Explaining Subnational Regime Variation:

Country-Level Factors

Kelly M. McMann, Matthew Maguire, John Gerring, Michael Coppedge, and Staffan I. Lindberg

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The study of political regimes has largely overlooked variation within countries, despite empirical evidence showing that the same regime type does not necessarily exist throughout a country. Scholars have uncovered this variation mostly in countries labeled as democratic or democratizing, finding that some territories in these countries experience a high degree of democracy while others qualify as "authoritarian enclaves."[1] Residents of one province enjoy free and fair elections and numerous civil liberties, for example, while residents of a neighboring province do not. Similar subnational regime variation, or unevenness, can exist within authoritarian countries.

Unevenness adds a new dimension to our understanding of regimes and regime change. A better understanding of unevenness can help scholars improve regime typologies and conceptions of democracy.[2] Currently countries with minimal and substantial subnational regime variation are treated identically in regime typologies and conceptions of democracy, overlooking countries' degrees of subnational unevenness. Examining unevenness also has the potential to improve theories of regime change. Territorial unevenness is one of the obvious obstacles to regime consolidation; the "deepening" of democracy, for example, is partly a question of making democracy homogeneous at all levels of government.[3] Understanding unevenness can therefore help open the "black box" between theories of regime transition and regime consolidation. A clearer picture of unevenness can also illuminate regime breakdown.[4] That is, democratic or democratizing countries might be susceptible to breakdowns due to authoritarian enclaves, and authoritarian national regimes might be vulnerable as a result of democratic enclaves. Undergirding these theoretical payoffs are normative and

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practical concerns: in countries with democratic or democratizing national regimes, all citizens, regardless of their location, should enjoy the benefits of democratic institutions and liberties. A better understanding of subnational regime variation can be helpful to democracy advocates and policymakers who are trying to extend these benefits to all.

As a step toward improving understanding of unevenness, this article offers an explanation for why some countries are more prone to subnational regime variation than others and provides data depicting how common this unevenness is. These contributions do not supplant existing work, but rather complement it. The existing subnational democracy literature[5] has addressed a different question—why do some regions within a country have a lower level of democracy than others—rather than our question of why some countries are more susceptible to subnational regime variation.[6] The questions are related, but not identical. The factors that make a country prone to variation might differ from the factors that make a particular region an outlier. The subnational democracy literature has mostly pointed to proximate causes of subnational levels of democracy. By labelling these "proximate," we mean those causes near the outcome end of the causal chain and endogenous to government and elites. The factors identified by existing works include political institutions that reduce the national government's interest in democratizing regions and economic monopolies created by subnational elites and used to restrict political freedoms.[7]

Our theory, by contrast, focuses on national, distal causes of unevenness. By "distal" causes, we mean those causes far from the outcome end of the causal chain and exogenous to government and elites. We show that countries that are hard to govern by virtue of their diversity, topography, and/or size are prone to unevenness. These demographic and geographic features increase social heterogeneity and challenge the national government's control over subnational units, contributing to variation across subnational regimes.

We agree that actors are important, as emphasized in previous subnational democracy studies, but in this article our focus is on a prior link in the causal chain. The features we identify are exogenous to government. They promote unevenness directly, and they also contribute to it indirectly by constituting fundamental structures that condition the behavior of elites. Our examination of distal causes complements the existing subnational democracy literature's focus on proximate causes to provide a more comprehensive understanding of subnational regime variation.

Our different question and theory necessitate a methodological approach unlike those of prior subnational democracy studies. Unevenness is a country characteristic, so we rely on a cross-national analysis, employing national-level data. By contrast, investigations of subnational outliers examine one or two countries and use subnational-level data. As is typical for large-N cross-national studies, our analysis does not test causal mechanisms; however, it does test the extent to which particular distal factors increase the likelihood that countries experience unevenness. And, the findings are consistent with our theory about how distal factors and unevenness are linked.

We are also interested in whether these distal factors are influential when taking into account proximate factors. Our models include numerous proximate factors from

the subnational democracy literature. Global data do not, however, exist to include in our models one proximate factor: the will of national government leaders to exert national control and democratize subnational political units. Subnational democracy studies have shown that it can be politically beneficial to national government leaders and their agents, such as police forces and bureaucrats, to allow subnational regimes distinctive from the national government to endure.[8] Similarly, the civil war and state capacity literatures have shown that national government leaders sometimes lack the incentives to extend territorial reach.[9] This lack of will is compatible with our argument because the will to exert national control and democratize subnational units is endogenous to capabilities, which are a function of distal factors, such as diversity, topography, and size. If national leaders and their agents know that extending territorial control is going to cost them resources,[10] with uncertain success, it is rational for them to pursue an indirect rule strategy that results in greater unevenness. If we could test will, in addition to capabilities, perhaps we could explain more variance, but the absence of such as test does not invalidate what we have found. As our results show, on average, in a large sample, a significant portion of the variance in unevenness is explained by variables that are more consistent with the difficulty of imposing uniformity. A final way that our analysis departs from existing work is by encompassing the past century, rather than just the contemporary period.

To conduct this analysis we enlist the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset, which includes measures of unevenness in nearly all countries of the world, with annual data beginning in 1900.[11] This enables us to provide the first global and historical study of unevenness. To take maximum advantage of this dataset, we employ a statistical model that distinguishes the "within-country" and "between-country" effects of time-varying observations. This approach avoids the kind of omitted variable bias that plagues most random effects models, without discarding time-invariant observations, as one would in a fixed-effects model.[12] Our approach is also innovative because, as a robustness check, our statistical analysis takes into account measurement uncertainty, thus providing a better estimate of overall uncertainty in reported results.

This article provides empirical evidence about subnational regime variation not yet revealed by earlier work. Prior research investigated a small number of countries with fairly similar characteristics. Most are located in Latin America or the post-Soviet region, have newly democratic or hybrid regimes, are federal states, and are examined in the contemporary era. We find that the unevenness exists in all regions of the world, though it is more common in some regions than others. It is most common in countries with hybrid national regimes—regimes with both democratic and authoritarian elements—and it exists in both unitary and federal states and in different time periods.[13]

In sum, this article offers a new question, theory, approach, and empirical findings to understanding subnational regime variation. The article advances two related literatures: investigations of regime types and change and studies of subnational democracy. Our elucidation of the phenomenon of unevenness adds a new dimension to our understanding of regime typologies and conceptions of democracy, helps connect theories of regime transition and regime consolidation, and highlights a possible cause

of regime breakdown. Our theory of distal causes of unevenness illuminates why some countries are prone to subnational regime variation, whereas the subnational democracy literature's focus on proximate causes explains why specific subnational units differ. Our theory thus complements prior subnational democracy studies, and together that work and ours achieve a more comprehensive understanding of subnational regime variation.

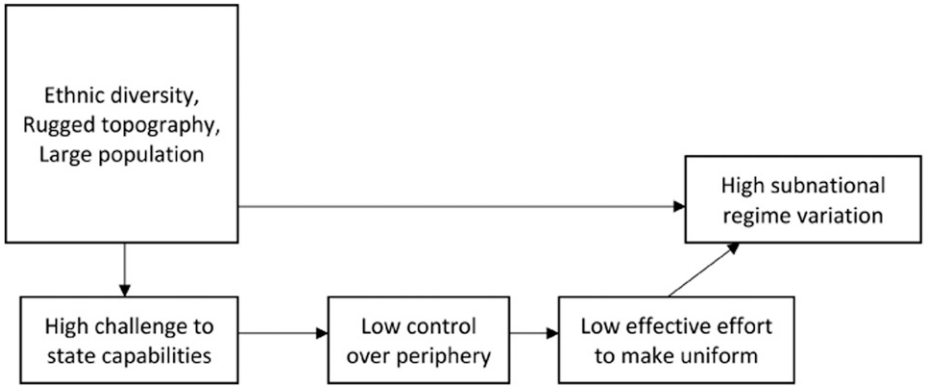
Theoretical Framework

To explain unevenness—a country characteristic—our theoretical framework focuses on national-level factors. We argue that greater social heterogeneity of a country and structural challenges to the state's ability to govern the periphery result in subnational regime variation. Research from anthropology, biology, economics, and political science has identified three key country characteristics—ethnic diversity, a rugged topography, and a large population—that promote social heterogeneity and challenge the state's ability to govern the periphery, so we employ these.[14] We expect that ethnic diversity, a rugged topography, and a large population directly promote the development of subnational political units with different regime characteristics. These characteristics also, we argue, make it more difficult for the state, when it aims to, to exert control outside the capital and thus effectively bring subnational regimes in line with the laws and practices of the national government.[15] As a consequence, there is greater subnational regime variation.

We expect that ethnic diversity promotes unevenness in two ways, as depicted in Figure 1. First, this diversity can directly result in subnational political units having different regime characteristics. This proposed mechanism is supported by one strand of the subnational democracy literature, which has shown how local cultural conditions can shape subnational regime type. For example, scholars have demonstrated that in recent decades, indigenous groups with strong patriarchal norms in the Mexican state of Oaxaca created municipal institutions that prohibited women's participation in the selection of mayors for several years; whereas, those with more progressive norms did not do so.[16]

A second way we expect that significant ethnic diversity can promote unevenness is by challenging the national government. Studies of nation- and state-building support this idea, showing that subnational elites, and sometimes average residents themselves, will defend their political practices and thus can be hostile to national government homogenization efforts.[17] Moreover, research on civil war indicates that when a particularly distinct group is concentrated in a subnational territory rather than dispersed throughout a country, its resistance is likely to be even more effective.[18] As an illustration of this, consider the Thai province of Pattani. Since its integration into Thailand in the early 1900s, the majority Muslim Malay population there has struggled against homogenization, including national efforts to end local governance by Sharia law. A separatist movement—the country's strongest minority resistance—and the Thai

Figure 1 Depiction of Argument



military response have resulted in gross violations of civil liberties and local elections marred by voter intimidation, unseen in most provinces of the country.[19]

The national government can also face structural challenges that result in higher unevenness. We argue that a rugged topography and large population can promote unevenness through the same two pathways as ethnic diversity.[20] First, a rugged landscape and large population directly promote the development of subnational political units with different regime characteristics, and, second, this variation challenges the national government's extension of power over the territory when that is an objective. Research by anthropologists, biologists, and economists suggests that a rugged landscape encourages the development of distinctive cultural traits (other than just ethnic identity).[21] Economist Kuznets's (1960) work indicates that a large population results in a greater diversity of preferences, norms, and practices (besides ethnic ones).[22] Madison underscored this point in *The Federalist Papers*.[23] Both a rugged topography and a large population result in a greater diversity of political institutions and practices and thus directly promote unevenness. The greater challenge of governing different, rather than similar, units and the greater likelihood of subnational elites and average residents defending their distinctive institutions and practices make it more difficult for the national government to extend power territorially and eliminate variation when that is an aim. In addition, as actual physical obstacles, a rugged landscape and a large population are also challenges to national government capabilities, as studies of civil war, economic development, and state-building have demonstrated.[24] Regardless of state wealth and other measures of state strength, it is more difficult to extend control over a rugged country as opposed to a topographically more forgiving one, and it is more difficult to maintain authority over a large population as opposed to a smaller one. This has been true for India, a country with the world's second largest population and some of the Earth's tallest mountains and densest forests. For example, the national government failed to bring the former state of Jammu and

Kashmir, covered by five mountain ranges, into the democratic national fold since the country's independence. Instead, a non-democratic regime ruled the state, engaging in election fraud and violating civil rights and fueling violent separatism by prohibiting legal means of protest.[25] In sum, we theorize that the degree of ethnic diversity, the ruggedness of the landscape, and the size of the population each has a positive, direct, independent effect on subnational regime variation.

