

3. HISTORICAL SEQUENCES

- specific path or sequence of known transformations
- way in which the new regime can conceive of historical processes as having two aspects relevant to our central question: the specific path or sequence of transformations of a regime and the way in which a new regime is inaugurated.

The Path to Polyarchy

Does the sequence matter? ¹ Are some sequences more likely than others to lead to mutual security and thus to facilitate the shift toward a more polyarchal regime? The two figures introduced in the last chapter to represent the two dimensions of democratization with which we are concerned allow, of course, for an infinite number of paths. History has traced out some of these. But even if one were to limit his imagination by history and common sense, he would surely discover and invent more paths than anyone could deal with. A modest concern for a reasonably parsimonious and manageable theory impels me to try for a narrower

1. This is also the central question in Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966). However, as the subtitle suggests, Moore is concerned with different variables and longer historical sequences. Moreover, he chooses to ignore the experience of smaller countries on grounds I find unpersuasive (p. xiii).

focus. Let me begin, then, by considering only three possible paths to polyarchy:

I. Liberalization precedes inclusiveness;

A. A closed hegemony increases opportunities for public contestation and thus is transformed into a competitive oligarchy.

B. The competitive oligarchy is then transformed into a polyarchy by increasing the inclusiveness of the regime.

II. Inclusiveness precedes liberalization;

A. A closed hegemony becomes inclusive.

B. The inclusive hegemony is then transformed into a polyarchy by increasing opportunities for public contestation.

III. Shortcut: A closed hegemony is abruptly transformed into a polyarchy by a sudden grant of universal suffrage and rights of public contestation.

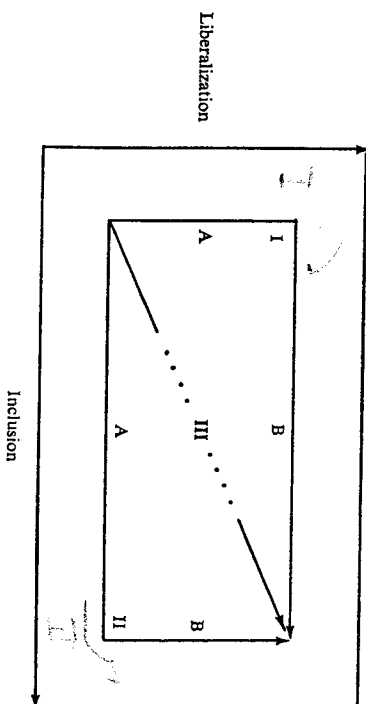


FIGURE 3.1 Some Paths to Polyarchy

These three paths are represented in figure 3.1. The first is a fair approximation of the paths taken by England and by Sweden.² The second is roughly the path taken by Germany from the Empire to Weimar. The third is roughly the path taken by course not nearly as schematic as the diagram suggests. For example, until the effects on the suffrage of the Reform Act of 1832 began to be felt, in many constituencies the candidates

path taken in France from 1789 to 1792 (although given various restrictions on voting and the freedom to organize the terminus would perhaps be more accurately described as near-polyarchy).³

put forward by the notables won without being contested in the election. "Of the 22 towns with over 1000 voters, eleven went to the poll in 1761; of the 22 towns with 500-1000 voters, twelve; while of the remaining 201 English constituencies only 18; i.e., more than half of the larger boroughs were contested, and about one in ten of all the other constituencies." Sir Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (London: MacMillan, 1961), p. 83. As late as 1830, elections in the counties usually went uncontested: "In the forty counties of England and Wales there were in 1830 only nine contests, the same number as in 1820; and in 1831 there were eleven, one more than in 1826. In most counties the great landowners nominated the candidates, very often by agreement among themselves so as to avoid the expense of a contested election and the disturbance of the peace of the county." Sir Ivor Jennings, *Party Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 81. Even in 1833, when the first election under the Reform Act occurred, there were no contests in nearly one third of the constituencies. Ibid., p. 84, n. 1.

3. About 60% of the adult males had the right to vote under the electoral law of 1789. Under a system of indirect election these "active citizens" chose delegates who in turn elected the deputies. Although the figure is in dispute, probably not more than 45% of the adult males could qualify as delegates. Cf. R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: The Challenge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), appendix V, pp. 522 ff., and Peter Campbell, *French Electoral Systems and Elections, 1789-1957* (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), pp. 50-57. The electoral law of 1792, under which the Convention was elected, introduced manhood suffrage, though it retained indirect elections; the Constitution of 1793 provided for universal manhood suffrage, but that constitution was never applied. "At all elections in this period large numbers of electors did not vote. In 1792 only 700,000 of the national electorate of 7,000,000 voted. In the referenda on the successive constitutions between one-third and five-sixths of the electorate abstained. Under the Republic corruption, fraud, intimidation, and violence were practised by the candidates of all factions and their supporters . . . electors with the wrong views were prevented from voting; citizens who might have the wrong views were disfranchised." Campbell, p. 57. Moreover, the Le Chapelier Law prohibited economic organizations of workers (and also in principle if not in practice, of entrepreneurs and merchants). Val R. Lorwin, *The French Labor Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 4.

