In a democracy civil liberties and responsive political institutions do not necessarily extend to every corner of the country. Countries such as Brazil, Chile, India, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and the U.S. have had pockets of authoritarian rule at times when they were widely considered democracies. Living outside a city limit or beyond a provincial border should not reduce one’s rights, such as the rights to voice one’s opinion, access objective media, form an opposition group, compete for public office, vote in free and fair elections, or have government policies reflect one’s preferences. Yet in practice, such geographic disparities do exist. How can they be overcome? How can democracy develop evenly throughout a country?

Existing studies do not answer these questions. Theories of democratization have largely ignored the spatial component of the process. Most implicitly assume that democracy appears throughout a country once national leaders opt to introduce greater civil liberties and competitive elections. Investigations of subnational democracy and democratization, which have proliferated in the last two decades, offer some insights. However, most of these studies examine countries where subnational variation in democracy continues to this day, so their utility is limited.

This paper takes a first step to understanding how subnational variation in democracy is overcome by learning from the democratization experiences of countries where democracy is now evenly present throughout the territories. It couples this evidence with ideas from the subnational democracy and democratization literature. Specifically, this paper proposes four possible pathways to the even development of democracy within countries—direction,
collaboration, diffusion, and emergence. Evidence from England and France illustrates two of the pathways, and the case of Sweden, where comparable subnational variation in democracy does not seem to have existed, provides a contrasting example.

I. Existing Scholarship

The growth of subnational democracy studies since the 1990s holds promise for illuminating how democracy develops within a country. By contrast, earlier democratization research, with its focus on national elites and national institutions, has left us in the dark about how democratization efforts in national capitals result in democracy throughout a country.

Studies of Unevenness in Democracy

Subnational democracy research has mostly examined the maintenance of “authoritarian enclaves,” meaning subnational territorial units that exhibit some non-democratic characteristics. A small number of studies, however, offer explanations for how these enclaves become democratic. The explanations fall mainly into two categories—national intervention and diffusion—which overlap to some extent. These studies aim to explain the collapse of individual authoritarian enclaves, not the complete democratization of a country’s territory, which may or may not be identical processes. They also do not reshape general theories of democratization with their subnational findings. This is reasonable considering that the generalizability of their findings may be limited—the studies, in fact, examine only four countries, all with federal systems of government—Argentina, Mexico, Russia, and the United States. That said, these studies do provide good starting points for explaining how unevenness in democracy within a country is overcome.
The central research on national intervention as a means to democratize authoritarian enclaves has been done by Gibson. His work is based on the idea that it is not the characteristics of the subnational unit itself but its interaction with the national government that accounts for an enclave’s democratization. Gibson argues that undemocratic subnational regimes survive when their leaders manage to isolate local oppositions from national political allies and resources. He developed these models based first on studies of the Mexican state Oaxaca and the Argentine province Santiago del Estero in this decade and then the entire countries of Argentina and Mexico as well as the United States in the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction eras.1 Other studies also support the importance of isolation, including Behrend’s findings from the Argentine provinces Corrientes and San Luis in recent decades and Benton’s research on Oaxaca’s municipalities in the late 1990s and this decade. From this point about isolation, Gibson then argues that these undemocratic subnational regimes democratize when the isolation ends, namely when, a local crisis mobilizes a local opposition party that links the local conflict to the interests of national leaders. As both Gibson and Giraudy have noted, subnational undemocratic regimes tend to survive when they are in the national leaders’ interest, so a local crisis that challenges those interests can motivate intervention.

According to Gibson, the type of national intervention depends on how local leaders have maintained authoritarianism.2 A party-led transition is likely to occur where democratic rules and institutions exist but provincial leaders create authoritarianism through informal and illegal practices. In this scenario, a national party intervenes by providing resources to the local opposition party. These resources strengthen the local opposition party, enabling it to

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2 The level of autonomy subnational leaders have from the national government shapes their strategies, according to Gibson.
successfully oust the incumbent. The center-led approach is most likely to occur when local leaders maintain authoritarianism by establishing non-democratic rules and institutions. In this case, the national government intervenes by changing the rules and institutions in the province. With democratic rules and institutions in place, the local opposition party is able to oust the incumbent and take power.

By explaining how authoritarian enclaves can democratize, the party-led and center-led models are an important breakthrough. However, these models make a number of assumptions that may underemphasize additional factors important in the cases Gibson examines and that may simply not hold elsewhere. By emphasizing the importance of local-national interactions over local conditions, the models assume that oppositions can form anywhere. However, McMann shows that certain characteristics of subnational units may prevent oppositions from forming, thus limiting the applicability of these models. Specifically, when the economic policies and natural features of a subnational unit do not afford individuals economic autonomy—opportunities to earn income independent of local authorities—few will engage in democratic activism and opposition will be weak or non-existent. Her study draws on evidence from Kyrgyzstan and Russia. Similarly, Gervasoni found that a paucity of economic autonomy accounted for low levels of democracy in Argentine provinces. He also identified an additional source of weak economic autonomy—central government subsidies. The distribution of these subsidies by subnational leaders makes residents economically dependent on them. An explanation of how democracy develops evenly throughout a country will need to consider the formation of local oppositions.

The party-led and center-led models also take as given a strong party system and capable state, respectively. Yet, we know that all states, particularly newer democracies, do not exhibit these characteristics. Without a strong party system, there is not likely to be a national party to provide resources to local opposition parties, as the party-led model predicts. Without significant state capacity, the center is unlikely to be able to change local rules and institutions, as the center-led model predicts. Party system strength and state capacity are assumptions that an explanation of how democracy develops evenly throughout a country should not make.

Another existing approach to explaining how authoritarian enclaves democratize is diffusion. Hiskey and Canache find that diffusion from neighboring subnational units is important in Mexico, and Lankina and Getachew find that international diffusion is important in Russia. A typical weakness of democratic diffusion theories, developed to explain national regime change, is that they have not explained the mechanism by which democracy can spread. By contrast, Hiskey and Canache uncover numerous mechanisms. An opposition victory in a subnational unit may embolden the opposition in a neighboring authoritarian territory and boost election turnout there. Leaders in less democratic units may respond by introducing or strengthening civil and political rights to protect themselves when they are out of office. They

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5 In a couple of sentences, Gibson acknowledges this and indicates that other civic organizations could play the role of parties.