Challenges to state capabilities reduce the national government's control over the periphery and thus the likelihood of it making effective efforts to homogenize subnational regimes and bring them into line with national laws and practices. This holds true whether those national laws and practices lean democratic or authoritarian.

Including the effort of national officials in our theoretical framework, as shown in Figure 1, connects our argument with prior work: it acknowledges that agency matters and links the distal causes we have identified with the elite behaviors others have examined. Our explanation underscores that these exogenous factors condition national leaders' behavior (as well as directly promote unevenness). National leaders' effort to exert uniform control over their countries can vary: some may find it politically beneficial to allow regimes distinctive from the national government to endure.[26] However, ethnic diversity, a rugged landscape, and a large population directly promote unevenness, we argue, and they will make efforts to exert uniform control less effective when these efforts do occur. Given two national leaders attempting to exert control over their countries' peripheries, the efforts of the one facing greater ethnic diversity, a more rugged landscape, and a larger population will be less effective. Effort is important, but these distal factors also have an effect.

Our focus on exogenous factors clarifies the causal pathways to unevenness. The factors we identify contribute to unevenness, not the reverse. It is unfathomable that unevenness caused ruggedness in countries. It is also difficult to imagine that the variation affected population size. There might, however, be a feedback mechanism between unevenness and ethnic diversity: distinct local political practices might help preserve ethnic differences. For the purposes of this article, our interest, however, is in ethnic diversity's impact on unevenness.

Hypotheses

According to our theoretical framework, unevenness is a product of two intertwined factors: social heterogeneity and structural challenges to the state's ability to govern. It follows that any factor contributing to one or the other (or both) should also affect the level of unevenness in a country. Drawing on the research from anthropology, biology, economics, and political science, we propose three hypotheses.

First, we expect that ethnic diversity fosters greater unevenness by cultivating varied political institutions and practices within a country and hindering the national government's efforts at homogenization. We use the measure *Ethnic fractionalization*, which defines ethnicity as a combination of racial and linguistic characteristics and

represents the probability that two people chosen at random will not share any characteristic.[27] Unlike other measures of ethnicity, or, more broadly, culture, *Ethnic fractionalization* measures variation within countries, rather than their aggregate characteristics. This variation better captures the concept of social heterogeneity. Additional details about this and other measures appear in Table A1 in the online appendix.[28]

Second, we hypothesize that a country's rugged topography is an incubator for distinctive cultures and a barrier to involvement by the central government, thus promoting varied political institutions and practices and also hindering the national government's extension of power territorially. We measure ruggedness by the percentage of land covered by *Mountains* within a country, transformed by the natural logarithm. Rather than looking simply at elevation, this measure also considers relative relief, steepness, and other factors, so that high elevation plateaus, for instance, do not count as rugged.[29] Although other physical challenges such as dense forests and archipelagos exist, our measure identifies a key dimension of ruggedness and has been used by other researchers for this purpose.[30]

Third, we posit that the demographic size of a country should lead to greater diversity of preferences, norms, and practices—thus fostering greater heterogeneity in political institutions and practices across regions and also complicating the central government's task of governing. Demographic size is measured by *Population*, transformed by the natural logarithm.[31]

Proximate Factors and National Regime Type

We are interested in whether the distal factors from our theoretical framework are influential even when taking into account proximate factors, so we include models that have both sets of factors. Proximate factors refer to those causes near the outcome end of the causal chain and endogenous to government and elites. The proximate factors we examine include those that the subnational democracy literature has emphasized and those that might explain the failure to extend national government control uniformly. We also investigate whether unevenness is simply explained by national regime type. The subnational democracy literature has identified center-periphery political institutions, subnational economic heterogeneity, and international influences as explanations for the existence of authoritarian or democratic enclaves within a country.

Center-periphery political institutions have been shown in the subnational democracy literature to help subnational officials maintain regimes that differ from the national regime. Federalism and electoral and party rules have received the most attention.

Federalism Most studies of subnational democracy postulate, or at least implicitly assume, that unevenness across regions of a country is primarily a product of federal systems of government. This is reflected in the frequency by which federal states are selected for study. Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Russia, and the United States are the most

commonly examined.[32] The central idea is that greater autonomy allows for greater subnational diversity. We test this idea with *Federalism*, using the Regional Authority Index (RAI) from Hooghe et al.[33] Unlike binary or categorical measures of federalism, the RAI is a continuous measure that captures the degree to which subnational units are autonomous.

Electoral and Party Rules The subnational democracy literature suggests that local leaders are sometimes able to maintain non-democratic regimes by ensuring that national leaders do not get drawn into local political conflicts, an event that might compel them to enforce national laws and disrupt local power structures.[34] Thus, we assume that when conflict is localized, it will generate greater unevenness across regions. Since electoral and party rules help to structure competition in a way that either nationalizes or localizes political conflict, they may have an important impact on the overall level of unevenness. For example, malapportionment in national legislatures may afford non-democratic subnational leaders additional protection by enabling those governing overrepresented territories to exercise greater influence in national politics.[35] *Malapportionment* is measured by summing the difference between each district's share of legislative seats and its population.[36] Proportional representation (PR) electoral rules, especially if combined with a closed party list, are likely to centralize power within political parties by enhancing national party leaders' influence over candidate selection and by encouraging party-centered, rather than candidate-centered, voting decisions.[37] This limits subnational leaders' ability to put in office national legislators who will prevent national government interference in their locales. This concept is measured with Gerring and Thacker's *Closed-list PR* trichotomous measure.[38]

Economic Heterogeneity Some subnational democracy literature has attributed authoritarian and democratic enclaves to subnational economic heterogeneity. These prior studies of one or two countries reveal a variety of causal mechanisms for non-democratic enclaves, including limited economic opportunities and high levels of inequality, but all highlight the general idea that poorer economic conditions promote non-democracy.[39] From these findings, we can surmise that greater variation in the economic strength of subnational political units might result in greater unevenness in subnational regime type within a country. This could be true in countries with either democratic- or authoritarian-leaning national regimes. To test for *Economic heterogeneity*, we use Lee and Rogers' measure of regional inequality within countries, equal to the variance in subnational regions' GDP weighted by population.[40] For our cross-national time series analysis, this is the best measure of varied economic strength across subnational political units.

International Influence Studies of individual countries have shown that neighboring democratic countries can contribute to the democratization of subnational units in nearby non-democratic countries and thus promote unevenness in subnational regime type.[41] We test this possibility by developing a measure, *Diverse regime neighborhood*,

that reflects differences in regime type between a country and its neighbors. The measure is equal to the average difference(s) in democracy scores between a country and each of its contiguous neighbors, weighted by GDP per capita, using the V-Dem Electoral Democracy index. We use data about national regime types to construct the measure because prior studies have focused on the influence of a neighboring country with a more democratic national regime. The weighting by GDP helps to capture the idea in the literature that an economically powerful country in the region would be more influential than an economically weak one. A positive relationship between *Diverse regime neighborhood* and measures of unevenness would provide support for this explanation. In other words, it would show that the greater the difference in regime type between a country and its neighbors, the greater the likelihood of unevenness in the country.

Beyond subnational democracy research, other literatures have provided clues as to what may account for a national government's (in)ability to uniformly control subnational units, when it aims to do so. These include internal armed conflict, economic development, and corruption—factors more proximate than the three we consider.

Internal Armed Conflict Rebels, drug cartels, and similar groups engaged in armed conflict with the national government challenge its ability to exert control over its territory.[42] The conflict destroys infrastructure and expends government resources,[43] which could otherwise be used to bring the periphery into line, when that is a national government objective. Rebel groups that control and govern territory form distinctive subnational political regimes.[44] For these reasons, armed conflict might promote subnational regime variation. We test this using the measure *Internal armed conflict* from Clio Infra.

Economic Development It seems plausible that economic development could reduce unevenness in countries with authoritarian- or democratic-leaning national governments. Economic development, by providing more resources to the state, may enhance national governments' abilities to bring subnational outliers into line with national institutions and practices, when that is an objective. This is consistent with the state-building literature, which emphasizes that a wealthier state can more easily extend its rule territorially.[45] We measure economic development using *GDP per capita*, transformed by the natural logarithm.[46]

Corruption Corruption can reduce a national government's ability to uniformly control subnational units because corrupt bureaucrats and subnational officials will not carry out directives when they conflict with schemes for personal enrichment, or they will manipulate their implementation for personal gain. Both democratic- and authoritarian-leaning national governments focused on bringing subnational institutions and practices in line with national ones will be stymied when subnational bureaucrats and officials prioritize their own personal profit instead. This does not

presuppose that the national officials are good people, merely that they are trying to consolidate their regimes. We test this possible proximate cause using an index comprised of V-Dem measures of political corruption, *Corruption control*. Because of the coding of the component variables, a high score on this index indicates a low level of corruption.

National Regime Type Distinct from the proximate factors is the possibility that unevenness in subnational regime type is merely a function of the national regime type. Countries might be prone to unevenness simply because they have hybrid national regimes. In other words, nationally, neither an authoritarian nor a democratic regime has fully consolidated so subnational regime variation is possible. This is not a satisfying explanation because it explains "by definition," rather than by providing a causal explanation. Moreover, we expect that, even controlling for national regime type, there is unexplained variation that our three factors account for. We test this by including the variable *Democracy*, which is measured using the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index and its quadratic. If our expectations are correct, we will find that unevenness is least likely to occur at low values (in essentially closed autocracies) and high values (in liberal democracies) of the index and most likely to occur at middling values (in hybrid regimes), and we expect to show that, controlling for this, *Ethnic fractionalization, Mountains*, and *Population* are nonetheless influential.

Measuring Unevenness

Prior to testing our hypotheses, alongside these proximate factors and national regime type, we will first explain our methods for measuring subnational regime variation and summarize general patterns. We measure within-country unevenness using an index created from two measures in the V-Dem dataset, one focused on the freeness and fairness of subnational elections (*Subnational election unevenness*) and the other focused on government officials' respect for civil liberties (*Civil liberties unevenness*). These measures provide the only global, time series data available on unevenness, and they capture the concept well. *Subnational election unevenness* and *Civil liberties unevenness* measure two central conceptualizations of democracy: the electoral conceptualization and the liberal conceptualization.[47] Poor electoral quality or respect for civil liberties indicates a less democratic, more authoritarian regime. The measures do not capture every conceptualization of democracy or authoritarianism (e.g., egalitarianism), nor do they capture every component of democracy or authoritarianism (e.g., judicial independence). However, they measure conceptualizations and components central to understanding regime type. They also exclude concepts such as sovereignty and stability that are not part of regime type and thus would impede our ability to identify generalizable factors that make a country prone to unevenness. Validity tests of these two subnational measures show that they capture the underlying concepts well.[48] Because our focus is on explaining the phenomenon of unevenness,

regardless of national regime type, it is fine that these measures do not distinguish between unevenness in countries with democratic- versus authoritarian-leaning national regimes. Together, the measures provide an overall picture of the extent to which subnational regime type varies within a country.

