Budgetary Change in Authoritarian and Democratic Regimes

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On-line Appendix
A. Data Sources and Descriptive Statistics
B. Robustness Tests
C. Descriptions of the Budgeting Process in Each Country

For reasons of space, we have not included in the main print-version of our article detailed descriptions of our data sources, as well as how the budgetary process works in each of the countries studied. We provide that information here.

A. Data Sources and Descriptive Statistics
Russia

Russian spending figures are drawn from a variety of sources. In order to calculate changes in spending priorities over time, we need *unamended*, *overall* spending figures – that is, figures drawn from the original budget law for a particular year, and that cover both classified and unclassified spending. The relevant appendix (attached to budget laws) containing these figures is titled *Raspredelenie raskhodov federal'nogo biudzheta po razdelam i podrazdelam funktsional'noi klassifikatsii raskhodov biudzhetov Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Distribution of expenditures of the federal budget by sections and subsections of the functional spending classification of budgets of the Russian Federation),[1] which provides a breakdown of total spending (unclassified and classified combined) by functional spending category. These appendices are available for the 1999 to 2007 budgets from the legal information portal

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[1] The wording varies slightly across years.

Zakonodatel'stvo Rossii – an official resource curated by the Federal Protection Service (*Federal'naia sluzhba okhrany*).[2] Beginning with the 2008 budget, however, this appendix has not been made public, with a draft version not introduced for open legislative consideration and the final version not released along with the budget law. As Cooper (2007: 2) argues, '[b]y dropping the usual appendix providing a functional breakdown of total budget expenditure, an unprecedented degree of classification of the budget has been achieved, in addition to the traditional practice of declaring some appendix secret'.

Fortunately, spending figures for the 2012 to 2015 budgets are included in the Federal Exchequer's (*Federal'noe kaznacheistvo*) quarterly reports on budget implementation.[3] 2011 budget spending figures are included in the Audit Chamber's (*Schetnaia palata*) report on the main supplementary budget bill.[4] Although figures for 2009 are available from the same source, figures from 2008 and 2010 are not available, meaning it is not possible to calculate change statistics. Although these sources allow us to track diachronic spending shifts for a number of years in non-democratic Russia, it is not clear why these bodies are allowed to publish information which appears to be classified by the Government.

For the 1998-2014 period under examination, three different spending category classification systems were used: 1999-2004 (26-27 categories); 2005-2010 (11 categories); and 2011-2014 (14 categories). Beyond these changes, nine observations have been deleted due to concerns about the comparability of spending figures – that is, that the associated change statistics reflect changes in reporting practices rather than actual shifts in spending priorities.

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[2] The website address is http://pravo.gov.ru.

[3] These reports are available here: http://www.roskazna.ru/ispolnenie-byudzhetov/federalnyj-byudzhet/.

[4] This bill's webpage – and the Audit Chamber's report – is available here: http://asozd2.duma.gov.ru/main.nsf/(Spravka)?OpenAgent&RN=542807-5.

Brazil

The dataset for Brazil is comprised of the available authorized budget data reported by the IBGE from 1964 to 1985 and the authorized budget data reported in the Brazilian Budgetary Law (Lei Orçamentária Anual, LOA) from 1995 to 2010. The data have been converted into 2014 Reais (R$) and are listed by topic codes that cover the executive, legislative, and judicial branches and their subtopics. The formulas for monetary and inflation adjustment were calculated based on the dates of approval of the LOAs. We rely on different sources of data because the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) does not report the authorized budget, but the executed budget, from 2001 on. The IBGE and LOA data sets are nevertheless comparable, since both data sets report budget authority data.

We do not investigate public budgeting during the period in which Brazil was drafting its new constitution or the first years after democratization (1986 to 1994). The existing IBGE budget data for the period of 1986-1994 are not entirely reliable. For instance, Brown (2002) finds that the country's debt crisis led to accounting changes that render comparisons after 1987 very difficult. As indicated by our data set, this limitation is only circumvented with the establishment of the Real plan in 1994.