6 Jonathan Hiskey and Damarys Canache, “The Demise of One-Party Politics in Mexican Municipal Elections,” *British Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 2 (2005); Tomila Lankina and Lullit Getachew, “A Geographic Incremental Theory of Democratization: Territory, Aid, and Democracy in Postcommunist Regions,” *World Politics* 58, no. 4 (2006). Gel’man and Lankina propose three types of diffusion. Although their objective is to more explain subnational reversals of democracy, namely the elimination of popular mayoral elections in 75 regional capitals of Russia, their models are instructive. Their three types of diffusion include hierarchical diffusion, which resembles Gibson’s idea of national government intervention. However, in this case a national government uses a hegemonic party to discourage the continued use of popular mayoral elections and thus prompts a reversal. Gel’man and Lankina’s other two types of diffusion are the spread of democratic ideas and practices from neighboring subnational units and international actors, as Hiskey and Canache and Lankina and Getachew also found, respectively. Vladimir Gel’man and Tomila Lankina, “Authoritarian Versus Democratic Diffusions: Explaining Institutional Choices in Russia’s Local Government,” *Post Soviet Affairs* 24, no. 1 (2008).

may also develop electoral institutions to allow for the possibility that they or their supporters return to office.

The small number of studies of diffusion and national intervention offer valuable insights into subnational regime change. Most have shown that subnational undemocratic regimes can become more democratic in a democratizing country or hybrid regime; the evidence is typically from Argentina, Mexico, and Russia. The study of subnational regime change would also benefit from examination of consolidated democracies. Gibson’s case study of the U.S. is a good start. Likewise, Mickey’s work begins to undertake this task by examining how a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1944 initiated the long process of dismantling the authoritarian regimes of eleven states of the old Confederacy.\footnote{Robert W. Mickey, “The Beginning of the End for Authoritarian Rule in America: Smith v. Allwright and the Abolition of the White Primary in the Deep South, 1944-1948,” Studies in American Political Development 22 (2008). Mickey expands on this work in a book due out in June. Robert Mickey, Paths out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America’s Deep South (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).} It would also be helpful to examine countries with unitary systems of government because all the countries studied so far are federalist. More broadly, a useful goal, beyond explaining the democratization of enclaves, would be to investigate how subnational regime change may contribute to democracy throughout a country. As the next sections show, general theories of democratization have ignored this spatial component of the process.

\textbf{Democratization Theories}

Studies of subnational democracy and democratization provide more insight into overcoming unevenness in democracy than traditional democratization theories. Traditional democratization theories assume that democracy exists evenly throughout a country. This is true
for all four schools of thought on democratization: modernization, crafting, social forces, and the new economic approach.

Modernization theories, best exemplified by Lipset’s 1959 article, attribute democracy to economic development.\(^9\) Economic development lengthens people’s perspectives, complicates and moderates their political views, creates cross-cutting pressures on their identities, and integrates them into a national culture, all of which increase their tolerance and thus sustain democracy. Economic development is signified by increased wealth, industrialization, urbanization, and mass education. To measure these socioeconomic factors, modernization studies rely on national averages, ignoring that an average can mask significant variation within countries. This approach implicitly assumes that if the national numbers look good, democracy exists evenly throughout the country.

Crafting theories compensate for a weakness in the modernization school of thought, but they too provide no insight into how unevenness in democracy is overcome.\(^10\) Crafting theories begin with the observation that democracies have formed even in countries where the socioeconomic factors highlighted by modernization theory were weak. For that reason crafting theory emphasizes the will and action of government elites in bringing about democracy. A crisis of regime legitimacy prompted by economic decline or military defeat, for example, causes a split within the regime into reformers and hardliners. Meanwhile mass protest further delegitimizes the regime, and reformers develop alliances with societal opposition. Unwilling to use force to quell the protests, the hardliners agree to reformers’ proposals to democratic

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\(^10\) Many scholars have contributed to this school of thought, but two of the earliest and most central works were Guillermo A. O’Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Dankwart A. Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model,” *Comparative Politics* 2, no. 3 (1970).
elections because the “uncertain outcomes” of democracy offer the opportunity to hold power again, and these pacts often involve concessions to protect hardliners’ interests.\textsuperscript{11} Alternatively, the hardliners are so weak that the reformers can impose democratic institutions unilaterally.

The crafting approach makes no mention of how national elites’ decisions to permit civil liberties and elections are put into practice throughout the country. The answer is not uniformly that national elites mandate that civil liberties are protected and elections are held by subnational government elites. As McMann has shown with evidence from Kyrgyzstan, even in countries with unitary systems of government only a patchwork of democracy may exist initially because of national elites’ weak capacity and subnational conditions discouraging political contestation.\textsuperscript{12} Also, as Gibson demonstrated, national parties may strengthen local oppositions, who, in turn, topple authoritarian leaders, rather than national government leaders imposing democratic institutions on local incumbents.

Another school of thought broadens the accounts of democratization to include the role of social classes; however, this approach also does not address the spatial component of democratization. This school of thought emphasizes how a social class brings about democracy by pressuring the elites and making demands. Moore emphasized the role of the bourgeoisie; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens have highlighted the importance of the working class.\textsuperscript{13} Similar to modernization theory, the class approach examines groups nationwide. It does consider territory in the sense that it distinguishes between rural and urban classes, but it does not consider subnational political regimes and how non-democratic ones become democratic.

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\textsuperscript{12}McMann, \textit{Economic Autonomy and Democracy}.
\end{flushright}
The “new economic approach” to explaining democratization suffers from the same weakness crafting theory does. With a focus on elites, the new economic approach implicitly assumes that democracy appears throughout a country once national leaders introduce democratic institutions. This approach borrows from the other three by examining how economic change can produce class pressures that shape elites’ strategic decisions. The basic argument is that declining inequality reduces elites’ fear of creating democratic institutions to appease the masses. Democratic institutions are pro-majority and thus result in redistributive policies. When inequality remains but is not too great, lower social classes demand greater redistribution and elites are willing to grant it because their losses will not be as significant as if there were great inequality. Like crafting theory, the new economic approach does not consider how decisions made in national capitals will guarantee the creation and operation of democratic institutions throughout a country.

These theories leave us with a black box in the democratization process. The crafting, class, and new economic approaches offer explanations for democratic transition—how extraction from the old regime and the introduction of democratic institutions in the national capital occur. Modernization theory, and to a lesser extent the new economic approach, identify factors that promote the long-term success of democracy, or democratic consolidation. What is left out is a key process in between—the development of democracy evenly throughout a country.

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II. Argument: Pathways to Democracy

To explain the development of democracy evenly throughout a country, it is helpful to consider democracy as a combination of components, instead of a single entity. In his conceptualization of democracy, Dahl offers eight components—alternative sources of information, freedom to form and join organizations, eligibility for public office, right of political leaders to compete for support, freedom of expression, right to vote, free and fair elections, and institutions for making government policies depend on voters’ preferences. From studies of subnational democracy we know that following democratic transition some of these components may exist evenly within a country and some may not.