The structure of the two questions that generate the data is identical. Question one asks "Does the freeness and fairness of subnational elections vary across different areas of the country?" Question two asks "Does government respect for civil liberties vary across different areas of the country?" There are three possible response categories: 0 = equivalence across most or all subnational units, 1 = subnational units differ from each other in the country, and 2 = subnational units differ significantly from each other in the country. It is important to note that these values, as printed here, are reversed from the original questions in the V-Dem dataset in order to facilitate discussion of unevenness, rather than evenness. As the complete text of the two questions and various response categories indicate (see Table A1 in the online appendix), the variables measure how severe the differences are among subnational units, but they do not quantify how many subnational units differ.[49] Also, we emphasize that these indicators measure dispersion within countries, and they are not derived from separate measures of each, individual subnational political unit. Although the measures do not capture all dimensions of subnational variation, their geographic and temporal coverage do enable us to begin to study this phenomenon globally and across different eras.

Data for these two measures come from country-expert coders, generally academics or members of nongovernmental organizations and typically residents or citizens of the country they are coding. For each indicator, an average of five coders with expertise in elections or civil liberties are enlisted, resulting in five separate codings. Coders' responses are aggregated in a measurement model that employs Bayesian item response theory (IRT) modeling techniques to estimate latent polity characteristics from each set of expert ratings. This model provides point estimates as well as estimates of uncertainty, which are based on inter-coder reliability and other features of the coders.[50]

The resulting variables are only moderately correlated (Pearson's $r=0.54$), suggesting that they measure different dimensions of regime type at the subnational level. To evaluate overall unevenness, we average the two measures for each country-year to form the variable *Unevenness*, which favors cases that are uneven on both dimensions. In the analysis section, we estimate effects on the variable *Unevenness* and also these dimensions separately. Histograms of each component variable, as well as the resulting index, demonstrate a continuous distribution (see Figures A1, A2, and A3 in the online appendix). This justifies our use of linear models in subsequent analyses.

General Patterns

We expand upon the existing literature to show the scope of subnational regime variation. This variation exists around the globe and across time. Also, it has persisted despite waves of democratization.

Figure 2 Unevenness across Countries in 2018

Note: Darker shades indicate greater unevenness. No shading indicates missing data.

Unevenness is a global phenomenon. In 2018, approximately 66 percent of all countries experienced significant unevenness in either civil liberties or freedom and fairness of subnational elections.[51] Subnational regime variation is not limited to particular regions of the world. Significant unevenness, as illustrated with black in Figure 2, and some unevenness, depicted with dark gray, exist in every region of the world. To systematically test for susceptibility to unevenness across different regions of the world, we include a regions dummy variable in our models, as described in the analysis section below.

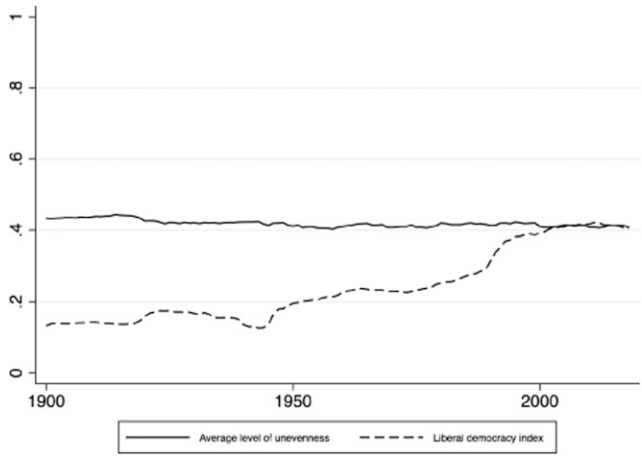
Subnational regime variation exists throughout the observed period, as shown in Figure 3 by the solid line. This unevenness has persisted despite the so-called third wave of democratization, as depicted with the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index, the dashed line in Figure 3.[52] Although more countries than ever before transitioned to democracy during the third wave, there remains subnational regime variation in these countries, as well as in those governed by national authoritarian regimes.

The persistence of unevenness, evident also when examining individual countries, is consistent with our theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of more static factors. Ruggedness of a country does not typically change, and ethnic diversity and population size change relatively slowly. To better evaluate how well these factors account for why some countries are more prone to unevenness than others, we conduct a series of statistical tests.

Analysis

We test our three explanatory factors, *Ethnic fractionalization*, *Mountains*, and *Population*, both individually (Models 2–4) and all together (Model 5) in Table 1. We

Figure 3 Unevenness over Time



Note: This figure provides the annual, global means. It uses interval measures helpful to examining relative change across time, but not to interpreting absolute values.

also test these explanatory variables, which measure distal factors, alongside more proximate factors and national regime type (Models 6–15) in Table 2. Taken together, the results indicate that ethnic diversity, ruggedness, and population size have a profound influence on the level of unevenness in a country and that the influence of these distal factors is apparent even after controlling for more proximate causes and national regime type. Again, our purpose is not to disconfirm the impact of proximate causes, but to demonstrate that distal factors are also influential.

We test our hypotheses using time-series cross-sectional data from 155 countries between 1900 and 2018. In order to consider the effect on unevenness of both time-varying and time-invariant variables, we employ a "within-between" random-effects model.[53] Where appropriate, we estimate both a within-country effect (i.e., by country mean centering) and a between-country effect (i.e., by grand mean centering) for time-varying variables. For time-invariant variables, only the between-country effect is estimated. This approach is particularly useful when testing our time-invariant distal factors alongside time-varying proximate factors as in Models 6–15. All models include year fixed effects and lag right-side variables by one year in order to model time-dependent relationships and block potential confounders.

We have shown above that unevenness is not limited to particular regions of the world. However, it could be that some parts of the world, by virtue of a shared culture, religion, or historical experience, are more prone to unevenness than others. Indeed, one might infer from the focus of subnational democracy studies—many of which examine Latin American countries or Russia—that these regions are more susceptible to

Table 1 Main Findings

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)		**0.170*** **			**0.141** **
		[0.060]			**[0.058]**
Mountains, ln (b)			**0.039*** **		**0.032*** **
			[0.009]		**[0.008]**
Population, ln (b)				**0.037*** **	**0.030*** **
				[0.009]	**[0.008]**
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	15578	15578	15578	15578	15578
Countries	155	155	155	155	155
Years	118	118	118	118	118
R-squared	0.283	0.303	0.352	0.344	0.404

Within-between models. Dependent variable is an index of unevenness made up of two components: civil liberties unevenness and subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and region fixed effects (FE).
*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$.

Table 2 Robustness Tests with Proximate Factors and National Regime Type

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)	**0.130**	**0.223***	**0.232*****	**0.152****	**0.227*****	**0.148****	**0.188*****	**0.155*****	**0.111****	**0.115****
	[0.092]	**[0.124]**	**[0.071]**	**[0.066]**	**[0.057]**	**[0.062]**	**[0.056]**	**[0.050]**	**[0.052]**	**[0.054]**
Mountains, ln (b)	**0.063*****	**0.033****	**0.041*****	**0.031*****	**0.033*****	**0.033*****	**0.032*****	**0.025*****	**0.027*****	**0.023*****
	[0.014]	**[0.016]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.009]**	**[0.008]**	**[0.008]**	**[0.006]**	**[0.007]**	**[0.007]**
Population, ln (b)	**0.045****	**0.040***	**0.025***	**0.030*****	**0.031*****	**0.024*****	**0.026*****	**0.027*****	**0.028*****	**0.023*****
	[0.021]	**[0.022]**	**[0.013]**	**[0.011]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.009]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.008]**	**[0.007]**	**[0.007]**
Federalism (w)	0.002*									0.004***
	[0.001]									[0.001]
Federalism (b)	-0.001									0.000
	[0.003]									[0.000]
Malapportionment (b)		-0.064								0.022
		[0.279]								[0.019]
Closed-list PR (w)			0.009							0.004
			[0.013]							[0.007]
Closed-list PR (b)			-0.009							-0.002
			[0.017]							[0.004]
Economic heterogeneity (b)				0.131***						0.042***
				[0.039]						[0.008]
Diverse regime neighborhood (w)					-0.004					-0.016***
					[0.006]					[0.004]
					0.012					0.002
					[0.013]					[0.008]
Diverse regime neighborhood (b)						0.036***				0.025***
						[0.010]				[0.007]
Internal armed conflict (w)						0.167**				0.090*
						[0.070]				[0.046]
Internal armed conflict (b)										

(*Continued*)

Table 2 (continued)

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
GDP per capita, ln (w)							-0.042***			-0.017***
							[0.011]			[0.006]
GDP per capita, ln (b)							-0.019			-0.005
							[0.020]			[0.008]
Corruption control (w)								-0.035***		-0.032***
								[0.007]		[0.005]
Corruption control (b)								-0.038***		-0.020***
								[0.008]		[0.007]
Democracy (w)									0.412***	0.384***
									[0.107]	[0.094]
Democracy (b)									1.245***	0.120
									[0.239]	[0.162]
Democracy squared (w)									-0.701***	-0.603***
									[0.121]	[0.108]
Democracy squared (b)									-1.843***	-0.268
									[0.317]	[0.169]
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3441	69	5221	1344	10615	12774	11213	11923	15348	15578
Countries	69	69	128	75	153	154	148	155	155	155
Years	61	1	103	54	117	101	117	118	118	118
R-squared	0.601	0.637	0.593	0.808	0.528	0.389	0.505	0.571	0.490	0.563

Within-between models. Dependent variable is an index of unevenness made up of two components: civil liberties unevenness and subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and region fixed effects (FE). Model 15 aggregates results across five imputed data sets. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$.

unevenness than others. To account for these complex cultural and historical determinants of unevenness, we also include region dummies in all models.[54]

In devising plausible specifications, we begin in Table 1 with Model 1, which sets a benchmark for model fit by including only region and year fixed effects.[55] Model 2 adds *Ethnic fractionalization*, which is significant in the predicted direction, confirming that countries with greater ethnic heterogeneity experience greater unevenness across regions. Models 3 and 4 add our remaining two variables of theoretical interest: *Mountains* and *Population* (logged), respectively. As hypothesized, the results demonstrate a positive and statistically significant association between *Mountains* and unevenness.[56] The between-effect of *Population* is positive and significant, indicating that larger countries also tend to experience greater unevenness.[57] These hypotheses are tested alongside each other in Model 5, and, again, the findings are consistent with our expectations. In models not depicted here, we also performed tests of interaction effects between each of these three variables, which produced null findings. As our theoretical framework predicts, each appears to act independently on unevenness.

In addition to be being statistically significant and in the hypothesized direction, the magnitude of these effects is substantial. Consider a country with a relatively low degree of unevenness such as Sweden (unevenness index = 0.11 in 2018).[58] Now, consider the impact of raising that country's ruggedness, ethnic fractionalization, and population by one standard deviation. Model 5 predicts that this hypothetical set of changes would result in a level of unevenness roughly equivalent to the actual level of Canada (unevenness = 0.24). An additional increase of one SD across these three variables would raise the level of unevenness to that of the United States (unevenness = 0.36). And a third increase (to a total of 3 SDs) would result in a level of unevenness equivalent to that of Serbia (unevenness = 0.52). A fourth increase (to a total of 4 SDs) would result in a level of unevenness close to that of Russia (unevenness = .68) or Mexico (unevenness = 0.69). The marginal effects produced by changes in these key variables are also demonstrated in Figures A4 through A6 in the online appendix. Taking each measure separately, these figures illustrate our main findings: change in ruggedness, ethnic fractionalization, or population size has a clear and substantial impact on unevenness.