Altogether, the dataset has 105 different budget categories, which are all the categories reported in the IBGE and in the LOA data sets for both periods. The sum of budget categories reported for each year yields the total budget of each year.[5] While 105 categories existed during the time period of our study, not all categories exist in each year. Rather, categories vary across and within political regimes because the Brazilian government altered them throughout the years. These modifications occur in the democratic period because the

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[5] In order to calculate the total budget for each year, one needs to exclude the following categories: 10000 (Executive Branch), 30000 (Legislative Branch as reported in the authoritarian period) 30500 (Legislative Branch as reported in the democratic period), 50000 (Judicial Branch), and 90400 (Other expenses). These categories represent the sum of several subcategories, which are included separately and are therefore redundant.

president has the power to create, modify or extinguish ministries, secretaries, and public administration bodies through special legislation. To illustrate, the budget category that represents the expenses of the Ministry of Agriculture takes on the following names in the data set: 'Ministério da Agricultura', 'Ministério da Agricultura, Abastecimento e Reforma Agrária', 'Ministério da Agricultura e do Abastecimento', 'Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento', and 'Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário'. These differences are not limited to nomenclature, but reflect substantive changes in the scope and purpose of the Ministry of Agriculture. As indicated previously, in our analysis we included only budget categories which are consistently defined between two years.

Turkey

Turkish budget data come from the General Directorate of Budget and Fiscal Control (BFC; Bütçe ve Mali Kontrol Müdürlüğü), a subunit of the Ministry of Finance in Turkey. Appendices for budget allocation decisions for the period of 1924-2005 have been made public (in English and Turkish) at the BFC's website. A larger body of data about fiscal policy, including the period of the Ottoman Empire, was published in multiple studies (Shaw and Shaw 1977)[6].

The budget data available at the BFC's website provides a breakdown of total spending by spending category. This classification shows how much money is allocated to each spending unit (ministries and government organizations) for a fiscal year. These figures include data on 'allocated funding', 'actual spending' and 'budget share'. The number of spending units does not change much over time, with the range being 30-36. As is mentioned previously, we do not calculate annual change statistic for inconsistent spending units that undertook organizational change.

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[6] T., 2003. Osmanlı malî istatistikleri bütçeler, 1841-1918 (Vol. 7). TC Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü.

There is no missing data in Turkish spending figures for the period under examination. Except some years in the late 1800s, allocated funds along with actual spending can be found at the BFC's website[7] and in Güran (2003).

Malta

Maltese spending figures are drawn from two different sources. For a large part of the British colonial period (1813-1964), the British authorities published 'Blue books', which were recently digitalised and published online at:

https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Historical_Statistics/Malta_Blue_Books/Pages/Malta-Blue-Books.aspx. Such books provided a wealth of information on such socio-economic aspects as population, currencies, trade and currencies, education and climate (but occasionally even description of botanic species or street maps). Spending figures were regularly included in the Blue books in a dedicated chapter on 'net revenue and expenditure', which we digitalised and put in spreadsheets. Blue books cover the period 1821-1937, with the only gaps in 1823 and 1826. Because the gaps were concentrated at the beginning of the time series, and also to avoid possible biases associated to the changeover between the old currency (scudo) and the 'new' one (pound sterling) that happened in 1826, we only used data starting from 1827. Expenditures data were recorded at a rather detailed level, and spending categories were relatively stable considering the long time covered. We counted 147 different categories that were used at least two consecutive times and were thus useful to calculate budget changes. Of these, 79 categories recurred at least ten times. Spending figures for 2001 to 2011 are available from the European Union's Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) dataset.

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[7] http://www.bumko.gov.tr/?_Dil=2

B. Robustness Tests

Regime Classification

Concerns about the effect of regime-classification variation on the results reported in the article motivate us to pursue various robustness tests. If results consistently point in the same direction after multiple replications, this should lend greater credibility to our conclusions, even if certain concerns about data quality remain. In the article, we use Freedom House scores to separate authoritarian and democratic regimes. This appendix replicates our analysis using three alternative classification systems: Polity IV, Varieties of Democracy, and Unified Democracy Scores.

Polity IV codes 'the authority characteristics of states in the world system for purposes of comparative, quantitative analysis' (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2013). Specifically, we use Polity IV codes corresponding to political competition. We have theorized that it is the electoral connection that provides leaders in democratic regimes with the incentive to seek out and engage with policy information, so it makes sense to look at political competition. Polity IV divides regimes into five levels of political competition: repressed, suppressed, factional, transitional, and competitive. Every year of available budget data for Russia corresponds with the 'transitional' period for political competition, offering no opportunity for comparison. Malta is not coded at all under Polity IV, so our replication looks at only Brazil and Turkey. Table A1 displays the kurtosis statistics corresponding to the distribution of changes associated with each level of political competition.

Table A1. Kurtosis by Polity IV (Political Competition).