I hypothesize that a component, or collection of components, of democracy may develop evenly throughout a country by four possible means—direction, collaboration, diffusion, and emergence. I draw on the subnational democratization literature and my critiques of it, described above, to develop these. In particular, I expand upon existing works to allow for the possibility that state capacity may be poor, parties may be non-existent or weak, and local conditions may influence the growth of opposition.

Direction is the imposition of democracy on authoritarian subnational units by the national government or a foreign country. This draws on Gibson’s idea of a center-led transition, but is broader because it allows for a foreign country to play the role. The direction approach also does not limit the national government’s intervention to changing local rules. A

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national government could also democratize subnational units by changing national laws or removing subnational leaders, for example. The direction approach must explain the timing of the national leadership’s interest in a particular undemocratic regime. Leaders’ interest may be sparked by a local crisis, as Gibson suggests, or other developments, such as a shifting balance of power nationally. The intent of the national government or foreign country does not have to be democratization; democratization can be a byproduct of some other objective. Direction does require, however, that the national government or foreign country has the capacity to change subnational regime types.\footnote{For a discussion of capacity in the context of subnational variation in regime type, see Gibson, “Boundary Control: Subnational Authoritarianism in Democratic Countries.”} In the case of the latter, the foreign country likely has to militarily occupy a territory in order to direct it to democratize.

Collaboration is the joint effort of national political actors and local opposition to democratize a subnational unit. This approach can include Gibson’s party-led transition, where national and local parties collaborate, but it also allows for the possibility that collaboration does not occur through a party system, but instead with other actors and organizations. The national actors may be representatives of a party or alternatively national government leaders or members of a national political faction, for example. Local opposition may be in the form, for example, of a union or civic group rather than a party. This approach must account for the timing of the national actors’ interest and the local opposition’s emergence and ability to link with national elites. As noted above, it may be a local crisis, as Gibson suggests, or other developments that spark national interest.

Diffusion is the spread of democracy from one or more democratic subnational units within a country or from a foreign democratic country to authoritarian subnational units within the country. As Hiskey and Canache describe, an opposition victory in one subnational unit can
diffuse through increased hope among oppositions and through protective measures, such as
expanded civil and political rights and more democratic electoral institutions, by incumbents in
neighboring subnational territories.

Emergence is the spontaneous development of democracy in authoritarian subnational
units. For this to occur, some change must take place within the subnational unit that leads to the
dismantling of the undemocratic subnational regime. Here the general democratization theories
may be of use. Subnational incumbents may adopt democratic institutions as a result of a crisis
of legitimacy, as crafting theory predicts; the pressure of social forces, as the class-based
approach argues; or a combination of economic development and mass pressures, as the new
economic approach suggests. Alternatively, democratic institutions that had been only a façade
may begin to operate democratically if economic changes increase people’s economic autonomy
from local authorities and consequently their willingness to contest the incumbents’ policies and
legitimacy.

For both the diffusion and emergence pathways, the democratization of these
undemocratic regimes could follow democratic transition, bringing these units into line with the
early democratizers. Their democratization could also precede democratic transition, resulting in
all subnational units being democratic before the national government codifies democracy.

Within a country a mix of these four processes to overcoming unevenness can occur.
More than one process may democratize authoritarian enclaves throughout a country. Also
different enclaves may experience different democratization processes within a country.

The description of each of these pathways requires significant elaboration. They also
require empirical verification. To begin this latter task, the next section uses the cases of
England, France, and Sweden to start to uncover pathways in practice.
III. Some Evidence from England, France, and Sweden

England, France, and Sweden are theoretically and practically useful cases. As consolidated democracies, rather than hybrid regimes or democratizing countries, they can provide clues to the overarching question of how democracy develops evenly within countries. All three belong to the first wave of democracy, which initiated some of the world’s most responsive, stable, and productive democracies. While there are many factors that have contributed to the success of first wave democracies, their ability to overcome unevenness in democracy may be one of them. As countries with unitary systems of government, these three can help balance the earlier focus on federalist countries in the study of subnational democratization. A practical benefit of examining first wave democracies is that we can be more confident that they have, in fact, overcome any subnational variation in democracy because so much time has passed. We do not have a dataset that provides subnational variation in democracy, so merely selecting cases requires considerable research into whether subnational variation existed and whether it was overcome.18 For this initial study of the questions of overcoming subnational variation in democracy, I have excluded cases of failure, but I will add them in the future.19

Examining first wave democracies also poses a challenge. Is first wave democratization too different from contemporary regime change to illuminate current obstacles? In particular, is unevenness in democracy in first wave countries only a story of unevenness in extending the franchise, to rural areas for example? This does seem to be the case for New Zealand and

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18 The Varieties of Democracy project will provide such data. See https://v-dem.net/.
19 I also avoided very small countries because I expect that subnational variation in democracy is less of a problem. I excluded countries that experienced reversals of democracy for reasons other than foreign military occupation because the unevenness in democracy may have contributed to the reversal. This is an interesting question for the larger project. A likely case to add in the near future is the U.S.; I am waiting for Robert Mickey’s book on the South to be published in June. I am also considering the utility of adding Canada, Finland, Iceland, or Ireland as well as first wave democracies, in addition to France, which I have already included, where foreign military occupation reversed democracy.
Australia, so I did not include these cases. But, in fact, the unevenness in democracy historically in some first wave democracies resembles the pockets of non-democracy we see today.

England and France had undemocratic subnational regimes even once democratic transition had occurred in the country. Leaders of these regimes governed as autocrats and residents did not challenge their rule. In England the unevenness resulted from formal institutions, whereas in France it was due to informal practices. Democracy eventually developed evenly within the countries as a result of national direction, and perhaps collaboration with local opposition, in England and as a result of diffusion of ideas from towns and national institutions to villages in France. In Sweden pockets of non-democracy did not seem to exist, making it an interesting contrasting case. The stories unfold first with a description of England’s and France’s democratic transitions and the subnational variation in governance that remained afterwards.

**Democratic Transition and Remaining Variation**

When the non-democratic national regimes were dismantled in England and France in the late 1600s and late 1800s, respectively, democracy did not spread like spilled milk throughout the countries.\(^{20}\) Instead, in England there was considerable unevenness in the franchise, representation in national parliament, and the character of local rule. And, in France there was subnational variation in parliamentary representation and local governance.

**England**

Democratic transition in England can be dated, somewhat controversially, to the late 1600s. Extraction from the old regime had occurred with the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and

\(^{20}\) Thanks to Pete Moore for the milk analogy.
the passage of the English Bill of Rights (and its acceptance by the King) in 1689. The Bill of Rights codified certain rights of the people and, in doing so, effectively eliminated the possibility of an absolute monarch. The caveat is that the aristocracy, more than the common people, ruled. On balance, with the demise of the old regime and existence of competitive elections and civil liberties, a transition had occurred. Yet, even at this point geographic disparities existed in terms of franchise, representation, and form of governance.