In Table 2, tests of our explanatory factors alongside measures of *Federalism*, *Malapportionment*, *Closed-list PR*, *Economic heterogeneity*, *Diverse regime neighborhood*, *Internal armed conflict, GDP per capita*, *Corruption control*, and *Democracy* provide additional support for our hypotheses. These tests use the specifications in Model 5 in Table 1. The number of observations, both years and countries covered, in these models varies depending on the availability of data for the measures of proximate factors and national regime type. These tests demonstrate the impact of our variables of interest, which, in most cases, is not disturbed or overwhelmed by additional factors; the direction of the relationship and the magnitude of the effect remain largely consistent. These tests also enable us to assess whether a variable omitted in our models might be causing social heterogeneity and other challenges to state power in addition to unevenness.

Specifically, Models 6–13 introduce a single proximate factor alongside our three distal factors, and in each case the direction of the relationship for the distal factors remains unchanged and the magnitude of their effect remains largely consistent. While several of the proximate factors demonstrated the expected effect on unevenness, it is important to note that Models 6–13 are designed to test for the influence of our hypothesized distal factors in the presence of proximate factors, not to provide a definitive test of the proximate factors. That said, our results do not substantiate the expected relationship between each of the following proximate factors and unevenness: *Malapportionment* (Model 7),[59] *Closed-list PR* (Model 8),[60] and *Diverse regime neighborhood* (Model 10).[61] We also tested for the possibility that *Malapportionment* and *Closed-list PR* might be influential only in countries with democratic-leaning national governments as those national legislatures tend to be more powerful than their counterparts in countries with authoritarian-leaning national governments. To do so, we included an interaction term with *Democracy*; however, these results also failed to substantiate the expected relationships (see Table A3 in the online appendix.)

Our results do provide at least some support for hypotheses related to *Federalism* (Model 6),[62] *Economic heterogeneity* (Model 9), *Internal armed conflict* (Model 11), *GDP per capita* (Model 12),[63] and *Corruption control* (Model 13). With the exception of *Federalism* and *GDP per capita*, where only the within component conforms to theory, each variable demonstrates the expected relationship with unevenness and reaches statistical significance. Even when taking these proximate factors into account, however, our three distal factors continue to demonstrate a separate effect on the outcome.[64] Furthermore, results for these proximate factors are largely consistent with our theoretical framework. *Economic heterogeneity*, for example, may act similarly to ethnic diversity: subnational differences, ethnic or economic, can promote varied subnational regime types, and it is more difficult for national leaders to exert control over different rather than similar subnational regimes. Similarly, *Internal armed conflict* is likely to hinder a national government's ability to extend its authority territorially and to create distinct rebel-governed subnational regimes. Although a more proximate and potentially endogenous factor, the results for *Corruption Control* are also consistent with our theory: corruption can reduce a national government's ability to extend uniform control over the country because corrupt bureaucrats and subnational officials will not carry out directives when those directives conflict with schemes for personal enrichment or they will manipulate their implementation for personal gain.

To examine the potential impact of national regime type, we include *Democracy* and its squared term in Model 14. This specification accounts for the greater prevalence of unevenness among hybrid regimes. The results show that democracy has a curvilinear relationship to unevenness, with the greatest unevenness occurring near the middle of the democracy scale. However, unevenness is not merely a result of national regime type: *Ethnic fractionalization*, *Mountains*, and *Population* continue to demonstrate a separate effect on unevenness. Thus, national regime type is not a stand-alone explanation. It is also not a satisfying one because it does not provide a causal explanation, but rather a definitional one—neither an authoritarian nor a

democratic national regime has fully consolidated so subnational regime variation is possible.

Finally, Model 15 includes all the distal and proximate factors and national regime type together in one model, using multiple imputation to address the large number of missing observations for particular measures of proximate factors, especially *Malapportionment* and *Economic heterogeneity*. The results, aggregated across five imputed data sets, further demonstrate the robust relationship between unevenness and *Ethnic fractionalization*, *Mountains*, and *Population*.

In sum, we still find strong relationships between unevenness and our three distal factors even when proximate factors and national regime type are included. Interestingly, the proximate factors that produce significant results—economic heterogeneity, internal armed conflict, corruption control—are consistent with our theoretical approach. These findings lend further support to our hypotheses about distal factors and our theoretical framework.

Regarding tests of region dummies, we find that, compared to Western Europe and North America—a region of the world where unevenness is rarely identified—unevenness is significantly more likely to be found in Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and South Asia (see Table A4 in the online appendix).[65] It is possible that we omitted a variable that could explain greater levels of unevenness in all these regions, but, due to the diversity of the regions and the many alternative explanations we test, we suspect that there might be idiosyncratic factors that operate within particular regions. Either way, our analysis boosts confidence that the factors we have identified are important determinants of unevenness, even though there is still more variation left to explain.[66]

Naturally, there are alternate approaches one might take to modeling the complex relationships of theoretical interest. One might employ pooled ordinary least squares, between-effects ordinary least squares, or simple random effects in order to emphasize the cross-sectional component of the analysis. This makes a certain amount of sense with respect to fixed covariates, such as those measuring geography or ethnicity. Tests conducted with these estimators confirm the results posted in Tables 1 and 2, although naturally the size of the estimated coefficients depends upon the structure of the model. As an alternative to including *Democracy* and its squared term, we reproduced the analysis including only hybrid regimes, and these factors remained influential. We also performed these tests on the two individual components of the unevenness index, with similar results (see Tables A7 through A10 in the online appendix.)

A final concern is measurement error. While mountains and population seem fairly secure, one might wonder about measurements of concepts such as ethnic fractionalization and democracy. Reassuringly, alternate measures of ethnic fractionalization and democracy show identical patterns, suggesting that the results posted in Tables 1 and 2 are not the product of idiosyncratic errors in measurement (though naturally we cannot rule out systematic errors in measurement).[67]

As a final robustness check, we reproduce our analyses in Tables 1 and 2 incorporating measurement uncertainty for all V-Dem variables. Although measurement

uncertainty is rarely taken into account, we do so here by running each model on 900 draws from the posterior distribution of each V-Dem variable (including both left- and right-side variables).[68] These results, shown in Tables A11 and A12 in the online appendix, are largely consistent with results in Tables 1 and 2. Incorporating measurement uncertainty increases our confidence that our results reveal true relationships.

These findings support our theoretical framework, which posits that countries are more prone to unevenness primarily—though of course not exclusively—because of societal heterogeneity and structural challenges to the state's ability to govern the periphery.

Conclusion

In examining unevenness, this article makes three contributions. First, it demonstrates theoretically and empirically how social heterogeneity and structural factors undermining the national government's ability to extend uniform control promote subnational regime variation. It offers an explanation for why countries are prone to unevenness, whereas prior subnational democracy studies have investigated why certain subnational units of a country are outliers. In doing so, this article reveals underlying exogenous factors for this variation within countries, while much of the existing literature examines more proximate, endogenous causes. Our empirical results demonstrate that countries that are rugged, more populous, and more ethnically diverse are more likely to exhibit unevenness. Our theoretical framework proposes how this collection of fundamental geographic and demographic characteristics diversifies the political practices and institutions in countries while also challenging national governments' abilities to impose uniformity when they choose to do so. Statistical analysis using within-between regression models and the innovation of incorporating measurement uncertainty provide support for our theory.

Second, the article reveals the scope of the phenomenon. Something that previous works have been unable to do due to the limited number of countries, parts of the globe, state structures, and eras examined. We show that unevenness exists in all regions of the world, though it is more common in some than others. Our findings also indicate that unevenness exists in both unitary and federal states. This finding likely relates to our point about the causal importance of the national government being able to extend its power into the periphery. Just because a country has a unitary system of government with relatively great powers granted to national leaders does not mean that they have the ability to act on those *de jure* powers. Further, this article has shown that unevenness is not a contemporary phenomenon, but something that existed during different democratization waves and reversals and despite the influences of different eras, such as the post-war periods and the Cold War.

Third, our development of benchmark models and introduction of global measures of unevenness from the V-Dem dataset will hopefully encourage new lines of inquiry.

Looking forward, in-depth country studies will continue to be important for developing new hypotheses and revealing causal mechanisms. Our models and measures will be useful for the testing of hypotheses and uncovering cross-national patterns. The models and measures can also help us to examine additional questions, for example, how is unevenness overcome and when does it result in breakdowns of democracy. Ultimately, this cross-national approach, coupled with in-depth country studies, can improve our understanding of regime type and regime change by illuminating how politics outside of national capitals impacts entire countries.

NOTES

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1. e.g. Carlos Gervasoni, *Hybrid Regimes within Democracies: Fiscal Federalism and Subnational Rentier States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Edward L. Gibson, *Boundary Control: Subnational Authoritarianism in Federal Democracies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Agustina Giraudy, *Democrats and Autocrats*: *Pathways of Subnational Undemocratic Regime Continuity within Democratic Countries*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

2. David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," *World Politics*, 49 (April 1997), 430–51; David Held, *Models of Democracy, 3rd ed*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Juan J. Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nathan W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1975); Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited* (Chatham: Chatham House, 1987).

3. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

4. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics*, 49 (January 1997), 155–83.

5. Although works in this literature examine subnational non-democratic, as well as subnational democratic, regimes, this is one of the common names for this body of work.

6. e.g. Jacqueline Behrend, "The Unevenness of Democracy at the Subnational Level: Provincial Closed Games in Argentina," *Latin American Research* Review, 46 (2011), 150–76; Vladimir Gel'man and Tomila Lankina, "Authoritarian versus Democratic Diffusions: Explaining Institutional Choices in Russia's Local Government," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 24 (2008), 40–62; Imke Harbers, Jos Bartman, and Enrike van Wingerden, "Conceptualizing and Measuring Subnational Democracy across Indian States," *Democratization*, 26 (2019), 1154–75; Gervasoni; Giraudy; Damir Kapidzic, "Subnational Competitive Authoritarianism and Power-Sharing in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* (December 2019), online; German Petersen, "Elites and Turnover in Authoritarian Enclaves: Evidence from Mexico," *Latin American*

Politics and Society, 60 (2018), 23-40; Maya Tudor and Adam Ziegfeld, "Subnational Democratization in India," in Jacqueline Behrend and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Illiberal Practices: Territorial Variances within Large Federal Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 49–88. For a near-complete list of works that have examined why some regions within a country have a lower level of democracy than other, see Kelly M. McMann, "Measuring Subnational Democracy: Toward Improved Regime Typologies and Theories of Regime Change," *Democratization*, 25 (2018), 27. Whereas our focus is on subnational regime variation, other works have examined variation in specific subnational institutions and other phenomena. See Other Subnational Literatures in the online appendix for examples.

7. Gervasoni; Gibson; Kelly M. McMann, *Economic Autonomy and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Daniel Ziblatt, "Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany," *American Political Science Review*, 103 (February 2009), 1–21.

8. Allyson Lucinda Benton, "Bottom-Up Challenges to National Democracy: Mexico's (Legal) Subnational Authoritarian Enclaves," *Comparative Politics*, 44 (April 2012), 253–71; Gibson; Giraudy; Regina Goodnow, Robert G. Moser, and Tony Smith, "Ethnicity and Electoral Manipulation in Russia," *Electoral Studies*, 36 (December 2014), 15–27; Frances Hagopian, *Traditional Politics and Regime Change in Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

9. Catherine Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State: Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Kent Eaton, "Conservative Autonomy Movements: Territorial Dimensions of Ideological Conflict in Bolivia and Ecuador," *Comparative Politics*, 43 (April 2011), 291–310; Agustina Giraudy and Juan Pablo Luna, "Unpacking the State's Uneven Territorial Reach," in Miguel Centeno, Atul Kohli, and Deborah J. Yashar, eds*., States in the Developing World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 93–120; Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Paul Staniland, "States, Insurgents, and Wartime Political Orders," *Perspectives on Politics*, 10 (2012), 243–64; Deborah J. Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

10. Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 88.