Country	Time Period	N	Kurtosis	L-kurtosis
Turkey				
Factional	1971-1972; 1979-1981; 1996-2004	350	208.26	0.779
Transitional	1973-1978; 1983-1995	531	91.14	0.440
Brazil				
Repressed	1966-1974	264	10.90	0.651
Suppressed	1975-1985	368	47.11	0.467
Transitional	1995-2010	595	40.40	0.382

For both Brazil and Turkey, L-kurtosis decreases substantially moving from periods of low to higher political competition. This provides additional support for the informational advantage hypothesis. Political competition forces leaders to engage with policy information, as an administration that is unresponsive to shifting environmental challenges will be voted out of office.

The new 'Varieties of Democracy' (V-Dem) classification system offers measures of five principles of democracy (electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian) and these are disaggregated into a variety of variables measuring such things as judicial independence, electoral regularity, and gender equality (Coppedge et.al. 2015b). From the V-Dem databank, we use a composite variable called the electoral democracy index, which captures Robert Dahl's institutions of polyarchy: freedom of association, suffrage, clean elections, elected executive, and freedom of expression (Coppedge et.al. 2015b). Countries can receive scores of either 0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75, or 1, with higher scores indicating greater electoral accountability. The V-Dem codebook (Coppedge et.al. 2015a) suggests that the scores can be associated with 'closed autocratic,' 'autocratic,' 'ambivalent,' 'minimally democratic,' and 'democratic' regimes. Table A2 shows the results of the distributional analyses using V-Dem's electoral democracy index to divide the data. If there are fewer than 100 observation associated with an electoral democracy score, that period is not included in the analysis over concerns about the reliability of distributions drawn from small datasets. (Malta is not rated by the V-Dem system and therefore not included in the table.)

Table A2. Kurtosis by Varieties of Democracy scores.

Country	Time Period	N	Kurtosis	L-kurtosis
Turkey				
Ambivalent	1984-1989	155	49.16	0.441
Minimally Democratic	1971-1979; 1990-2004	624	366.89	0.735
Brazil				
Autocratic	1965-1985	668	30.36	0.853
Democratic	1995-2010	595	40.40	0.382
Russia				
Ambivalent	1998-2002	343	74.81	0.433
Autocratic	2002-2003; 2004-2006; 2010-2012	438	37.70	0.497

Results are mixed. Brazil shows a dramatic reduction in kurtosis moving from a more autocratic to a more democratic period; evidence supportive of the informational advantage hypothesis. For Russia, the results point in the same direction, but the magnitude of change is smaller. The results for Turkey are, in contrast, supportive of the institutional efficiency hypothesis: more democratic years are associated with higher L-kurtosis. V-Dem rates Turkey as 0.75, minimally democratic, throughout the 1970s, 1990s, and 2000s, during which the country experienced two military interventions. Freedom House distinguishes the late 1970s as a period of greater freedom and categorizes all other years as 'partly free'. So, there are considerable discrepancies in the way the V-Dem electoral democracy index and Freedom House classify Turkey and they affect the results of the distributional analysis.

Finally, we use Unified Democracy Scores (U-Dem), which are estimated using Bayesian statistical models to create a general scale of democracy based on thirteen measures of regime type (Pemstein, Meserve, and Melton 2010). The scale is continuous, ranging from -0.50 for the most autocratic regimes to 0.50 for the most democratic. We subdivide this continuous measure into four U-Dem quartiles so that we have enough observations in each quartile to draw change distributions. Table A3 shows the results of distributional analyses that group budgetary changes based on these quartiles. If there are fewer than 100 observations in a quartile we do not draw a distribution for that grouping of observations.

Table A3. Kurtosis by Unified Democracy scores.

Country	Time Period	N	Kurtosis	L-kurtosis
Turkey				
1st Quartile (Least Freedom)	1973; 1983-2003	594	580.00	0.664
3rd Quartile	1974-1979	187	110.13	0.623
Brazil				
1st Quartile (Least Freedom)	1965-1974	300	12.63	0.690
2nd Quartile	1975-1985	368	47.11	0.467
4th Quartile (Most Freedom)	1995-2010	595	40.40	0.382
Russia				
2nd Quartile	2004-2005; 2011-2012	265	38.37	0.520
3rd Quartile	1998-2003; 2005-2006	516	76.43	0.440

L-kurtosis estimates for Brazil, Russia and Turkey support the informational advantage hypothesis. In all three cases, L-kurtosis is lower during periods of greater political freedom, although for Russia and Turkey the differences are smaller in magnitude than the differences found in Brazil.