The variation in franchise was the smallest geographic disparity among the three. Mostly the variation in franchise was across socioeconomic groups. After decades with only the aristocratic landlords enfranchised, the right to vote in national elections was gradually expanded through reductions in property and wealth requirements and an end to sex discrimination. First the up-and-coming bourgeoisie earned the franchise, followed by the lower middle-class and merchants along with some of the working class, then the full working class, succeeded by universal manhood suffrage and then the inclusion of females in the franchise.

Geographic variation in franchise existed because of differences in class composition, property values, and local election laws. The effects of the Second Reform Act of 1867, which enfranchised many in the working class, were geographically uneven, with industrial towns gaining many more voters than rural areas. Moreover, because many voting restrictions were based on property values the percentage of people that had the right to vote in national elections depended on the part of the country. One author writes: “property prices varied across the country, and in London, where prices were high, enfranchisement penetrated lower down the social scale than elsewhere…In particular boroughs, there could be more extreme differences: in Birmingham, newly enfranchised, only 11 per cent of adult males were registered to vote,
compared to 88 per cent in Preston.”21 Different municipal laws on voting in local elections further exacerbated geographic disparities. For example, some, but not all, municipalities adopted the 1850 Small Tenements Act which allowed a different category of taxpayers, “compound ratepayers,” to vote.22

Geographic variation in parliamentary representation also existed, with the southern part of England having a disproportionate number of seats. “Whilst England’s population was shifting northwards and towards larger towns, most parliamentary seats were concentrated amongst small southern communities. Many substantial industrial towns, including Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester and most Lancashire cotton towns, were represented only through their respective counties…[in 1801] the six southernmost counties possessed one-third of English borough and county MPs but just 15 per cent of the population”23 Some new towns and urban centers, even some large ones, had no members of parliament at all.24 The disproportionate representation resulted from the increase and movement of population without a redrawing of electoral borders.25 The 1832 Reform Act redistributed 143 seats, but even after that the problem persisted. The north of England had the majority of the population, but only 120 MPs, while the south still had 370 MPs.26

21 Hugh Cunningham, The Challenge of Democracy: Britain 1832-1918 (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 33-34. Parliamentarians’ decision to not withdraw the vote of those who had it prior to standardization of the requirement also contributed to these discrepancies.
23 Ibid., 21.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 21-23.
France

Unlike England, France did not have a clear breakthrough to democracy but instead many failed attempts. Beginning with the French Revolution, multiple democratic transitions occurred but then were reversed. It was only with the Third Republic, lasting from 1870 until German occupation in 1939, that democracy took hold in France. The Third Republic emerged as a result of France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian war. “The suddenness and thoroughness of France’s battlefield collapse came as a shock to most French citizens, who had generally greeted the outbreak of war with Prussia just months earlier with patriotic enthusiasm.”27 With Napoleon III and his army imprisoned by the Prussians and mass demonstrations in the streets of France, the republicans dismantled the former regime and created a new one by 1877. The republicans “did not indulge themselves merely in political opposition, but articulated an alternative social program that bore their distinct stamp and struck deeply into the heart of France.”28

Yet, as in England, democracy existed unevenly within France even after its transition to this new form of governance. Geographic differences existed in terms of representation and form of governance, but not franchise. Urban areas were underrepresented in the national parliament. Coupled with this geographic disparity was a socioeconomic one: both rural and urban elites dominated the parliament. The geographic disparity was starkest in the Senate which “greatly exaggerated the weight of rural France. 300 villages with less than 100 inhabitants each shared 370 voters, while eleven cities with 2.5 million inhabitants had 264.” The Senate had been created in 1875 as a “sop to royalist landed notables,” allowing them to be

elected indirectly by municipal councils.\textsuperscript{29} The growing suburbs, full of working-class individuals, were underrepresented in the Chamber of Deputies. The urban upper-class was able to dominate because of the way constituency boundaries were drawn. The upper and middle bourgeoisie held 85 percent of the seats in the Chamber.\textsuperscript{30}

In contrast to national representation, the franchise did not suffer from geographic disparities, but instead, as elsewhere, sex discrimination. Universal suffrage existed for men, but not women, in this period. For its time France was rather a standout: it had the most generous franchise, universal manhood suffrage, among the great powers of Europe.\textsuperscript{31}

**Unevenness in Local Governance**

Among these three types of variation in England and France, the differences in local governance were perhaps the most significant and are the most relevant today. Local, rather than national, government typically has a greater impact on everyday life. And citizens often have more influence in local political institutions, when they are elected, because they are more accessible geographically. The presence of both representative government and fiefdoms in England and in France mirrors the situations in democratizing and hybrid regimes of the third wave of democracy. In these countries, pockets of democracy and non-democracy coexist. For these reasons, the paper focuses on the elimination of variation in local governance, instead of other forms of variation, in England and France.

In England some territories did not have the right to select their leaders, enabling local officials to govern in a way that was unresponsive to residents. In France all territories elected

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
their leaders; however, in those territories where residents were dependent on landlords those landlords dominated that election ensuring that their favored candidates won and no one contested their authority. In terms of Dahl’s components of democracy, at least eligibility for public office, the right of political leaders to compete for support, the right to vote, free and fair elections, and institutions for making government policies depend on voters’ preferences were absent or weak in the countries.\textsuperscript{32} In England residents of certain territories were excluded from seeking and competing for public office and could not vote for local officials because there were no elections for local leaders. As a result, local institutions did not depend on voters’ preferences. In France elections for local officials took place but informal practices prevented oppositions from seeking and competing for public office and voters from supporting them. Consequently, local institutions represented primarily the interests of those in power. To characterize the situations more broadly, some in England could neither participate nor contest and in France all (men) could participate but not all could contest. In England the formal institutions were absent; in France the formal institutions existed but informal practices hampered their operation. The next two sections describe the difference in local governance within each country in greater detail.

\textbf{England}

In the early 1800s in England differences in types of subnational governance were stark, with residents of most areas living in what resembled oligarchies and residents of some areas enjoying representative government. The differences coincided with how leaders were selected in the territorial unit.

