil society.

Our study has also yielded important conclusions on the legacies of individual colonial powers. The advantages that the literature attributes to the British colonial legacy have been overstated in certain regards. Specifically, former Spanish colonies have performed better historically in terms of democratic survival. Still, British

³³ When we control for development and social fractionalization in this model, presidentialism becomes positive and significant. This is because among former British colonies presidentialism is concentrated in Africa. Among former British colonies, Africa is also the most socially fragmented and least economically developed region. We thus believe that finding is driven by the fact that the cases of presidential regimes in former British colonies include those countries that are least developed and most socially fragmented. Therefore this finding is an artifact of performing this test on the subset of former British colonies.

TABLE 6. Models Capturing the Effects of African Legacy on Democratic Survival

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Model 12</i>		<i>Model 13</i>	
	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>
	<i>Comparisons against non-African Colonies</i>		<i>Comparisons against non-African Colonies Controlling for Development and Social Fragmentation</i>	
Party Fractionalization	0.0063	0.1032	- 0.0595	0.0631
Presidentialism	- 0.0134	0.3261	- 0.1376	0.2629
Economic Performance	5.7211***	1.7909	4.3538**	1.8330
Past Attempts at Democracy	- 0.1489	0.2332	0.0428	0.2009
Religious Fractionalization	—	—	- 1.4373**	0.5810
Ethnic Fractionalization	—	—	- 1.2630**	0.6437
Economic Development	—	—	0.0004***	0.0001
African Colonies	- 1.4625***	0.3260	- 0.3493	0.3195
European Colonial Powers	15.4471***	1.6181	13.3724***	1.8293
European Internal Colonies	15.3887***	1.6498	13.4363***	1.8613
European Settler Colonies	15.5967***	1.6559	13.4242***	1.9191
Other	- 0.6994	0.5204	- 1.8430***	0.3889
Constant	3.8732***	0.3912	4.0825***	0.6508
<i>p</i> (<i>duration parameter</i>)	1.14		1.61	
Log-Likelihood	- 81.41		- 61.61	
Number of Democratic Spells	123		122	
Number of Data Points (country-years as Democracy)	2012		2000	

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

colonialism had constructive effects for post-colonial democracies in terms of the relationship between the state and civil society compared to other forms of colonialism. In the British case the relationship between the state and civil society seems to be an important part of its relative democratic success. This finding confirms the results of Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens's natural experiment on Central America and the British Caribbean. It also leads us to believe that previous large- n studies that only included a dummy variable for British colonialism may have missed its effect because of the similarities between former British colonies and older established democracies in the datasets.

We also found support for Huntington's and Diamond's contention that longer periods of colonial rule promoted democracy in former British possessions. We did not find that this relationship held for colonialism generally, however. This provides additional evidence that there is something exceptional and beneficial about British compared to other forms of colonialism.

Further, our findings seem to invalidate claims about the advantages of a French colonial legacy; overall it seems to be one of the least favorable for sustaining democracy. However, our discussion of expected durations in Table 4 (but not our statistical tests) provides slight evidence that a French colonial legacy may have a small positive effect on the state/civil society relationship. Nevertheless, this effect has not been sufficient to counteract French colonialism's generally negative effect with respect to development and social fragmentation.

With regard to the contention that there was something uniquely negative for democracy in the legacy of colonialism in Africa, we found confirming evidence. Former colonies in Africa break down with greater frequency than all others. However, when we disaggregated colonialism into its separate components we did not find evidence for Young's contention that Africa's problems with democracy

had to do with the weakness of civil society. Rather, lower levels of development and higher levels of social fragmentation seem to drive this result.

Most importantly, we believe that the legacy of a colonial past continues to have consequences today. A colonial legacy's ramifications for democracy should not be viewed as merely the presence or absence of some particular requisite for or danger to democracy. Rather, as Karl (1990) has suggested, we must consider past cultural and developmental legacies in a path-dependent fashion. They have profound implications for decision-makers, structuring their choices in a highly contingent fashion. Decision-makers in post-colonial democracies will find that their country's unique configuration of development, social fragmentation, and state/civil society orientations continue to limit the freedom with which they may make important choices in addressing their countries' challenges. Moreover, the constraints under which these decision-makers operate raise doubts over the ease with which they may engage in "crafting" purely institutional solutions to the problems of maintaining democratic rule.