By using the various classification systems, we gain consistent measures of the democratic tendencies of different regimes over time. But the historical span of these systems is limited and for Malta we have budget data from much further back in time than regime-classification data is available. Furthermore, there are always some concerns about the accuracy of generalized classification systems. For these reasons, we replicate our analysis using regime transitions as the dividing points in the data. That is, we simply look at the historical record and note (to the best of our ability) the points at which one regime fell and was replaced by another. Table A4 shows the results.

Table A4. Kurtosis by regime.

Country	Time Period	N	Kurtosis	L-kurtosis
Russia				
Democracy	1998-2003	435	74.21	0.446
Authoritarian	2004-2006; 2010-2014	526	98.49	0.515
Turkey				
Democracy	1970-1978; 1982-1995; 1997-2004	484	454.37	0.736
Military	1979-1981; 1996	69	4.91	0.195
Brazil				
Military	1964-1985	944	80.70	0.376
Democracy	1995-2010	866	229.78	0.283
Malta				
Colonial	1827-1921	2,675	565.68	0.652
Colonial Self-Rule	1922-1936	499	122.93	0.569
Democracy	2001-2011	380	71.11	0.499

Using the longer data series for Brazil and the different dividing points for each country does not substantively alter the results. (The exception is Turkey, where the low number of cases during periods of military rule create concerns about the robustness of distributional statistics.) For the most part, however, we still see a lower magnitude of punctuation during periods of greater political openness. Altogether, we have conducted sixteen tests of the hypotheses (across countries and classification systems) and twelve of these tests support the informational advantage hypothesis. So, while the results are not unequivocal, they point strongly in one direction and appear to reflect real differences in the abilities of democracies to process and act on information.

Economic analysis

Concerns about alternative explanations motivate us to engage in another robustness test. Brazil, Russia, and Turkey experienced economic instability during the periods analyzed in this paper. Thus, we need to account for the possibility that it is economic instability, and not difference in regime type, that explains the kurtosis patterns we observe. This issue is less problematic for Russia because the years of economic crisis are already excluded from our data set given our inability to compute spending change statistics for the 2008, 2009, and 2010 budgets. We rely on existing literature to define the years of economic collapse for the

two other countries. For Turkey, we exclude the years of 1994 and 2001 (Celasun [1998];

Özatay and Sak [2002]; Akyüz and Boratav [2003]; Macovei [2009]; Öniş [2009]). For

Brazil, we exclude the second period of the military regime (1975-1985), during which the

country experienced oil shocks and debt crises; and the years of 1995, 1998, 1999, and 2001,

during which the country was hit by different financial crises (Skidmore [1988]; Skidmore et

al. [2010]; Toshniwal [2012]). Table A5 reports the results of this analysis using Freedom

House scores: L-kurtosis still declines moving from partly free to free periods. In fact, results

remain unaltered across multiple replications of this analysis using Polity IV, V-Dem, U-

Dem scores and historical records.

Table A5. Kurtosis by Freedom House rankings (years of economic crisis excluded)

Country	Time Period	N	Kurtosis	L-kurtosis
Brazil				
Partly Free	1975-1985; 1996-1997; 2000	222	26.01	0.433
Free	2002-2010	210	12.03	0.319
Turkey				
Partly Free	1970-1972; 1979-1993; 1995-2000; 2002-2004	718	439.80	0.710
Free	1973-1978	161	95.38	0.657

C. Descriptions of the Budgeting Process in Each Country

Russia

The political environment has varied considerably in post-Soviet Russia. Following the

collapse of the Soviet Union, the country experienced an unprecedented level of political

competition, media freedom, and economic liberty. However, the concomitant collapse in

state capacity meant that President Yeltsin's tenure, 1991-1999, was also marked by

economic turbulence, threats to the territorial integrity of the federation, and 'feckless

pluralism' (Carothers 2002: 10) instead of consolidated multi-party politics. In response to

this impression of disorder, Vladimir Putin set out on a project of re-establishing state control

on his election to the presidency in 2000 — an aim aided greatly by the concurrent rise in world oil prices.

Although there are notable differences in how post-Soviet Russia's political system has been classified, there is a broad consensus of an authoritarian turn under the leadership of President Putin. Freedom House changed its classification of Russia from 'Partly Free' in 2003 to 'Not Free' in 2004, citing 'the virtual elimination of influential political opposition parties within the country and the further concentration of executive power' (Freedom House 2005). Along with executive dominance over the legislature — thanks to the rising seat share of the 'party of power', United Russia — the Putin administration clamped down on media freedom, removing most independent television news outlets. In addition, oligarchs with political pretensions — most notably Mikhail Khodorkovsky — were threatened into exile or imprisoned.

