**Summary of Literature Review**

Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse’s (2006) research on the connection between literacy and communism’s durability seeks to find the mechanism underlying whether communist parties lost or retained rule after the first free elections in countries of the former Soviet Union. It also explores why power transitions were or were not followed by democratic rule. The authors find that, in nations where mass schooling was introduced before the rise of communism, those schooling systems fostered a set of shared standards and nationalism which prevented communist ideals from taking hold as much as in other nations. In those nations in which mass schooling was introduced under the communist system, those who experienced technological and social advancements, along with their associated improvements in quality of life, during communist rule associated those changes with communism. Whether mass schooling was introduced prior to or under communist rule correlates strongly with the persistence of communist rule after the Soviet collapse. The authors argue that this correlation demonstrates the most plausible mechanism for explaining whether free elections resulted in democracy or the endurance of communism, holding up as most likely when compared to other causal hypotheses.

Geoffrey Evans and Pauline Rose explore the effect of education on support for democracy in Malawi using data from a 1999 Afrobarometer survey. Evans and Rose look at the relationship between education level and responses to questions designed to evaluate both support for and understanding of democracy in the context of Malawi government and society. Those who answered the survey in 1999 received their education under authoritarian rule. The authors find a positive linear correlation between level of education and agreement with the statement, “Democracy is preferable to any other form of government” (Evans 2007, 908). There is a negative correlation between level of education and agreement with the statement, “In some circumstances, a nondemocratic government can be preferable to a democratic government” (Evans 2007, 908). When asked what words or phrases describe democracy, 23% of respondents with no formal education answered that they don’t know. Meanwhile, 12% of those with some primary education, 3% of those who completed primary education, 2% of those who had secondary education, and 0% of respondents with post-secondary education answered that they did not know how to describe democracy (Evans 2007, 909).

In a paper published in the *International Journal of Social Economics* in 2009, Neelesh Gounder, Mahendra Reddy, and Biman Chand Prasad examine whether education has an impact on support for democracy in Fiji. The authors find an initial correlation between level of education and support for democracy. However, after controlling for other factors which may influence democratic desire (age, gender, ethnicity, and respondents’ parents’ level of schooling), democratic desire no longer significantly correlates with level of education (Gounder 2010). Gounder, Reddy, and Prasad propose the explanation that curriculums in Fijian schools lack any “coherent and sequential programme of citizenship education” (2010, 144).

Tom Ulbricht (2018) finds that a flaw in modern research into democratic desire arises when researchers assume that the word “democracy” will hold the same or similar allusions, connotations, and associations among all respondents, regardless of the regime under which they live. This makes comparisons between countries far less meaningful. Ulbricht argues that responses should be qualified by respondents’ perceptions of democracy. Ulbricht’s results support his hypothesis that, when liberal democracy is clearly defined, people who are unfamiliar with the concept tend not to desire it, instead only actually desiring a more abstract and less considered concept of democracy. The most predictive independent variable in Ulbricht’s research is the regime type under which respondents live because, he says, the context in which respondents develop their idea of democracy “conditions” their conceptualization of democracy.

Filipe Campante and Davin Chor (2012) study the relationship between education and political destabilization in Middle Eastern countries during the Arab Spring. The authors argue that a mismatch between education and employment is the primary indicator of political instability because those with higher education but fewer job prospects tend to be more likely to engage in political protest. Campante and Chor find that most of the countries which experienced significant upheaval during the first year of the Arab Spring (e.g. Tunisia, Egypt) also experienced a significant mismatch between education and employment, while those countries which endured that first year relatively peacefully (e.g. Qatar, United Arab Emirates) had a labor market which matched gains in education (2012, 170).

Sources

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