Probably the commonest sequence among the older and more stable polyarchies has been some approximation of the first path; that is, competitive politics preceded expansion in participation.⁴ As a result, the rules, the practices, and the culture of competitive politics developed first among a small elite, and the critical transition from nonparty politics to party competition also occurred initially within the restricted group. Although this transition was rarely an easy one, and party conflict was often harsh and bitter, the severity of conflict was restrained by ties of friendship, family, interest, class, and ideology that pervaded the restricted group of notables who dominated the political life of the country. Later, as additional social strata were admitted into politics they were more easily socialized into the norms and practices of competitive politics already developed among the elites, and generally they accepted many if not all of the mutual guarantees evolved over many generations. As a consequence neither the newer strata nor the incumbents who were threatened with displacement felt that the costs of toleration were so high as to outweigh the costs of repression, particularly since repression would entail the destruction of a well-developed system of mutual security.

The other two paths are more dangerous, and for the same reason: to arrive at a viable system of mutual security is a

4. Obviously this capsule description ignores variations that in another context would be vital for explaining differences in contemporary European systems—the party systems, for example. The most extensive analysis of which I am aware of the different historical paths of European countries and their political consequences is to be found in the work of Stein Rokkan. Cf. his "The Comparative Study of Political Participation," in A. Ranney, ed., *Essays on the Behavioral Study of Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), pp. 45-90; "Mass Suffrage, Secret Voting, and Political Participation," *Arch. Eur. Sociol.* 2 (1961): 132-52; "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments" (with S. M. Lipset), in Stein Rokkan and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 1-64; and "The Structuring of Mass Politics in the Smaller European Democracies: A Developmental Typology" (Paper presented to the International Political Science Association, Brussels, September 1967).

difficult matter at best; the greater the number of people and the variety and disparity of interests involved, the more difficult the task and the greater the time required. Tolerance and mutual security are more likely to develop among a small elite sharing similar perspectives than among a large and heterogeneous collection of leaders representing social strata with widely varying goals, interests, and outlooks. This is why the first path is more likely than the other two to produce stable transformations away from hegemony toward polyarchy. The third path drastically shortens the time for learning complex skills and understandings and for arriving at what may be an extremely subtle system of mutual security. The second path requires that the system of mutual security be worked out, not within a small and relatively homogeneous elite, but among spokesmen who reflect the whole spectrum of social strata and political perspectives in the society, or at least in a broad part.

There seem to be few if any unambiguous cases in which the shortcut has been successfully taken.⁵ To be sure, in 5. The case of Denmark seems to be somewhat anomalous, though I know too little about it to make a valid appraisal. Under the constitution of 1665, the power of the monarch was absolute, and during the next two centuries the country was ruled by a highly centralized administration under the king. The July revolution of 1830 in France persuaded the king to establish four provincial assemblies for consultative purposes. Under the stimulus of the revolution of 1848, the monarch proclaimed a constitution that entrusted the legislative power to the Rigsdag. Suffrage was granted to all men 30 years of age or older, except those working as servants and farm helpers not having their own household, and those receiving or having received poor relief. In this sense, Denmark did indeed take a shortcut. However, voting for the lower house was in public, by show of hands; that for the upper house was indirect, and under the constitution of 1866 the landowners and highly taxed citizens were given preponderant influence in the upper chamber. Moreover, the monarch refused to accept the principle that his ministers were responsible to Parliament; after 1901 responsibility existed de facto and after 1915 de jure. The constitution of 1915 also established universal suffrage for men and women 29 years of age and over, and abolished the privileged suffrage for the upper chamber. Thus Denmark took a shortcut in 1849 to a broad suffrage and a considerable increase in opportunities for public contestation but delayed for half a century