This narrative of increased executive control was also reflected in budgetary practices. Whereas budgets passed in the 1990s were subject to intense lobbying during legislative passage, often resulting in delayed promulgation and making the final laws un-implementable (Troxel 2003), budgeting in the 2000s became a much more orderly affair, with fewer channels for outside influence on executive tax and spending decisions. However, the rising dominance of the executive branch and apparent subsequent gains in institutional efficiency went hand-in-hand with the loss of information transparency. Beginning with the 2008 budget, complete spending figures broken down by functional sub-category have not been made public by the Russian Government – something that, according to Cooper (2007: 2), constitutes an 'unprecedented degree of classification [opacity] of the budget'.[8] Beyond the markedly reduced influence of the legislature in the decision-making process, increased

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[8] As described in the appendix, spending figures for later years are taken from reports produced by other state bodies involved in the budget process, which – for unknown reasons – are able to make public ostensibly classified information.

opacity appears to be another way in which budgeting processes can differ between periods of democracy and non-democracy (see Wehner and Renzio 2013).

Turkey

The history of Turkish democracy can best be described by large fluctuations starting from the multiparty politics in 1950. Although the end of single-party political system was of great importance for the democratization of Turkish politics, the newly elected government under the leadership of Adnan Menderes soon embraced undemocratic practices to restrict opposition activities. As the deteriorating relations between government and opposition reached its nadir in 1960, the military intervened in politics for the first time since the establishment of the Republic (1923), removing the government party from office and executing its leaders. Shortly afterwards, in 1961, elections were held and Turkish politics entered into a new phase, one in which polarization and political violence increased dangerously to the point at which the military intervened in politics for the second time by delivering memoranda. However, violence and political instability continued to develop (Tachau and Heper 1983). In the following ten years, politics was mostly dominated by unstable coalitions and minority governments, resulting in right-wing/left-wing political violence. For the third time, in 1980, the military took control of the government and banned all the political activities temporarily until 1983. The influence of military on politics has been restricted only after late 2000s during the AKP's (Justice and Development Party) government.

Although Turkish politics faced three military interventions in two decades (1960, 1971 and 1980), the role that the military played was categorized as 'moderator' and 'guardian' as these military regimes ended soon after the political authority was restored (Tachau and Heper 1983). Instead, the conditions that put Turkey among 'partly-free' countries emerged under civil governments. An electoral threshold of 10 percent that

prevented certain parties from winning seats in parliament and bans on political activity of the Kurdish élite harmed political rights and civil liberties in Turkey during the 1990s. Moreover, freedom of expression had long been limited in Turkey; many journalists were accused of insulting state officials and imprisoned in 1999 (see Freedom House 1999; section on Turkey), which received much attention particularly from the EU and leading non-profit organizations.

The Turkey data covers the period of 1970 to 2004. The first period, 1970-1972, is categorized as partly free; 1973-1978, free; and 1979-2004 again partly free. The latter period coincided with the rise of the Kurdish movement in the country: Turkey's treatment of its Kurdish citizens has been the main obstacle to the democratization of Turkish politics (Ergil 2000). There are good reasons to expect that certain political and social groups were isolated from the decision-making process and their demands were not taken into consideration during this period.

Brazil

Our analysis focuses on the years of authoritarian rule (1964-1985), and, in the democratic period, the years of centre party rule (PSDB, 1995-2002, during which the president was Fernando Henrique Cardoso) and the years of left party rule (Workers' Party, or the PT, 2003-2010, during which the president was Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva). The authoritarian years under the Brazilian military can be divided into two periods. The first (1964-1974) was characterized by the dominance of a hard-liner group of military officers, economic prosperity, and the relative absence of social unrest. The second (1975-1985) was characterized by the dominance of the moderate group of military officers, economic crisis, and presence of social unrest.

The first period of the military regime was marked by the severe restriction of political and civil rights. The government interfered in almost all labour unions and civil

society organizations, strikes were banned and student movements were declared to be extinct. Political rights were also suspended. The government established indirect elections for presidents and governors. Only two political parties were allowed to exist: the ARENA (*Aliança Renovadora Nacional*), the regime party, and the MDB (*Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*), the opposition party. During this period, rulers temporarily shut down Congress in 1968 and edited the AI5 (Institutional Act 5), suspending all democratic rights and constitutional freedom.