\textsuperscript{32} I do not yet have information about all the other components.
At this time England was divided primarily into parishes, municipalities, counties, and county boroughs. Parishes governed rural areas, and municipalities governed urban areas. Counties were the next higher level of government, and they could include rural or urban areas or a mix. Large towns were designated county boroughs and were governed only by borough and national leaderships. Complicating this picture were a growing number of other territorial units throughout the century. Units were created to deal with specific issues, such as sanitation and education. Smellie describes the situation near the end of the century as “designed confusion…. The borough, the sanitary districts, the union and the school board district were of confusion all compact. There were large boroughs with no clearly-defined boundaries belted in with urban districts so closely packed as almost to jostle one another….”

Local elites governed many of the parishes, municipalities, counties, and county boroughs like fiefdoms, but an increasing proportion throughout the early 1800s had representative government. The contrast in governance can be attributed to different means of selecting leaders. In two situations, citizens did not play a role in selecting their leaders. Counties were governed by magistrates who were centrally appointed and typically selected from the local landed gentry. Particularly in rural areas, where they were the only effective authorities, they tended to exert oligarchical control. Citizens also did not choose their leaders in territories with “closed” or “select” bodies. In these subnational units leaders chose their successors, creating what historians have characterized as an “oligarchical structure.” By contrast, in “open bodies” citizens elected their mayors, councilmen, and aldermen.

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34 Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain: Elites, Civil Society, and Reform since 1800*, 34.
Poor governance, particularly embezzlement of funds, was a problem in closed bodies. “The expenditure of the county funds was commonly subject to little or no control, and the system of audit was often rudimentary and ineffectual.”36 By contrast, in open bodies, “[t]he new [elected] councils and their committees removed the former unrivalled role of the lords lieutenant and magistrates in the multifarious aspects of county administration. The new elective bodies had the effect of greatly broadening the representative nature of local government.”37 The open bodies, nonetheless, suffered from some corruption, especially during elections. Also even with well-intended leaders, governance could be poor because of inadequate resources. Some urban districts were “so small as to furnish few or none of the materials needed for efficient government.”38 There were also specific exceptions to these broad characterizations. Liverpool, a closed municipality, was said to have operated one of the most honest and efficient governments in the country, whereas some open municipalities were horribly governed. Generally, however, selecting local leaders resulted in a representative government, and having local leaders select their successors resulted in fiefdoms.

Inattention from the national government facilitated the unevenness. “During the eighteenth century the anarchy of local autonomy was heightened by the fact that there was nothing that could be regarded, either in theory or in practice, as a system of Local Government.”39 Since the 1689 Revolution Parliament and the King had followed a policy of indifference and non-interference with local governments.40

40 Ibid., 3.
Unlike in England, where different formal institutions largely accounted for variation in type of governance, in France informal practices were most influential. In France economic control, its cultural legacies, and the isolation of rural life discouraged peasants from challenging local leaders. As a result, rural areas that had been dominated by large resident landlords typically resembled fiefdoms while urban and other rural areas usually more closely resembled representative governments.

In this era France had two subnational levels of government: the departments, which were similar to provinces, and the communes, which were equivalent to municipalities and townships. The lower level of government, the communes, is the focus here. Residents of the communes had the right to vote for governing councils and mayors. Beginning in 1874 all men could vote in municipal elections.41

Despite this uniformity in institutions, certain local areas were characterized by one-man governance. The leader was typically a landlord who held a large portion of the property and lived in the territory. In practice there was little right for alternative candidates to compete for support. Locals did not run against the landlord or the candidate with the landlord’s blessing, and the national political factions had no success in local elections. Although elections took place, they did not provide a genuine opportunity to reject ineffective incumbents. In addition to the absence of opposition candidates, direct pressure from these local leaders also prevented elections from being free and fair. At times of national crisis, these local leaders pressured voters in their territories to cast ballots in favor of particular candidates. This was evident with

the October 1877 ballot that ended the Seize Mai emergency.\footnote{Peter Jones, \textit{Politics and Rural Society: The Southern Massif Central, c. 1750-1880} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 261.} Electoral corruption also occurred elsewhere, particularly before 1913 when the secret ballot was introduced.\footnote{Magraw, \textit{France, 1815-1914: The Bourgeois Century}, 222.} However, electoral competition seems to have been particularly weak and consistently problematic in these rural regions where a residential landlord held a large portion of the property.

These local leaders’ dominance was a result of landlords’ economic control and cultural legacies of that control. Despite its reputation as a boon to the peasants, the Revolution of 1789 did not wrench economic control from the more affluent. The sale of France’s public lands, consisting in large part of property taken from the Church and from the aristocracy, “favored mainly the urban bourgeoisie and the well-to-do peasantry,” who mostly didn’t want to farm it themselves, but make money by renting it to small farmers.\footnote{Harvey Goldberg, “The Myth of the French Peasant,” \textit{American Journal of Economics and Sociology} 13, no. 4 (1954): 366.}

The Revolution thereby created a body of large middle-class landowners, while the post-Revolutionary period actually witnessed the reappearance of a sector of aristocratic landowners. This group was in part recruited from the new Napoleonic aristocracy, men who were rank opportunists seeking land for additional revenue. For the rest, it was formed from the old ruling class, nobles who had somehow managed to hold fast to their estates during the Revolution and returned émigrés who were able after 1815 to repossess part of their expropriated lands.\footnote{Ibid.}

The systems of tenant farming and sharecropping endured after the Revolution so that a single person often economically dominated a commune.

Landlords who had held a large portion of the property in a territory exerted political control over the peasants. These landlords also tended to hold local political positions. Because peasants were economically dependent on them, they did not challenge their rule and they tended
to vote for candidates the landlords supported in national elections. Peasants’ dependence on them also allowed local elites to resist the encroachment of national political factions. Voting supposedly took place, in many parts of France, within the context of a hierarchical society in which local notables were able to influence the votes of their social inferiors: access to land, charity, and even salvation could depend on voting the right way. “Peasant” voters were therefore constrained in their choices; unable to select candidates on the basis of a rational consideration of policies and programs, they were influenced by local networks of kinship, clientage, and local interest.

Local political opposition was unlikely to form, and alternative political factions from the capital were effectively locked out. This economic dependence resembles the contemporary situation where individuals’ lack of economic autonomy from their leaders discourages them from challenging their policies and leadership.

The same economic forces that fueled national democratization also eroded tenant farming and sharecropping and reduced landlords’ economic control of peasants. Economic development of France by the mid-nineteenth century made the national transition to democracy possible.

The authoritarian Empire fell victim to forces created by its own brilliant achievements in economic modernization. Developments such as the spectacular growth of big business and the completion of a national railroad network hastened the establishment of a national market. Within this market, small and medium-sized producers still dominated. As they became more conscious of their stake in the economy, they claimed a stronger voice in the management of France’s affairs. Pressures for democratization of the government followed.