Finally, we end on where the limitations of our treatment of this problem emerge and what this points to in terms of where further work is necessary to move our understanding of the relationship between colonial legacies and democracy forward. First, there are limitations in just how far conceptualization in terms of the legacies of colonial powers in national terms can take us. As we point out, entities as large and complex as the British Empire entailed many different forms of rule. This is true not only of them, but of other empires over space and time. One promising avenue to move beyond national characterizations of colonial legacies would be by tracing the legacies of different forms of colonial rule. For this to be fruitfully accomplished, we believe that there first needs to be important typological work in a Weberian vein to develop a set of useful concepts.

Second, the state/civil society dimension that we have used to explore colonial legacies is very broad. It covers a great number of factors specified in the literature and could be potentially cloaking other independent variables not yet identified. We believe that the next step in this direction would be to unpack this dimension into different components. However, before this can continue using large-*n* methods, better data need to be collected, or reasonable proxies for data that we will never be able to collect need to be developed.

Appendix Democratic Episodes in the Dataset

Andorra 93–95	Burkina Faso 78–80	Finland 51–95
Antigua and Barbuda 81–95	Canada 51–95	France 51–95
Argentina 84–95	Cape Verde 91–95	Gambia 66–94
Australia 51–95	Chad 60–62	Germany 51–95
Austria 55–95	Chile 51–73, 90–95	Ghana 57–60, 69–72, 79–82
Bahamas 73–95	Colombia 74–95	Greece 75–95
Bangladesh 91–95	Congo 61–63, 92–93	Grenada 74–79, 84–95
Barbados 66–95	Costa Rica 51–95	Guatemala 51–54
Belgium 51–95	Czech Rep. 92–95	Guyana 92–95
Belize 81–95	Czechoslovakia 90–91	Haiti 95
Benin 60–62, 91–95	Denmark 51–95	Honduras 90–95
Bolivia 82–95	Dominica 78–95	Hungary 90–95
Botswana 66–95	Dominican Rep. 63, 78–95	Iceland 51–95
Burundi 93	Ecuador 51–52, 79–95	India 53–75, 77–95
Brazil 51–64, 86–95	El Salvador 91–95	Indonesia 55–57
Bulgaria 90–95	Estonia 92–95	Ireland 51–95

Israel 51–95	Niger 93–95	South Africa 94–95
Italy 51–95	Nigeria 60–66, 79–83	South Korea 61, 88–95
Jamaica 63–95	Norway 51–95	Spain 78–95
Japan 52–95	Papua New Guinea 77–95	Sri Lanka 48–83
Kenya 63–66	Panama 94–95	Sudan 56–58, 65–69, 86–89
Latvia 93–95	Paraguay 93–95	Suriname 75–79, 88–89, 91–95
Lithuania 91–95	Peru 80–92	Sweden 51–95
Luxembourg 51–95	Philippines 53–72, 87–95	Switzerland 71–95
Macedonia 91–95	Poland 89–95	Taiwan 92–95
Madagascar 61–71, 93–95	Portugal 76–95	Thailand 75–76
Malawi 94–95	Romania 92–95	Trinidad 62–95
Malaysia 59–69	Russia 93–95	Turkey 61–71, 73–80, 83–95
Mali 92–95	St. Kitts and Nevis 83–95	Uganda 62–66
Malta 64–95	St. Lucia 79–95	Ukraine 91–95
Mauritius 68–95	St. Vincent 79–95	United Kingdom 51–95
Moldova 94–95	Sao Tome 91–95	United States 51–95
Mongolia 92–95	Seychelles 93–95	Uruguay 51–73, 85–95
Mozambique 94–95	Sierra Leone 62–67	Vanuatu 80–95
Myanmar 51–62	Slovakia 92–95	Venezuela 58–95
Namibia 90–95	Slovenia 90–95	Zambia 91–95
Nepal 91–95	Solomon Islands 78–95	
Netherlands 51–95	Somalia 60–69	
New Zealand 51–95		
Nicaragua 90–95		

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