Italy, Germany, and Japan an existing hegemony was destroyed by military conquest in the Second World War, and the hegemonic regime was replaced during the occupation that followed defeat by an inclusive polyarchy. But these are highly ambiguous cases. For in all three countries, a transition to competitive politics had already been made before the dictatorial seizure of power, and some of the older traditions of competitive politics reappeared after the destruction of the dictatorship. In Japan, the preservation of the monarchy also helped to convey some traditional legitimacy to the new regime of competitive politics. Moreover, in each case the dictatorship was not destroyed from within but from outside by overwhelming military defeat; the occupying forces at least temporarily banned the spokesmen of the old dictatorship from public life, and for a few years they decided all the crucial questions. For all these reasons, and doubtless others, the new regimes were not beset by fatal conflicts over legitimacy arising out of counterclaims set forth by spokesmen for the old regime. Nonetheless, these three cases do show that under certain highly unusual conditions an abrupt shift from hegemony to polyarchy may result in tolerably stable regimes. The conditions may, however, prove to be historically unique.

The second path is also risky. When the suffrage is extended *before* the arts of competitive politics have been mastered and accepted as legitimate among the elites, the search for a system of mutual guarantees is likely to be complex and time consuming. During the transition, when conflict erupts neither side can be entirely confident that it will be safe to tolerate the other. Because the rules of the political game are ambiguous, and the legitimacy of competitive politics is weak, the costs of suppression may not be in-

the final transition to the eighth institutional guarantee listed in table 1.1. The Danish political experience has been subjected to so little systematic analysis that I am unclear as to how it bears on the argument of this section.

ordinately high. The danger is, then, that before a system of mutual security can be worked out among the contestants, the emerging but precarious competitive regime will be displaced by a hegemony ruled by one of the contestants.

Although the first path seems to be the safest of the three, it is not likely to be followed in the future, for as we have already seen most countries with hegemonic regimes are already inclusive. Only a rather small minority of countries deny the suffrage to more than 10 percent of their male citizens, and probably no more than a half dozen traditional monarchies or dictatorships have refused to grant the suffrage at all. Moreover, the suffrage seems to be more easily expanded than contracted; historically the process has typically been in one direction: once granted, it is rarely taken away. In this respect, the oscillations in France from 1789 to 1848 between a wide or universal manhood suffrage and a restricted electorate seem to be unusual. Even the few regimes now existing that have not yet granted their citizens the suffrage will probably not pursue the first path. For if demands for inclusion and liberalization begin to threaten the regime, the leadership will doubtless be tempted to make the cheapest concession possible: by granting the suffrage they can clothe the hegemony with the symbols and some of the legitimacy of "democracy"—at little cost, initially, to the leaders.

The argument thus far can then be summarized in four propositions:

- (1) The first path is more likely than the others to produce the degree of mutual security required for a stable regime of public contestation.
- (2) But the first path is no longer open to most countries with hegemonic regimes.
- (3) Hence the liberalization of near-hegemonies will run a serious risk of failure because of the difficulty, under conditions of universal suffrage and mass politics, of working out a system of mutual security.

(4) The risks of failure can be reduced, however, if steps toward liberalization are accompanied by a dedicated and enlightened search for a viable system of mutual guarantees.

Inaugurating the Competitive Regime

Does it matter how a competitive regime is inaugurated? By inauguration I mean the application of power, influence, or authority to introduce and to legitimize a regime—in this case a competitive regime. In this sense inauguration emphasizes transitional processes that are, conceptually speaking, somewhere between the paths to polyarchy that we have just been concerned with and the maintenance of the regime after it has been inaugurated. Although the distinctions between paths, inauguration, and maintenance blur at the edges, the concept of inauguration helps us to focus on an important element in the development of competitive regimes.

One way of deciding whether inauguration matters is to consider some of the important ways in which polyarchies or near-polyarchies have been inaugurated in the past. The chief forms seem to be:

I Within an already independent nation-state

A. The old regime is transformed by evolutionary processes: the new regime is inaugurated by incumbent leaders, who yield peacefully (more or less) to demands for changes and participate in the inauguration of polyarchy or near-polyarchy.

B. The old regime is transformed by revolution: the new regime is inaugurated by revolutionary leaders, who overthrow the old regime and install a polyarchy or near-polyarchy.

6. I am indebted to my colleague, Juan Linz for his insistence on the relevance of the way in which a competitive regime is inaugurated.

(C) The old regime is transformed by military conquest: after a military defeat, victorious occupying forces help inaugurate a polyarchy or near-polyarchy.

(II) In a hitherto dependent country subject to another state

D. The old regime is transformed by evolutionary processes: the new regime is fostered among the local population, whose leaders inaugurate polyarchy or near-polyarchy without a national independence movement or serious struggle against the colonial power.

E. The old regime is transformed as a part of the struggle for national independence, in the course of a "revolution" against the colonial power: the new regime is inaugurated by leaders of a national independence movement, who install polyarchy or near-polyarchy during or after a successful struggle for national independence.