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Supporters of a republican France came to power nationally due to their ability to unite these producers; they portrayed republican government “as the natural alliance of healthy, productive, useful capitalists with rising nouvelles couches – lawyers, doctors, teachers, peasants. Only the republic could reconcile ‘sacred property rights’ with the legitimate aspirations of the masses.”

Another scholar concurs, noting, “The republicans preempted the revolution, organized it, and set its limits. They could not have done so had they not acted from a firm foundation of capitalist and private property that had been consolidated during the waning years of the Second Empire.”

These same forces had also eroded tenant farming and sharecropping by the late 1870s. Tenant farming was quickly vanishing, and sharecropping had already “dwindled to the point of insignificance.” Yet, landlords continued to dominate. Nearly half the people who worked in agriculture did not own the land they farmed. In 1882 slightly more than 45 percent of the farm land was owned by four percent of the farm-owning population.

Moreover, cultural legacies of the former economic systems endured, and these legacies continued to discourage peasants from contesting local governance. Local elites’ enduring dominance came from a common cultural value of deference to authority. Peasants continued to defer to local elites who had traditionally controlled them economically. This cultural legacy was compounded by peasants’ isolation from national politics. The seclusion of rural life tied peasants even more firmly to national leaders.

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51 Magraw, France, 1815-1914: The Bourgeois Century, 212.
Physical and economic isolation, where they obtained, limited the alternatives or the access to them, and imposed a hierarchy of priorities. …Work, crops, and land were what mattered; access to them, to cash, to help in need; and all of these were tied to personal relations. So was the general welfare of the community, whose fate rested in the hands of a strictly limited few: a family or two. …Judicious regard for private and community interests made conformity with the concerns of notables hardly a sacrifice, and possibly quite profitable…But in any case selling one’s vote or giving it to one’s master was seen as the trade of an empty right for concrete advantage.56

This isolation also gave many peasants little reason to participate in national politics. Some scholars have claimed that French peasants were politicized during the French Revolution or the period from 1848 to 1851, but Weber argues that “though many regions did indeed move at the pace historians indicate, others took more time. …Politics in those rural parts of France that I have looked at remained in an archaic stage—local and personal—into at least the 1880’s.”57 Weber observes that in the first half of the nineteenth century peasants saw themselves as completely disconnected from the French national government: “…government and state in the first half of the nineteenth century were dimly seen as agencies for the exaction of taxes, occasionally interfering to impose public order (not necessarily identical with local custom) and to mete out justice (not necessarily identical with equity). …It was no part of the peasants’ life, he had no share in it; that it might represent him would seem nonsense.”58 The republicans of the Second Republic had made a concerted, but apparently unsuccessful, effort to politicize the peasants. They sent delegates to the villages, and they tried to recruit schoolteachers to propagandize for the republic.59 There were also political clubs, which seemed to have little impact on peasants’ isolation.

57 Ibid., 241.
58 Ibid., 242-243.
It is hard to tell the effect of clubs (open or secret) on the politically uninitiated. The humble may well have enjoyed an extension of traditional sociability, especially in the company of their social betters. But how many of the latters’ ideas rubbed off on them and in what form? One may as easily imagine that such unwonted extensions of sociability helped establish new or closer personal relations which would be simply variants of quite traditional kinds of deference and allegiance.60

Peasants’ detachment from national political life made it easier for local elites to gain political dominance in rural communities. As Weber explains, “Local notables exercised political influence not only because they wielded power, but because political issues mattered more to them than to the peasant; by his simple support, the peasant could thus at no pain oblige associates or superiors who seemed to care about such useless things.”61

Subnational oligarchies and one-man governance meant that democracy was largely absent in some parts of England and France even after democratic transition. However, this situation did not last. As the next section describes, democracy developed evenly in each country over time, although by different pathways.

**Overcoming Unevenness**

England’s parliament largely forced democracy upon recalcitrant municipalities and rural areas by enacting legislation to ensure that formal subnational institutions were uniform across the country. By contrast, democracy developed evenly across France once opposition ideas from towns and national institutions reached the villages. A different model best represents each of these experiences.

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60 Ibid.: 530.
England

The direction model best characterizes how unevenness in local governance was overcome in England. The national parliament instructed municipalities and then rural areas that had not previously elected local leaders to begin to do so. Implementation of the parliamentary acts succeeded because of the capacity of the English state, but also because the reforms aligned with the interests of many different peoples. Urban dwellers sought to have greater political voice in order to stem local government corruption; radicals and Whigs in Parliament passed the municipal reform in order to weaken Tories; Conservatives in Parliament later extended the reform to rural areas to head off Liberals’ more revolutionary aims and win their support on other issues.

The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act mandated local elections in urban areas. The 1835 Act required that councils be elected to run municipalities. Any taxpayer who had lived in a municipality for three years had the right to vote in council elections. The act also established procedures to encourage transparency in the councils’ operation: council meetings had to be open to the public and council accounts were subject to annual audits. Councils’ authority included levying taxes to overcome a deficit, and later for other purposes: issuing licenses for the sale of alcohol, developing by-laws to improve local governance and reduce public nuisances, and controlling the local police. Only parliament had the right to augment the councils’

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62 At this point, I have not found evidence to show how English state capacity made this implementation possible. In this paper it is presented as a given, but I will conduct additional research.
63 Women were excluded. Lee, Aspects of British Political History, 1815-1914, 70-71.
64 Ibid; Smellie, A History of Local Government, 31.
authority. The 1888 Local Government Act extended the local self-government reforms to rural areas by mandating county elections.66

The impact of these reforms was significant. “The result was the gradual replacement of aristocratic control over local government by the upper middle classes, a process which was more obviously apparent here [locally] than in parliament.”67 The middle class came to dominate the municipal councils, and these councils, unlike Parliament, became a political outlet for this group.68 This experience also led to middle class expectations for inclusion in the national political arena. In terms of the work of the municipal councils, they reduced financial irregularities that had previously plagued local government.69 In the countryside, the transfer of power was less dramatic as the country gentlemen tended to obtain seats in the new councils.70

The 1835 and 1888 Acts made elections for local leaders the norm across England. Although the national leadership’s response to public complaints about poor local governance set the country on the path to these reforms, it was a power play among members of parliament, not democratic ideals, that ultimately enabled the passage of the Acts. Residents of municipalities with closed bodies or corporations were increasingly complaining in the early 1800s that these institutions did not perform their functions. A royal commission investigated the complaints and found them justified. This occurred within the context of a struggle for power among radicals and Tories. Although no longer the dominant political force in England, Tories controlled municipal corporations. These corporations had been established when Tories were dominant and the process of incumbents selecting their successors allowed the Tories to maintain control of them. A radical led the commission that confirmed the municipal corporations’ poor record.