11. Data are available at https://www.v-dem.net/en/. They extend to 2018. This article uses version 9 of the V-Dem data, the latest version available at the time of writing (Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard et al., *Varieties of Democracy: Codebook v9* (2019a), distributed by Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project, https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/e6/d2/e6d27595-9d69-4312-b09f-63d2a0a65df2/v-dem_codebook_v9.pdf .) We do not use Historical V-Dem data, extending from 1789 to 1899, because at the time of writing those data were not complete and fully integrated with the more contemporary data.

12. Andrew Bell and Kelvyn Jones, "Explaining Fixed Effects: Random Effects Modeling of Time-Series Cross-Sectional and Panel Data," *Political Science Research and Methods*, 3 (January 2015), 133–53.

13. The definition of hybrid regimes comes from Larry Diamond, "Elections Without Democracy: Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (April 2002), 21–35.

14. This research is cited throughout this section.

15. We do not propose "weak state formation" as our explanation for subnational regime variation because this would provide more of a definitional, rather than a causal, explanation. We are interested in which factors make it difficult for a state to exert control outside the capital.

16. e.g. Michael S. Danielson and Todd Eisenstadt, "Walking Together, but in Which Direction? Gender Discrimination and Multicultural Practices in Oaxaca, Mexico," *Politics and Gender*, 5 (June 2009), 153–84.

17. Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*: *An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Gordon B. Smith, *Soviet Politics: Continuity and Contradiction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).

18. e.g. Lars-Erik Cederman and Luc Girardin, "Beyond Fractionalization: Mapping Ethnicity onto Nationalist Insurgencies," *American Political Science Review*, 101 (February 2007), 173–85.

19. Rohan Gunaratna and Arabinda Acharya, *The Terrorist Threat from Thailand: Jihad or Quest for Justice?* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012); Duncan McCargo, Phrae Sirisakdamkoeng, and Pauline Khng, *Mapping National Anxieties: Thailand's Southern Conflict* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2012).

20. Like other social scientists, we use "rugged" to refer to large-scale terrain irregularities, such as mountains. See Nathan Nunn and Diego Puga, "Ruggedness," *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 94 (February 2012), footnote 5.

21. e.g. Robert Boyd and Peter J. Richerson, *Culture and the Evolutionary Process* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Stelios Michalopoulos, "The Origins of Ethnolinguistic Diversity," *The American Economic Review*, 102 (June 2012), 1508–39; Ruth Mace and Mark Pagel, "A Latitudinal Gradient in the Density of Human Languages in North America," *Proceedings: Biological Sciences*, 261 (July 1995), 117–21.

22. S. Kuznets, "Economic Growth of Small Nations," in E.A.G. Robinson, ed., *Economic Consequences of the Size of Nations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), 14–32.

23. Clinton Rossiter, ed., *The Federalist Papers* (New York: The New American Library, 1961).

24. James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, 97 (February 2003), 75–90; Nunn and Puga.

25. Iffat Malik, *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict International Dispute* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

26. Benton; Gibson; Giraudy; Goodnow, et al.

27. Alberto Alesina, Arnaud Devleeschauwer, William Easterly, Sergio Kurlat, and Romain Wacziarg, "Fractionalization," *Journal of Economic Growth*, 8 (June 2003), 155–94.

28. Due to space constraints, the Appendix is not in the print version of this article. It can be viewed in the online version, at www.ingentaconnect.com/cuny/cp.

29. John Gerrard, "What is a Mountain?," Working paper, World Bank Development Research Group, 2000.

30. e.g. Fearon and Laitin.

31. We use data from Clio-Infra for the years 1900–2000 (https://clio-infra.eu/Indicators/TotalPopulation.html) and from the World Bank for the years 2001–2018 (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL).

32. e.g. Caroline C. Beer, *Electoral Competition and Institutional Change in Mexico* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2003); Behrend; Jacqueline Behrend and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *Illiberal Practices: Territorial Variance within Large Federal Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016); Benton; André Borges, "The Political Consequences of Center-Led Redistribution in Brazilian Federalism: The Fall of Subnational Party Machines," *Latin American Research Review*, 46 (2011), 21–45; Gervasoni; Gibson; Giraudy; Henry E. Hale, "Correlates of Clientelism," in Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson, eds., *Patrons, Clients, and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 227–50; Tomila V. Lankina and Lullit Getachew, "A Geographic Incremental Theory of Democratization: Territory, Aid, and Democracy in Postcommunist Regions," *World Politics*, 58 (July 2006), 536–82; Chappell Lawson, "Mexico's Unfinished Transition: Democratization and Authoritarian Enclaves in Mexico," *Mexican Studies*, 16 (Summer 2000), 267–87; Beatriz Magaloni, Alberto Diaz-Cayeros, and Federico Estévez, "Clientelism and Portfolio Diversification," in Kitschelt and Wilkinson, eds., 182–205; Kelly M. McMann and Nikolai V. Petrov, "A Survey of Democracy in Russia's Regions," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, 41 (2000), 155–82; Robert Mickey, *Paths Out of Dixie*: *The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America's Deep South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Alfred P. Montero, "No Country for Leftists? Clientelist Continuity and the 2006 Vote in the Brazilian Northeast," *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 2 (2010), 113–53; Bryon J. Moraski and William M. Reisinger, "Explaining Electoral Competition across Russia's Regions," *Slavic Review*, 62 (Summer 2003), 278–301.

33. Liesbet Hooghe, Gary Marks, Arjan J. Schakel, Sandra Chapman Osterkatz, Sara Niedzwiecki, and Sarah Shair-Rosenfield, *Measuring Regional Authority: A Postfunctionalist Theory of Governance, Volume I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

34. Behrend; Benton; Gibson.

35. Gibson, 164.

36. David Samuels and Richard Snyder, "The Value of a Vote: Malapportionment in Comparative Perspective," *British Journal of Political Science*, 31 (October 2001), 651–71.

37. John M. Carey and Matthew Soberg Shugart, "Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas," *Electoral Studies*, 14 (December 1995), 417–39.

38. John Gerring and Strom C. Thacker, *A Centripetal Theory of Democratic Governance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

39. McMann, 2006; Ziblatt.

40. Dong-wook Lee and Melissa Rogers, "Measuring Geographic Distribution for Political Research," *Political Analysis*, 27 (July 2019), 263–80.

41. e.g. Lankina and Getachew.

42. Kalyvas.

43. David Sobek and Cameron. G. Thies, "Civil Wars and Contemporary State Building," *Civil Wars*, 17 (2015), 51–69, 65.

44. Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly, eds., *Rebel Governance in Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

45. Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).

46. Angus Maddison, "Statistics on World Population, GDP and Per Capita GDP, 1–2008 Ad" (University of Groningen: Groningen Growth and Development Centre, 2010).

47. Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, Steven Fish, Allen Hicken, Matthew Kroenig et al., "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach," *Perspectives on Politics*, 9 (June 2011), 247–67.

48. McMann, 2018.

49. Whether a disputed territory is coded as a separate country or as part of another country depends on whether it meets the requirements of being a coding unit. See Coding of Disputed Territories in the online appendix for details.

50. Additional details about coder recruitment, selection, and characteristics and the measurement model are available in online V-Dem documents (Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, Vlad Ciobanu, and Lisa Gastaldi, "V-Dem Country Coding Units v9" (2019c), distributed by Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project, https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/3a/b4/3ab4f110-25c3-40b7-88c8-c600a21d91ae/v-dem_country_coding_units_v9.pdf; Daniel Pemstein, Eitan Tzelgov, and Yi-ting Wang, "Evaluating and Improving Item Response Theory Models for Cross-National Expert Surveys," Working Paper No. 1 (2015), Varieties of Democracy Institute, University of Gothenburg, https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/9a/18/9a188a8b-1073-4bbb-9831-20d200a358c3/v-dem_working_paper_2015_1.pdf).

51. The percentage was calculated using ordinal values of the component variables of *Unevenness*, rather than create an arbitrary cutoff point for *Unevenness*, which is an interval measure.

52. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

53. Bell and Jones; Yair Mundlak, "On the Pooling of Time Series and Cross Section Data," *Econometrica*, 46 (January 1978), 69–85.

54. Due to space constraints, we discuss region dummies in the text, but do not include them in the tables.

55. Despite varying numbers of available observations across our key independent variables, our models in Table 1 hold the sample size constant to allow for a comparison of model fit.

56. Corroborating this result, when we tested Hanson and Sigman's state capacity index and its individual indicators, including measures of tax revenue, bureaucratic quality, and military personnel, we found that only its ruggedness indicator influenced unevenness (Jonathan K. Hanson and Rachel Sigman, "Leviathan's Latent Dimensions," *Journal of Politics*, forthcoming.). To assess the robustness of our findings regarding ruggedness, we conducted tests using alternative measures of elevation from Michalopoulos (2012), Lee and Zhang (2016), and others, each of which produced comparable results (Michalopoulos; Melissa M. Lee and Nan Zhang, "Legibility and the Informational Foundations of State Capacity," *The Journal of Politics*, 79 (January 2017), 118–32).

57. The within-effect, which is not significant in this case, is omitted. As population changes slowly over time, we find that the difference in population between countries, which is consistently large, presents a better test of our hypothesis. Indeed, the ability to separate within- and between-effects is highly beneficial here for this reason. Additionally, testing indicated that population density does not influence unevenness.

58. The country examples use interval data to facilitate comparisons among countries.

59. It should be noted that the data for *Malapportionment* are purely cross-sectional, with only one year of observed data.

60. As another test of electoral and party rule influence we used a measure of the extent of centralization of legislative candidate selection within parties (V-Dem variable v2pscnslnl). We did not find a consistent relationship in the predicted direction.

61. We find comparable results for *Diverse regime neighborhood* when the differences in *Democracy* are unweighted or weighted by military spending. We tested the latter to examine the influence of a militarily, rather than economically, powerful country in a region.

62. Alternate measures for federalism, including those from Norris (2009), Henisz (2000), IAEP (Wig, Hegre, and Regan 2015), Persson and Tabellini (2003), and Jaggers and Gurr's (1995) Polity III, did not demonstrate a consistent and positive relationship to unevenness (Pippa Norris, Democracy time series data release 3.0, http://www.hks.harvard/fs/pnorris/Data/Data.htm (2009)); Witold J. Henisz, "The Institutional Environment for Economic Growth," *Economics and Politics*, 12 (March 2000), 1–31; Tore Wig, Håvard

Hegre, and Patrick M. Regan, "Updated Data on Elections and Institutions 1960–2012," *Research & Politics*, 2 (April 2015), 1–11; Guido Tabellini and Torsten Persson, *The Economic Effects of Constitutions* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003); Keith Jaggers and Ted Robert Gurr, *Polity III* (1995), distributed by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/6695/staff). Likewise, related measures—whether states and provinces are granted power over taxing, spending, or legislating from the Database of Political Institutions (Thorsten Beck, George Clarke, Alberto Groff, Philip Keefer, and Patrick Walsh, "New Tools in Comparative Political Economy: The Database of Political Institutions," *The World Bank Economic Review*, 15 (2001), 165–76) and the total number of primary and secondary administrative subdivisions of a country from Law's (2011) statoids.com (Gwillim Law, *Administrative Divisions of Countries ("Statoids")* (2011), http://www.statoids.com/)—did not show a consistent and positive relationship to unevenness.