Examples of the inauguration of polyarchies are given in table 3.1.

Although the examples in table 3.1 show that there has been no uniform process of inaugurating polyarchies, they also suggest that the various alternatives may not be equally auspicious. A disproportionately large number of the stable high-consensus polyarchies seem to have come about in the first way, by peaceful evolution within an already independent nation-state, or the fourth, by peaceful evolution within a dependent country. The reason is probably that peaceful evolution is most likely to result in a polyarchy supported by a widespread sense of legitimacy. As the incumbents yield peacefully (on the whole) and participate in the changes, their consent is won, the legitimacy attached to the previous regime is transferred unbroken to the new regime, and the

Table 3.1. Processes of Inaugurating Polyarchies

I. Within an already independent nation-state	
A. By evolutionary processes	Britain Belgium Chile Costa Rica Denmark Japan (Meiji Restoration to the 1930s) Netherlands Norway Sweden Switzerland Uruguay
B. By collapse or revolutionary displacement of old regime	France (1789-92, 1848, 1870) Germany (1919) Austria, First Republic (1918) Spain (1931)
C. By military conquest (all following World War II)	Austria, Second Republic German Federal Republic Italy Japan
II. Within a subject state	
D. By evolutionary processes	Australia Canada Iceland New Zealand Philippines
E. By a national independence struggle	Finland India Ireland Israel United States

process of peaceful change, so important to polyarchy, gains in legitimacy.

By comparison with the first process, the second—inauguration after the abrupt collapse or revolutionary overthrow of the old regime—is infrequent: in the three most notable

cases—the French Revolution, Weimar Germany, and the Spanish Republic—revolution or collapse was followed by an unstable regime that soon repressed to hegemony. Was this reversal accidental? Probably not, for where peaceful evolution cannot or does not take place and revolution occurs, the legitimacy of the new regime is more likely to be contested. A sudden collapse of the old regime leaves the new without a legacy of legitimacy; a revolutionary inaugural by the new legitimates the use of revolution against itself. The most critical years, then, are likely to be the early ones, when the legitimacy of the new regime is still in question, and loyalties to the old regime are still alive.

The third process has proved so far to lead to surprisingly stable polyarchies in the only four countries where inauguration of polyarchy by conquest has occurred in recent times. Some possible reasons for the stability of the polyarchies inaugurated under the Allies after World War II have already been suggested; I also suggested that these may be historically unique cases.

The fifth process is the one with which Americans are most familiar and, at least rhetorically, most sympathetic. As in the United States, so too in Finland, Ireland, Israel, and India the independence movement blended nationalism with the ideology of representative government and political liberalism. Thus the ideology of democracy was reinforced by the ideology of nationalism; to attack representative democracy was to attack the nation. The success of the movement for national independence largely liquidated the principal contenders for the legitimacy of the old regime. Mainly agents of the colonial power, they either returned to the home country or permanently exiled themselves from the new nation, as in the case of the Tories who moved to Canada after the American Revolution. Or, as with Ireland and Ulster, those who would have constituted a disaffected minority in the new country remained a part of the old.

In the future, however, stable polyarchies are unlikely to

be inaugurated by the fifth process. For one thing, in many of the new states where the sense of nationhood is weak, the leaders of nationalist movements, who during the struggle for independence proclaimed the goal of democracy, later on as leaders of the new and fragile nation see organized opposition as a threat to the integrity of the country. In the new states, then, nationalism does not so much encourage toleration of dissent and oppositions as it provides a ready and acceptable justification for intolerance and repression.⁷ (It is worth keeping in mind that in the United States throughout our national history fears about nationhood and loyalty have resulted in attempts—sometimes successful—to repress dissent. The relationship between nationalism, loyalty, and fear of dissent in the United States is nicely symbolized by the original name of the official organization that has most fully displayed hostility to dissent: the Un-American Activities Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives.)

What may be an even more important limitation on the fifth strategy is that world developments have made it obsolescent. With the disappearance of colonial empires, most of the world now consists of nominally sovereign states. In a world of independent states there are no longer many opportunities for movements of national independence to inaugurate more competitive regimes.

In fact, the options seem to be even more narrowly restricted. The disappearance of colonial empires also reduces the opportunities for the fourth process of inauguration. If it is true that the third process—via military conquest—is unlikely, then the most likely alternatives are reduced to the first two: in existing hegemonic regimes a more competitive system will have to be inaugurated either by evolution or by revolution. Simply because the revolutionary process carries a high risk of failure does not mean that it will not be tried,

7. Edward Shils, "Opposition in the New States of Asia and Africa," and Hans Daalder, "Government and Opposition in the New States," *Government and Opposition* 1 (January 1966): 175-226.

but revolutions will probably saddle new regimes with serious conflicts over legitimacy and hence create from the start a high probability of regression toward hegemonic rule.