66 Ibid., 37.
67 Lee, Aspects of British Political History, 1815-1914, 70-71.
69 Lee, Aspects of British Political History, 1815-1914, 71.
Passage of the 1835 Act then enabled radicals, other reformers, and Whigs, also Tory adversaries, to weaken the Tories by eliminating municipal corporations, one of their strongholds.71

Complaints of rural residents and strengthening democratic ideals facilitated passage of the 1888 Act, but it was ultimately another power struggle that extended elections into the countryside. Small farmers had grown increasingly disaffected with their limited political rights.

[Farmers] were completely excluded from any voice in county affairs. The wealthy Justices assessed and spent the rates [taxes], but the farmers had to pay them, and were coming to demand some part in the county government. As the burden of these rates grew heavier, the insistence of the farmers grew louder, and from this claim there was born a movement which grew into a clamour for elected county boards.72

In addition to these complaints, arguments about the inherent benefits of local self-government facilitated the second act. For example, John Stuart Mill criticized county government, which included the countryside, as being the most aristocratic of all English government, even more so than the House of Lords, which was tempered by the elected House of Commons. Elected county councils became part of the Liberal platform in the 1870s, although it was under a Conservative government that the 1888 Act passed. The bill was developed once Liberals controlled the government, but they decided to extend the franchise to agricultural workers first so that they could vote on the development of local government in the countryside. The Conservative government ultimately passed the act, not in the name of democratic ideals, but because it needed reformers’ support on other issues and it feared that Liberals would otherwise

72 Keith-Lucas, The English Local Government Franchise: A Short History, 90.
adopt more radical measures once they regained power. In sum, geographic variation in regime type in England was overcome by national government direction that was compatible with the interests of different elites and non-elites.

France

The diffusion model best accounts for the even development of democracy in France. New ideas reached peasants from towns and national institutions and broke down one-man governance in rural areas. The growth and expansion of towns and the introduction of national compulsory education and universal conscription ended the seclusion of rural areas. As peasants were exposed to ideas and debates from outside their villages, their deference to local leaders diminished and their interest in national politics increased. They became receptive to opposition initiatives, whether from local political entrepreneurs or national political factions.

As the number and size of towns grew over time, the more pluralistic politics of these urban areas spread to the villages.

Proximity to towns and their markets…accelerated the tendency to movement and evolution. …The tension between the little town—sub-prefecture or district center—and the surrounding countryside was increased and complicated by urban novelties. In turn, the small town often introduced new political tensions to the countryside.

For example, as one scholar describing a particular department writes, “in Allier the political emancipation of the rural areas from the domination of great landowners seems clearly due to the vitality of certain bourgs, ‘kernels of opposition,’ which gave the countryside around them an alternative political lead.” Elections strengthened this process. “[E]ach election, with the

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73 Ibid., 98-100, 105, 107, 108, 111.
75 Ibid., 271.
campaign preceding it and the talk this caused, introduced indifferent populations to new practices and issues.” Weber calls these elections “the most effective politicizing agent.”

France’s significant economic growth and rapid economic industrial expansion in the final years of the 1800s and the first decade of the 20th century accelerated the process of diffusion of ideas from the towns. “Growth was particularly rapid in the decade after 1905. The size of the industrial workforce increased suddenly after decades of stagnation. Industrial investment doubles in 1890-1914, after falling in the 1880s, contributing to a 57 per cent rise per capita in industrial productivity between 1901 and 1911.” This industrial expansion resulted in the growth of towns, in number and size, and further diffusion.

Siren pressures of national economic integration brought in their train new economic stereotypes which began to erode the particularist cultures of recalcitrant regions such as the southern Massif Central…The dilemma did not become acute until the 1880s, but it can be discerned in the polarized electoral conflict [between the republicans and conservatives] of that decade which left deep rifts in the ranks of noble and non-noble proprietors. Many bolstered their waning influence by concluding an alliance with the church, while others—recognizing the inevitability of ‘la république au village’—aligned themselves with government.

The introduction of national compulsory education and universal conscription further eroded the seclusion of the countryside, reducing peasants’ deference to local leaders and increasing their interest in national politics. Economic development also contributed to these trends by freeing peasants to spend less of their time on their own survival and more time on political issues. “Public sensitivity grew as the standard of living climbed. In a world where riches and poverty had seemed prescribed by a predetermined and unalterable order, the chief

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76 Ibid.
77 Magraw, France, 1815-1914: The Bourgeois Century, 231.
78 Jones, Politics and Rural Society: The Southern Massif Central, c. 1750-1880, 263.
question for most had been to survive…. Once elementary needs began to be satisfied, there was time to lay claim to more…”79

One result of this evolution is that peasants were less likely to vote for the national candidates their local leaders preferred. “Changes in voting behavior—that is, the conversion of rural voters to the Republic—came with a loosening of these local restraints on the independence of the voter, through competition within the elite for rural votes or through education of country dwellers.”80

IV. A Contrasting Case: Sweden

Unlike England and France, Sweden did not have pockets of non-democracy after its democratic transition. This conclusion is tentative as the project is still in its early stages and contradictory evidence might yet be uncovered. However, Sweden’s local government history does seem to be quite different from England’s and France’s.

Sweden’s democratic transition can be dated to 1809 with the end to the king’s absolute power. A few nobles in Stockholm, frustrated by a disastrous war with Russia, deposed King Gustav IV and participated in the drafting of a new constitution, which helped to level the power imbalance between parliament and the king: “What made this new system different, in theory at least, was that the king could not rule absolutely or arbitrarily. Parliament was to meet every five years…could review the advice given the king by his counselors and impeach those who broke the law… [and] had power over taxation and budget decisions.”81 With this the country was extracted from the former non-democratic regime. However, the Swedish parliament

80 Lehning, Peasant and French: Cultural Contact in Rural France During the Nineteenth Century, 181.
represented less than one-sixth of the population because it was still based on the ancient four
estates: the nobility, clergy, burghers, and farmers. The middle class—"civil servants who
were not of noble birth, and men of independent means such as doctors, schoolmasters,
technicians, and many landowners"—were left out. In 1866 the national government dissolved
the old parliament, and the new one was no longer based on the four estates.

After this national transition to democracy, and in fact, even immediately before it, there
are no signs that Sweden was plagued with subnational oligarchies or one-man dominance.