63. In the case of *GDP per capita* (logged), we find from Model 12 a negative within-country effect, indicating that as countries become more prosperous, unevenness declines. Increased country wealth seems to help national governments bring subnational regimes into line. However, looking across countries, we do not find a statistically significant, negative relationship between GDP and unevenness, suggesting that country wealth, or more broadly level of economic development, does not account for why some countries are more prone to unevenness.

64. Although the effect of *Ethnic fractionalization* is no longer significant when adding *Federalism* in Model 6, further tests reveal that this difference is explained by the change in sample size, not the addition of RAI to the model.

65. See Tables A5 and A6 in the online appendix for results from models in which region dummies are omitted.

66. As additional tests of culture and history, we also included the percent of the population born into a Protestant family, the percent of the population born into a Muslim family, and, as a proxy for history as an English colony, whether English common law is the origin of company law or the commercial code. No results were consistent and significant.

67. James D. Fearon, "Ethnic and Cultural Diversity by Country," *Journal of Economic Growth*, 8 (June 2003), 195–222; Monty G. Marshall, Ted Robert Gurr, and Keith Jaggers, *Polity IV Project* (2016), distributed by the Center for Systemic Peace, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html.

68. Results in Tables 1 and 2 are produced using point estimates from the V-Dem measurement model.

APPENDIX

Table A1. Variable Definitions

Dependent Variables
Unevenness. Average of Civil liberties unevenness and Subnational election unevenness. If no subnational elections are held in a given country-year, the index is equal to the level of civil liberties unevenness. Source: V-Dem, Coppedge et. al 2019a. *CL_SE_mean*
Civil liberties unevenness. Note that in this paper, the values are reversed from the original questions appearing in the V-Dem dataset in order to facilitate discussion of unevenness, rather than evenness. Does government respect for civil liberties vary across different areas of the country? 0: No. Government officials in most or all areas of the country equally respect (or, alternatively, equally do not respect) civil liberties. 1: Somewhat. Government officials in some areas of the country respect civil liberties somewhat more (or, alternatively, somewhat less) than government officials in other areas of the country. 2: Yes. Government officials in some areas of the country respect civil liberties significantly more (or, alternatively, significantly less) than government officials in other areas of the country. Source: V-Dem, Coppedge et. al 2019a. *v2clrgunev*
Subnational election unevenness. Note that in this paper, the values are reversed from the original questions appearing in the V-Dem dataset in order to facilitate discussion of unevenness, rather than evenness. Does the freeness and fairness of subnational elections vary across different areas of the country? Subnational elections refer to elections to regional or local offices. 0: No. Subnational elections in most or all areas of the country are equally free and fair (or, alternatively, equally not free and not fair). 1: Somewhat. Subnational elections in some areas of the country are somewhat more free and fair (or, alternatively, somewhat less free and fair) than subnational elections in other areas of the country. 2: Yes. Subnational elections in some areas of the country are significantly more free and fair (or, alternatively, significantly less free and fair) than subnational elections in other areas of the country. Source: V-Dem, Coppedge et. al 2019a. *v2elsnlsff*
Independent Variables
Closed-list PR. This is measured with a trichotomous measure that incorporates district magnitude and ballot structure. Coding: 0 = majoritarian or preferential-vote; 1 = mixed-member majority (MMM) or block vote; 2 = closed-list PR. Source: Gerring and Thacker 2008. *PR*
Corruption control. Five V-Dem indicators (v2exbribe v2exembez v2exthftps v2lgcrrpt v2jucorrdc) are included in a principal components factor analysis, the first component of which provides the index. Scale: Higher value means less corruption. Source: V-Dem, Coppedge et. al 2019a. *v2exbribe v2exembez v2exthftps v2lgcrrpt v2jucorrdc*

(*Continued*)

Table A1. (continued)

Dependent Variables
Democracy. This variable uses the V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index, which captures both electoral and liberal democracy principles. Source: V-Dem, Coppedge et. al 2019a. *v2x_libdem*
Democracy^2. Quadratic form of Liberal Democracy index. See above.
Diverse regime neighborhood. Average gap (as an absolute value) between the *Democracy* score of the country of interest and that of each of its contiguous neighbors, weighted by GDP per capita. Source: V-Dem, Coppedge et. al 2019a. *demo_neighbors_gdppc*
Economic heterogeneity. Measures regional inequality within a country using a population weighted coefficient of variance. Source: Lee and Rogers 2019. *covw*
Ethnic fractionalization. An index of ethnic heterogeneity reflecting the probability that two randomly selected individuals from a country are from two different groups, based on ethnic data from *Encyclopedia Britannica* and additional sources. Scale: value ranging from 0 to 1, with a greater value indicating greater diversity in a country. Source: Alesina et al. 2003. *al_ethnic*
Federalism. An index of regional authority in a country, including both the authority exercised by a regional government over those who live in the region and the authority exercised by that government or its representatives in the country as a whole. Source: Hooghe et al. 2016. *RAI*
GDP per capita, ln. Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Source: Maddison 2010. *e_migdppcln*
Internal armed conflict. This is coded as 1 in a given year if the country experienced internal armed conflict and 0 otherwise. Source: Clio-Infra 2012. *e_miinterc*
Malapportionment. Measures the degree of malapportionment of seats in the lower chambers of national legislatures. Malapportionment is a discrepancy between an area's share of legislature seats and its share of the population. Scale: value ranging from 0 to 1, representing the absolute value of the difference between each district's share of legislative seats and population, summed, then divided by two. Source: Samuels and Snyder 2001. *Malapportionment*
Mountains. Measures the percentage of land covered by mountains within a country, transformed by the natural logarithm. Source: Gerrard 2000. *lmtnest*
Population, ln. Measures the total population of a country, transformed by the natural logarithm. Source: Clio-Infra 2012 and World Bank 2018. *pop_ln_combined*
Regions. A dummy variable was created for each region: Eastern Europe and Central Asia (includes Mongolia), Latin America (includes Cuba and the Dominican Republic), Middle East and North Africa (includes Israel and Turkey), sub-Saharan Africa, Western Europe and North America (includes Cyprus, Australia, and New Zealand), East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Caribbean (includes Belize, Haiti, Guyana and Suriname). Source: Quality of Government Standard Dataset, Teorell 2013. *e_regionpol*

Note: Variable names from the paper's dataset appear at the end of each entry.

Table A2. Descriptive Statistics

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
VARIABLES	N	mean	SD	min	max	countries
Unevenness	18,575	0.418	0.203	0.023	0.917	183
Civil liberties unevenness	18,575	0.435	0.223	0.000	1.000	183
Subnational election unevenness	13,713	0.390	0.242	0.000	1.000	179
Closed-list PR	5,668	0.755	0.930	0.000	2.000	141
Corruption control	13,677	-0.000	2.037	-4.437	4.472	182
Democracy	18,191	0.249	0.249	0.002	0.914	183
Diverse regime neighborhood	11,440	1.522	1.117	0.000	6.692	172
Economic heterogeneity	1,366	0.341	0.225	0.002	2.490	75
Ethnic fractionalization	17,546	0.450	0.265	0.000	0.930	168
Federalism	3,732	8.835	9.413	0.000	36.990	77
GDP per capita, ln	12,199	8.366	1.129	4.898	12.305	163
Internal armed conflict	14,512	0.085	0.279	0.000	1.000	169
Malapportionment	73	0.064	0.060	0.000	0.262	73
Mountains, ln	16,201	2.113	1.421	0.000	4.557	159
Population, ln	17,621	15.231	1.883	9.792	21.050	177

Other Subnational Literatures

Other works have examined variation in specific subnational institutions, such as subnational judiciaries (e.g. Rebecca Bill Chavez, *The Rule of Law in Nascent Democracies: Judicial Politics in Argentina* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Matthew C. Ingram, *Crafting Courts in New Democracies: The Politics of Subnational Judicial Reform in Brazil and Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015)), electoral rules (e.g. Kathleen Bruhn and Steven Wuhs, "Competition, Decentralization, and Candidate Selection in Mexico," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60 (June 2016), 819-36) and domestic violence laws (e.g. Catalina Smulovitz, "Legal Inequality and Federalism: Domestic Violence Laws in the Argentine Provinces," *Latin American Politics and Society*, 57 (Fall 2015), 1-26). Other works have focused on subnational variation in other phenomena, such as municipal governmental performance (e.g. Matthew R. Cleary, *The Sources of Democratic Representation in Mexico* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2010)), state capacity (e.g. Imke Harbers, "Taxation and the Unequal Reach of the State: Mapping State Capacity in Ecuador," *Governance*, 28 (July 2015), 373-91), and education reform (e.g. R. Douglas Hecock, "Electoral Competition, Globalization, and Subnational Education Spending in Mexico, 1999-2004," *American Journal of Political Science*, 50 (October 2006), 950-61.

Coding of Disputed Territories

The following criteria are considered in making the determination of whether a disputed territory is coded as a separate country or as part of another country: "▪ Formal (legal) sovereignty, or at least claims to sovereignty. . .▪ Continuity with a contemporary nation-state. ▪ Defined borders...▪ A capital. . .▪ A person or body that exercises executive powers...▪ Self-rule, at least with respect to domestic affairs. ▪ A distinct governing style and/or quality of democracy relative to surrounding territories. . .▪ A distinct constitution from the surrounding territories or the wider polity the country might be subservient to. ▪ Lacking (equal) representation at the central level of the wider polity it might be subservient to." The Country Coding Units document describes this evaluation in greater detail and also provides the decisions about whether specific disputed territories are treated as independent coding units or parts of other units (Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Carl Henrick Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, Kyle L. Marquardt, Juraj Medzihorsky et al., "V-Dem Methodology v9" (2019b), distributed by Varieties for Democracy (V-Dem) Project, https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/2b/e8/2be80341-348e-453e-b766-e74f314155d2/v-dem_methodology_v9.pdf).