In the future as in the past, then, stable polyarchies and near-polyarchies are more likely to result from rather slow evolutionary processes than from the revolutionary overthrow of existing hegemonies.⁸

If this interpretation seems unduly restrictive, it is worth recalling that among most of the well-established polyarchies today where there exists a high tolerance for oppositions of all kinds, the transformation was exceedingly slow. In Britain a "formed" opposition was still illegal and illegitimate at the end of the seventeenth century. A century later the idea of a more or less organized but "loyal" opposition in Parliament to His Majesty's government had gained a considerable legitimacy.⁹ But still another century elapsed before Britain evolved its present system of highly organized parties competing for the support of a broad electorate. Elsewhere, as in France, attempts to short-circuit this slow evolutionary process by revolution sometimes produced lasting oppositions to the new regime. It is also worth recalling that in 1968 the USSR celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. While the extreme hegemony of the Stalinist period has been replaced, the USSR has not yet been transformed into a near-hegemony, and the inauguration of a near-polyarchy appears even to optimistic observers to be considerably more than a generation away.

[That polyarchies and one-party hegemonies have developed] Moore's emphasis on the vital importance of the violent revolution as a stage along the road to democracy is, I believe, misleading, particularly if it is applied to the process of inauguration. Moore stresses heavily the English Civil War, the French Revolution, and a very doubtful case—the American Civil War. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, passim. His argument here is, I think, weakened by his belief that the experience of the smaller countries is somehow irrelevant. The question is: irrelevant to what?

9. See Archibald Foord, *His Majesty's Opposition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

veloped in the twentieth century means that neither evolution nor revolution can occur in complete isolation from existing models that were quite unknown and would have been incomprehensible in the eighteenth century. A loyal opposition, a two-party system, a one-party dictatorship do not have to be reinvented as if there were no models to copy. No country needs to grope through centuries of experience with no clear idea of the elementary institutions required for a highly liberalized regime: competitive parties and unconcoerced elections are not merely a goal, but a fact. Likewise when a near-polyarchy collapses, antidemocratic leaders do not have to fumble for the one-party formula.

The consequences of this for the inaugural process are unclear. An evolutionary process leading to polyarchy in the future need not, and probably cannot, consume the centuries it took in Britain, Sweden, and elsewhere. Already "tested" models are now available that offer modern societies such radically different regimes as a unified hegemony in its most totalitarian form or an inclusive polyarchy with an extraordinary tolerance for oppositions of all kinds. The availability of these "tested" models which do not have to be reinvented may sometimes facilitate rapid transformation of regimes and even oscillations from one extreme to the other within a very short historical period: witness Italy, Germany, and Japan from, say, 1919 to 1950.

The argument of this section can be summed up in the following propositions:

1. The process of inauguration most auspicious for a polyarchy is one that transforms previously legitimate hegemonic forms and structures into the forms and structures suitable for political competition and thus produces no lasting cleavages or widespread doubts about the legitimacy of the new regime.
2. The inaugural process most likely to lead to this result is peaceful evolution within an independent

nation-state or within a quasi-independent nation that is granted independence without a national independence movement.

3. The process of inauguration least auspicious for a polyarchy is one that leaves a large segment of the citizen body opposed to the legitimacy of competitive politics.
4. This result is likely when a polyarchy is inaugurated by a civil war or revolution in which a large segment of the people who uphold the legitimacy of the old regime or deny the legitimacy of the new are defeated but nonetheless incorporated as citizens in the new regime.
5. The decline of colonial empires and the unlikely repetition of the circumstances facilitating the introduction of polyarchy in the defeated countries by the Allies at the end of World War II mean that in the future the main options available are evolution or revolution within an already independent nation-state.
6. The presence in the world of functioning models of polyarchy and one-party hegemony probably has an impact on the process of inaugurating regimes, but the effects are uncertain. At a minimum, their presence probably raises expectations that regimes can be rapidly transformed in either direction.
7. Yet in countries without a recent legacy of experience in the operation of competitive politics, the transformation of hegemonic regimes into polyarchies is likely to remain a slow process, measured in generations.
8. The length of the process can probably be reduced and the prospects of a stable transformation increased if inaugural processes are accompanied by a search for an internal system of mutual security.