Swedish local government has deep popular roots. …From the 1760s each parish
acquired formal responsibility for public services—first social welfare and care of the
poor and subsequently education and book distribution…Sweden’s unbroken traditions of
local democracy were given a new legal form in the 1862 Local Government Ordinances
which established 2,500 municipalities and self-governing provincial and city councils.
The councils represented social classes, including the artisans in the cities. Local
authorities were given the right to decide issues within their territories and to levy taxes.
The structure remained largely undisturbed until the 1960s, proving itself compatible
with rapid industrialisation in the twentieth century. The main changes came between
1962 and 1973 when the number of local authorities was drastically reduced.…

The provincial and city councils were elected throughout the country, so there was not variation
in the formal institutions, as there was in England. Nor does the evidence indicate they were
subject to one-man dominance as in France.

The franchise and national representation continued to be very limited even after the
reform of the national parliament, and this created some differences among subnational units.
Property requirements for voting limited the franchise. “The electoral law passed in 1866 and
valid until the reform bill of 1907 stipulated that voters had either to own real estate of a taxable
value of at least 1,000 Kronor, or to have leased farm property whose taxable value exceeded

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82 Ibid.
6,000 Kronor for at least five years, or paid taxes on an income of at least 800 Kronor p.c. a year.85 More people in towns likely met these requirements than people in rural areas, so the franchise extended to more people in certain areas of the country.

Property requirements for running for the First Chamber of the national parliament skewed national representation resulting in Stockholm being grossly overrepresented compared to the rest of the country. Unlike the Second Chamber, which was selected through general elections, the First Chamber was indirectly elected by provincial and municipal councils. Steep property requirements and the absence of a residential requirement allowed Stockholmers to seek election outside of their home city and capture 40 percent of the seats in the First Chamber.86

These subnational differences in franchise and national representation recall those in England and France. What distinguishes Sweden from the other countries is the apparent evenness of democracy, with its flaws of the time, throughout the country after, and even before, democratic transition. At this point I cannot explain the pathway by which democracy developed evenly through Sweden. At least in terms of its timing relative to transition, Sweden’s pathway seems to be different from England’s and France’s.

V. Concluding Observations

It is evident that unevenness in democracy is not exclusive to contemporary hybrid regimes and democratizing countries, but also existed in first wave ones. The analysis of England and France, unitary states at the time, also adds to the growing evidence that unevenness in democracy it not merely a problem in countries with federalism. At the same time some

86 Verney, Parliamentary Reform in Sweden, 1866-1921, 89.
countries, such as Sweden, may have managed to have democracy develop throughout their territories even before the national government extracted itself from a non-democratic regime.

The unevenness that did exist in first wave democracies, such as England and France, is relevant to contemporary regimes. The early democratizers exhibited pockets of non-democratic rule, just as we see in many contemporary countries. The first wave democracies also had subnational variation in terms of the extension of the franchise; however, this is less illuminating as contemporary countries have universal suffrage. The early democratizers’ geographic unevenness in national parliamentary representation may suggest another line of research, although changes to electoral rules appear to make for a relatively easy fix.

A more vexing problem is undemocratic subnational regimes. To what extent did the evidence from England and France match the proposed pathways and others’ accounts about how undemocratic subnational regimes collapse nowadays? The direction model, which fit England, resonates with scholars’ observation that national governments play an important role in the maintenance and possible destruction of these regimes in the contemporary period. While scholars have suggested why undemocratic subnational regimes may be in the interest of national elites, more theorizing needs to be done about why their destruction may be in the interest of national leaders. In the case of England, competition among national parties led one to dismantle the undemocratic subnational regimes. National leaders did not want authoritarian enclaves to endure because they were strongholds of their opponents.

Not only national leaders, but also local oppositions can play a role in democratizing subnational units of a country. This is captured by the collaboration model. This may also characterize events in England, but from the evidence so far it is not clear. The only hint of organized opposition is Keith-Lucas’s quote, above, about a movement for elected county boards.
growing from farmers’ disgruntlement. There were local complaints about governance that came
to national leaders’ attention, but it is not clear that these complaints led to lots of organized
opposition. It is also not evident that the national leaders collaborated with leaders of any local
oppositions that existed. This issue can likely be resolved with additional research about
England.

Of broader interest is whether organized local opposition may be more likely in
contemporary periods than historically. Over time more examples and resources for
organization, such as the U.S. civil rights movement and mass education, have accumulated, and
more obstacles, such as extreme isolation of rural populations, have fallen, so that perhaps local
opposition is more relevant today than in the past. This is something to be attentive to in further
research.

The diffusion model characterizes France and draws on existing theories of subnational
diffusion of democracy and current ideas about the isolation of local opposition. The evidence
from France hinted only at the spread of ideas as the mechanism of diffusion. It is possible that
Hiskey and Canache’s idea that an opposition victory in a nearby territory may embolden the
opposition and boost turnout elsewhere may be relevant. At least such occurrences in nearby
towns may have encouraged individual rural voters to challenge one-man governance through
their vote, even if not through an organized opposition. As local elections were allowed in
France it is not evident that another mechanism they propose—the introduction of electoral
institutions as a means to retake power—was relevant. Currently I have no evidence of another
mechanism they propose—leaders introducing more rights.87

Two broader issues regarding mechanisms are important to consider. First, from the
French case, it seems evident that national institutions, namely the education system and

military, played a role in strengthening rural residents’ opposition to local leaders by exposing
to new ideas. This mechanism is not captured by the subnational democracy literature.
Second, only subnational and national diffusion, not international, seem to have been influential
in France. Perhaps in previous eras foreign ideas and resources did not reach past national
capitals and second cities into villages. As in the case of local opposition, international diffusion
may be a factor more relevant today than in the past.

Of the three cases, France is most relevant to contemporary hybrid regimes or new
democracies with pockets of non-democracy. By contrast, Sweden does not seem to have
suffered from this problem at the time of its democratic transition. For Sweden the emergence
and diffusion models, or perhaps collaboration with national nongovernmental actors, are most
likely to account for the even development of democracy in the country before democratic
transition. It is unlikely that the national government imposed democracy on local areas before
the national government became democratic. In England the problem was largely one of absent
electoral institutions in some subnational territories. By contrast, the obstacle we find currently
is that electoral institutions exist, and are often even uniform, across subnational units. Instead,
the problem is with informal practices, as in the case of France. This suggests that diffusion of
ideas and resources that increase opposition locally may be more relevant today than direction by
national governments. However, resources may need to come from organizations other than
parties and through economic changes when party systems are weak, as they are in some
countries of the world. The fact that many national governments in hybrid regimes and new
democracies lack capacity, in terms of enforcing rule of law for example, further compounds the
problem of relying on national governments to develop democracy evenly throughout their
countries.
This paper suggests that democracy potentially can develop evenly through a country through a variety of pathways. Theories of democratization should not stop with explanations of national elites’ introduction of democratic institutions and factors that promote the endurance of those institutions. Instead, pathways of subnational democratization need to be uncovered and used to reconfigure theories of democratization.

Works Cited