Figure A1. Histogram of Unevenness

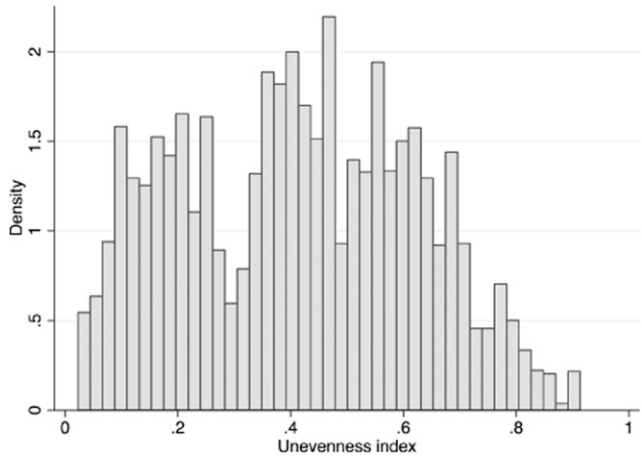


Figure A2. Histogram of Civil Liberties Unevenness

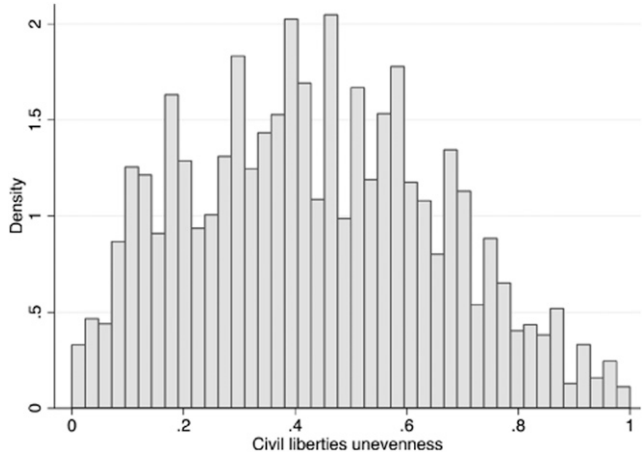


Figure A3. Histogram of Subnational Election Unevenness

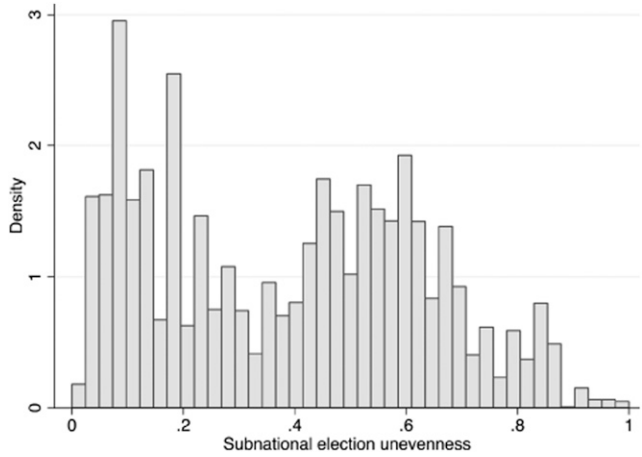
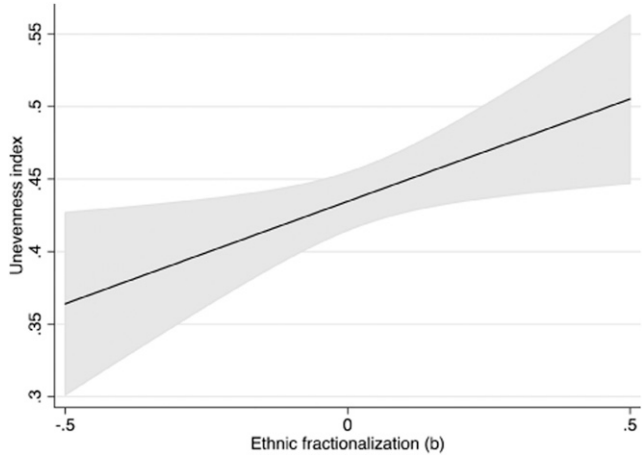
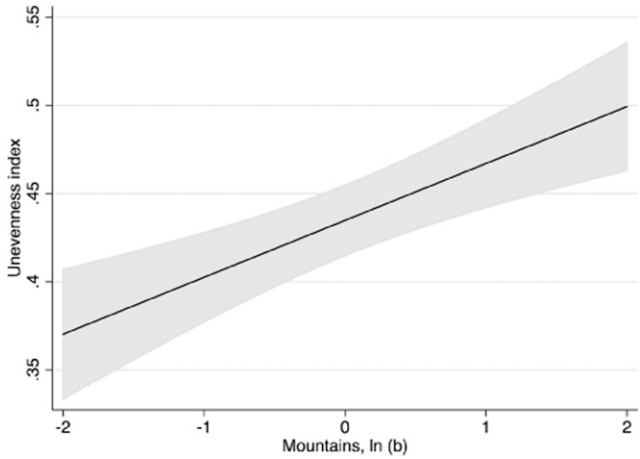


Figure A4. Marginal Effects of Ethnic Fractionalization on Unevenness



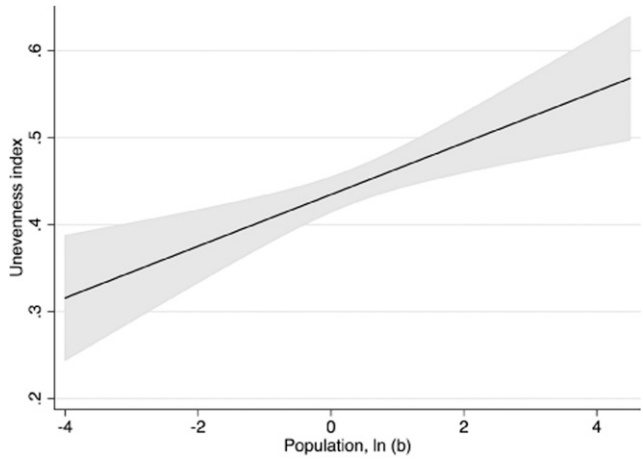
Predictive margins with 95% confidence intervals, based on Model 5 in Table 1.

Figure A5. Marginal Effects of Mountains on Unevenness



Predictive margins with 95% confidence intervals, based on Model 5 in Table 1.

Figure A6. Marginal Effects of Population on Unevenness



Predictive margins with 95% confidence intervals, based on Model 5 in Table

Table A3. Additional Tests with Interaction Effects

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)	**0.128**	**0.183*** **
	[0.084]	**[0.070]**
Mountains, ln (b)	**0.011**	**0.023** **
	[0.012]	**[0.010]**
Population, ln (b)	**0.041** **	**0.022** **
	[0.018]	**[0.011]**
Malapportionment (b)	0.051	
	[0.242]	
Malapportionment (b) x Democracy (b)	0.098	
	[1.030]	
Closed-list PR (w)		0.014
		[0.014]
Closed-list PR (b)		0.001
		[0.016]
Closed-list PR (w) x Democracy (w)		0.089
		[0.068]
Closed-list PR (b) x Democracy (b)		-0.059
		[0.068]
Democracy (w)		-0.205***
		[0.057]
Democracy (b)	-0.619***	-0.455***
	[0.094]	[0.091]
Year FE	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓
Observations	69	5195
Countries	69	128
Years	1	103
R-squared	0.808	0.647

Within-between models. Dependent variable is an index of unevenness made up of two components: civil liberties unevenness and subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and region fixed effects (FE).
*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$

Table A4. Region Dummies

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)		**0.170*** [0.060]**			**0.141** [0.058]**
Mountains, ln (b)			**0.039*** [0.009]**		**0.032*** [0.008]**
Population, ln (b)				**0.037*** [0.009]**	**0.030*** [0.008]**
Region					
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	0.085** [0.041]	0.056 [0.041]	0.076** [0.038]	0.104*** [0.040]	0.068* [0.039]
Latin America	0.300*** [0.050]	0.267*** [0.050]	0.267*** [0.047]	0.328*** [0.047]	0.267*** [0.046]
Middle East & North Africa	0.261*** [0.043]	0.227*** [0.046]	0.260*** [0.039]	0.295*** [0.041]	0.259*** [0.042]
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.255*** [0.037]	0.174*** [0.050]	0.270*** [0.036]	0.299*** [0.038]	0.236*** [0.049]
East Asia	0.059 [0.054]	0.080 [0.050]	0.020 [0.047]	0.001 [0.049]	-0.002 [0.040]
Southeast Asia	0.276*** [0.068]	0.238*** [0.071]	0.262*** [0.058]	0.268*** [0.059]	0.225*** [0.055]
South Asia	0.316*** [0.049]	0.265*** [0.058]	0.272*** [0.061]	0.289*** [0.039]	0.217*** [0.055]
The Pacific	0.238*** [0.071]	0.206** [0.087]	0.238*** [0.034]	0.332*** [0.057]	0.287*** [0.047]
The Caribbean	0.137** [0.063]	0.080 [0.073]	0.181*** [0.050]	0.232*** [0.066]	0.202*** [0.064]
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	15578	15578	15578	15578	15578
Countries	155	155	155	155	155
Years	118	118	118	118	118
R-squared	0.283	0.303	0.352	0.344	0.404

Within-between models. Dependent variable is an index of unevenness made up of two components: civil liberties unevenness and subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and region fixed effects (FE). Europe and North America is the reference category for region. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$

Table A5. Main Tests without Region Fixed Effects

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)		0.286***			0.318***
		[0.047]			[0.045]
Mountains, ln (b)			0.037***		0.037***
			[0.010]		[0.010]
Population, ln (b)				0.014*	0.015*
				[0.009]	[0.009]
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE					
Observations	15578	15578	15578	15578	15578
Countries	155	155	155	155	155
Years	118	118	118	118	118
R-squared	0.00160	0.120	0.0768	0.0137	0.222

Within-between models. Dependent variable is an index of unevenness made up of two components: civil liberties unevenness and subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year fixed effects (FE). *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$

Table A6. Additional Tests without Region Fixed Effects

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)	**0.411*** [0.085]**	**0.223* [0.124]**	**0.437*** [0.055]**	**0.364*** [0.088]**	**0.402*** [0.050]**	**0.298*** [0.046]**	**0.287*** [0.051]**	**0.252*** [0.044]**	**0.175*** [0.044]**	**0.175*** [0.045]**
Mountains, ln (b)	**0.071*** [0.014]**	**0.033** [0.016]**	**0.046*** [0.011]**	**0.036** [0.016]**	**0.037*** [0.010]**	**0.036*** [0.009]**	**0.033*** [0.010]**	**0.024*** [0.007]**	**0.025*** [0.008]**	**0.022*** [0.007]**
Population, ln (b)	**0.051** [0.021]**	**0.040* [0.022]**	**0.018 [0.012]**	**0.046*** [0.012]**	**0.023** [0.009]**	**0.003 [0.008]**	**0.018* [0.009]**	**0.020*** [0.007]**	**0.021*** [0.007]**	**0.013* [0.007]**
Federalism (w)	0.002** [0.001]									0.004*** [0.001]
Federalism (b)	-0.007*** [0.002]									0.000 [0.000]
Malapportionment (b)		-0.064 [0.279]								0.023 [0.019]
Closed-list PR (w)			0.009 [0.013]							0.004 [0.007]
Closed-list PR (b)			-0.029 [0.019]							-0.002 [0.004]
Economic heterogeneity (b)				0.207** [0.089]						0.042*** [0.008]
Diverse regime neighborhood (w)					-0.004 [0.006]					-0.016*** [0.004]
Diverse regime neighborhood (b)					0.008 [0.014]					0.002 [0.008]
Internal armed conflict (w)						[0.010] 0.036***				0.025*** [0.007]
Internal armed conflict (b)						0.331*** [0.080]				0.126*** [0.047]

(*Continued*)

Table A6. (continued)

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
GDP per capita, ln (w)							-0.042***			-0.017***
							[0.011]			[0.006]
GDP per capita, ln (b)							-0.049***			-0.007
							[0.017]			[0.007]
Corruption control (w)								-0.035***		-0.032***
								[0.007]		[0.005]
Corruption control (b)								-0.044***		-0.020***
								[0.007]		[0.006]
Democracy (w)									0.413***	0.386***
									[0.107]	[0.094]
Democracy (b)									1.137***	0.095
									[0.261]	[0.159]
Democracy squared (w)									-0.701***	-0.604***
									[0.121]	[0.108]
Democracy squared (b)									-1.854***	-0.354**
									[0.332]	[0.169]
Year FE	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Region FE										
Observations	3441	69	5221	1344	10615	12774	11213	11923	15348	15578
Countries	69	69	128	75	153	154	148	155	155	155
Years	61	1	103	54	117	101	117	118	118	118
R-squared	0.462	0.637	0.353	0.625	0.340	0.248	0.361	0.485	0.414	0.514

Within-between models. Dependent variable is an index of unevenness made up of two components: civil liberties unevenness and subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year fixed effects (FE). *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$

Table A7. Main Tests with Civil Liberties Unevenness

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)		**0.181****			**0.152****
		[0.071]			**[0.069]**
Mountains, ln (b)			**0.041*****		**0.034*****
			[0.009]		**[0.009]**
Population, ln (b)				**0.036*****	**0.029*****
				[0.010]	**[0.010]**
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	15578	15578	15578	15578	15578
Countries	155	155	155	155	155
Years	118	118	118	118	118
R-squared	0.255	0.275	0.313	0.304	0.358

Within-between models. Dependent variable is civil liberties unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and region fixed effects (FE). *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$

Table A8. Additional Tests with Civil Liberties Unevenness

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)	**0.203***	**0.221**	**0.241*****	**0.147***	**0.208*****	**0.159****	**0.194*****	**0.142****	**0.130***	**0.112**
	[0.109]	**[0.145]**	**[0.085]**	**[0.080]**	**[0.071]**	**[0.073]**	**[0.070]**	**[0.067]**	**[0.067]**	**[0.070]**
Mountains, ln (b)	**0.057*****	**0.031***	**0.043*****	**0.028*****	**0.034*****	**0.037*****	**0.034*****	**0.022*****	**0.025*****	**0.021****
	[0.016]	**[0.019]**	**[0.012]**	**[0.011]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.009]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.007]**	**[0.008]**	**[0.009]**
Population, ln (b)	**0.039**	**0.043***	**0.015**	**0.047*****	**0.026****	**0.021****	**0.023****	**0.024****	**0.027*****	**0.022****
	[0.024]	**[0.025]**	**[0.015]**	**[0.014]**	**[0.012]**	**[0.011]**	**[0.012]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.009]**	**[0.009]**
Federalism (w)	0.001									0.004***
	[0.003]									[0.001]
Federalism (b)	-0.002									0.000
	[0.003]									[0.000]
Malapportionment (b)		-0.360								0.016
		[0.404]								[0.027]
Closed-list PR (w)			0.002							-0.008
			[0.011]							[0.008]
Closed-list PR (b)			-0.010							0.000
			[0.020]							[0.005]
Economic heterogeneity (b)				0.160***						0.045***
				[0.062]						[0.012]
										-0.014***
Diverse regime neighborhood (w)					-0.003					[0.004]
					[0.006]					-0.001
					-0.002					[0.011]
Diverse regime neighborhood (b)					[0.018]					0.021**
										[0.010]
										0.106**
Internal armed conflict (w)						0.031**				[0.053]
						[0.013]				
						0.155				
Internal armed conflict (b)						[0.105]				

(*Continued*)

Table A8. (continued)

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
GDP per capita, ln (w)							-0.036**			-0.022***
							[0.014]			[0.008]
GDP per capita, ln (b)							-0.024			-0.004
							[0.022]			[0.009]
Corruption control (w)								-0.035***		-0.026***
								[0.008]		[0.007]
Corruption control (b)								-0.051***		-0.024***
								[0.009]		[0.006]
Democracy (w)									0.163	0.128
									[0.125]	[0.115]
Democracy (b)									0.580*	-0.021
									[0.320]	[0.283]
Democracy squared (w)									-0.490***	-0.401***
									[0.138]	[0.126]
Democracy squared (b)									-1.078***	-0.227
									[0.408]	[0.347]
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3441	69	5221	1344	10615	12774	11213	11923	15348	15578
Countries	69	69	128	75	153	154	148	155	155	155
Years	61	1	103	54	117	101	117	118	118	118
R-squared	0.553	0.565	0.502	0.747	0.470	0.351	0.449	0.517	0.412	0.479

Within-between models. Dependent variable is civil liberties unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year fixed effects (FE). Model 9 aggregates results across five imputed data sets. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$

Table A9. Main Tests with Subnational Election Unevenness

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)		**0.139***			**0.115***
		[0.074]			**[0.070]**
Mountains, ln (b)			**0.035*****		**0.030*****
			[0.010]		**[0.010]**
Population, ln (b)				**0.031*****	**0.025****
				[0.011]	**[0.011]**
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	12095	12095	12095	12095	12095
Countries	153	153	153	153	153
Years	118	118	118	118	118
R-squared	0.272	0.284	0.324	0.323	0.366

Within-between models. Dependent variable is subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year fixed effects (FE). *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0$.

Table A10. Additional Tests with Subnational Election Unevenness

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)	**0.011**	**0.225**	**0.081**	**0.128**	**0.172****	**0.090**	**0.119***	**0.104**	**0.073**	**0.097**
	[0.125]	**[0.161]**	**[0.090]**	**[0.100]**	**[0.071]**	**[0.076]**	**[0.070]**	**[0.070]**	**[0.066]**	**[0.069]**
Mountains, ln (b)	**0.066*****	**0.035***	**0.048*****	**0.037****	**0.036*****	**0.032*****	**0.029*****	**0.027*****	**0.025*****	**0.025*****
	[0.016]	**[0.019]**	**[0.011]**	**[0.015]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.009]**	**[0.009]**	**[0.009]**
Population, ln (b)	**0.040***	**0.037**	**0.027***	**0.011**	**0.030*****	**0.021***	**0.020**	**0.022***	**0.024****	**0.018***
	[0.023]	**[0.024]**	**[0.015]**	**[0.015]**	**[0.011]**	**[0.013]**	**[0.014]**	**[0.011]**	**[0.010]**	**[0.011]**
Federalism (w)	0.005**									0.003**
	[0.002]									[0.001]
Federalism (b)	0.002									0.000
	[0.003]									[0.000]
Malapportionment (b)		0.233								0.019
		[0.329]								[0.026]
Closed-list PR (w)			0.017							0.015
			[0.019]							[0.010]
Closed-list PR (b)			-0.013							-0.008
			[0.020]							[0.007]
Economic heterogeneity (b)				0.084						0.042***
				[0.070]						[0.013]
Diverse regime neighborhood (w)					-0.000					-0.013*
					[0.011]					[0.008]
Diverse regime neighborhood (b)					0.028					0.002
					[0.021]					[0.014]
Internal armed conflict (w)						0.033***				0.026***
						[0.012]				[0.008]
Internal armed conflict (b)						0.125				0.077
						[0.111]				[0.062]
GDP per capita, ln (w)							-0.027			-0.001
							[0.019]			[0.009]
GDP per capita, ln (b)							-0.024			-0.007
							[0.025]			[0.012]
Corruption control (w)								-0.035***		-0.034***
								[0.011]		[0.009]
Corruption control (b)								-0.022**		-0.010

(*Continued*)

Table A10. (continued)

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
								[0.011]		[0.008]
Democracy (w)									0.807***	0.828***
									[0.148]	[0.138]
Democracy (b)									1.865***	0.314
									[0.336]	[0.318]
Democracy squared (w)									-1.033***	-0.996***
									[0.161]	[0.156]
Democracy squared (b)									-2.611***	-0.433
									[0.418]	[0.395]
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3169	69	4859	1325	9284	9526	9638	10424	11961	12095
Countries	68	69	121	74	150	149	146	153	153	153
Years	61	1	103	52	117	101	117	118	118	118
R-squared	0.514	0.560	0.561	0.706	0.439	0.359	0.417	0.423	0.485	0.525

Within-between models. Dependent variable is subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year fixed effects (FE). Model 9 aggregates results across five imputed data sets. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Table A11. Main Tests with Measurement Uncertainty

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)		**0.110*** [0.042]**			**0.092** [0.043]**
Mountains (b)			**0.024*** [0.006]**		**0.020*** [0.005]**
Population, ln (b)				**0.024*** [0.006]**	**0.019*** [0.006]**
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	15564	15564	15564	15564	15564
Countries	155	155	155	155	155
Years	118	118	118	118	118
R-squared	0.238	.257	0.297	0.293	0.345

Within-between models. Dependent variable is an index of unevenness made up of two components: civil liberties unevenness and subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and region fixed effects (FE). *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$

Table A12. Additional Tests with Measurement Uncertainty

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Ethnic fractionalization (b)	**0.082**	**0.137**	**0.149*** **	**0.103***	**0.145*** **	**0.096** **	**0.121*** **	**0.097*** **	**0.081** **	**0.079** **
	[0.070]	**[0.096]**	**[0.053]**	**[0.057]**	**[0.041]**	**[0.047]**	**[0.041]**	**[0.036]**	**[0.038]**	**[0.039]**
Mountains (b)	**0.039*** **	**0.020**	**0.026*** **	**0.017** **	**0.021*** **	**0.021*** **	**0.020*** **	**0.016*** **	**0.017*** **	**0.015*** **
	[0.010]	**[0.013]**	**[0.008]**	**[0.008]**	**[0.006]**	**[0.006]**	**[0.006]**	**[0.005]**	**[0.006]**	**[0.005]**
Population, ln (b)	**0.028***	**0.025**	**0.016***	**0.019** **	**0.020*** **	**0.015** **	**0.017** **	**0.017*** **	**0.018*** **	**0.015*** **
	[0.015]	**[0.016]**	**[0.009]**	**[0.009]**	**[0.007]**	**[0.006]**	**[0.007]**	**[0.006]**	**[0.005]**	**[0.005]**
Federalism (w)	0.002**									0.003***
	[0.001]									[0.001]
Federalism (b)	-0.000									0.000
	[0.002]									[0.000]
Malapportionment (b)		-0.038								0.012
		[0.227]								[0.017]
Closed-list PR (w)			0.005							0.002
			[0.011]							[0.005]
Closed-list PR (b)			-0.006							-0.001
			[0.012]							[0.003]
Economic heterogeneity (b)				0.084**						0.027***
				[0.039]						[0.008]
Diverse regime neighborhood (w)					-0.002					-0.010***
					[0.005]					[0.003]
Diverse regime neighborhood (b)					0.008					0.003
					[0.010]					[0.007]
Internal armed conflict (w)						0.022**				0.015*
						[0.010]				[0.008]
Internal armed conflict (b)						0.108**				0.063
						[0.053]				[0.041]
GDP per capita, ln (w)							-0.026***			-0.011*
							[0.009]			[0.006]

(*Continued*)

Table A12. (continued)

VARIABLES	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
GDP per capita, ln (b)							-0.010			-0.003
							[0.014]			[0.007]
Corruption control (w)								-0.020***		-0.020***
								[0.005]		[0.005]
Corruption control (b)								-0.021***		-0.013***
								[0.006]		[0.005]
Democracy (w)									0.581***	0.248***
									[0.152]	[0.085]
Democracy (b)									1.180***	0.105
									[0.313]	[0.121]
Democracy squared (w)									-0.639***	-0.384***
									[0.139]	[0.097]
Democracy squared (b)									-1.304***	-0.030
									[0.320]	[0.033]
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3441	69	5221	1344	10613	12774	11211	11667	15334	15564
Countries	69	69	128	75	153	154	148	153	155	155
Years	61	1	103	54	117	101	117	118	118	118
R-squared	0.546	0.589	0.539	0.733	0.465	0.333	0.443	0.491	0.414	0.557

Within-between models. Dependent variable is an index of unevenness made up of two components: civil liberties unevenness and subnational election unevenness; larger values represent greater unevenness. Within-country variables are group mean centered (w); between-country variables are grand mean centered (b). Cluster-robust standard errors in brackets. All right-side variables measured at t-1. All models include year and region fixed effects (FE). *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.10$

Note: This robustness check sets a high bar and is rarely performed by other researchers. We include it to demonstrate that, nonetheless, most of our findings remain.