During the second period of the military regime, Brazil's economy started to suffer the effects of the oil shock of 1973 combined with the maintenance of investments in unfavourable conditions. Although the government tried to contain the crisis, a second oil shock (1979) jeopardized its plan. The annual rate of inflation did not stop growing during this period, which did not stop the Brazilian military regime from focusing on economic growth at all costs (Skidmore 1988). President João Figueiredo, the last military ruler to occupy office, turned to the IMF (International Monetary Fund) for assistance (Baer 2014) in 1982. Ernesto Geisel, who took office in 1974, had committed his government to starting the process of political opening (Huntington 1991). Several sectors of society began to organize in this period (for instance, the '*Diretas Já*' movement demanded direct presidential elections between 1983 and 1984), which increased the pressure for the government to promote institutional reforms (such as the end of the censorship of radio and television in 1978).

The transition to democracy occurred in March 1985 when President José Sarney took office after the death of Tancredo Neves, who had been indirectly elected president by an electoral college. Freedom House notes the transition, changing its classification of Brazil from 'Partly Free' to 'Free' in 1985.[9] These political changes also marked the beginning of a

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[9] Freedom House ranks the country as Partly Free again from 1993-2002. Such classification is justified by increases in violence and lawlessness on the part of the police, upsurge of organized crime, lack of respect for indigenous rights, and corruption within the federal government. From 2003

tumultuous economic period. From 1985 to 1994, Brazil had four different currencies (Cruzado, Cruzado Novo, Cruzeiro, and Cruzeiro Real). The country suffered with hyperinflation that reached levels as high as of 81.3 percent in a single month in 1990 (Bresser, Pereira, and Nakano 1991). Budget data for this period is scarce and unreliable. For these reasons we exclude 1986 to 1994 from our analysis.

Malta

Malta was under direct rule of the British Crown since 1800. British troops were called to liberate the island from the Napoleonic army after only two years of French domination, which in turn had posed an end to the unique confederal theocracy of the Order of St. John, known as the government of the Knights. When the British took over Malta, they centralized decisions under their authority. Ever since, the political history of colonial Malta was one of continuous requests of self-government by the Maltese, and reluctant, intermittent concessions by the UK (Frendo 2000).

The British rule of the first decades was effectively a 'gubernatorial autocracy' (Cremona 1997). Representatives of the Maltese population were kept out of any decision-making body, and civil liberties were suppressed. The King bluntly rejected the requests of constitutional government, representative political bodies, independent tribunals, and freedom of expression. Representation in a consultative Council of Government with consultative powers was first granted in 1835; Maltese members, however, were a minority, and they were appointed rather than elected.

The first elected Council of Government was introduced with the 1849 constitution. Maltese representatives were still a minority of the members, and suffrage was limited by

on, Freedom House ranks the country as Free due to improvements in political rights. In particular, Freedom House highlights the holding of a free and fair election in which an oppositional presidential candidate of a different ideology from the ruling coalition (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Workers' Party) was elected.

sex, age, literacy, property, and income; which restricted the electorate to less than four percent of the population. In addition, while the Council had decision-making power, the Governor could override its deliberations. A new constitution granted in 1887 established a Legislative Council with a majority of elected Maltese representatives. However, the Governor could still veto or override its decisions, and while limitations to suffrage were relaxed, the electoral body was still restricted to five percent of the population. When the elected members took a confrontational stand against the colonial government, the constitution was revoked.

A real change was introduced in 1921, when social pressures created by WWI led to the promulgation of a new constitution. The Amery-Milner constitution introduced a bicameral system with legislative powers. A number of matters – including trade, foreign relations and defence – were reserved to the Imperial government; and suffrage was still restricted, including by sex. And yet, the 1921 constitution marked a radical change with the introduction of self-rule. The next significant changed happened in 1947, when a national assembly approved a new constitution which introduced universal suffrage and restricted the reserved matters to those touching 'public safety'.

While post-second world war Malta had fully representative institutions, it still was a British colony. The 1961 Constitution finally established 'the state of Malta' which obtained independence from Britain on 21 September 1964 following a referendum. The Constitution was amended in 1974 to make Malta a Republic. Although Malta had a democratic constitution, a free press, and a pluralistic party system, the first decades after independence were years of democratic consolidation. Its perfect two-party system, coupled with hyper-majoritarian political institutions (Carammia and Pace 2015), meant that one party could rule the country after winning the elections by narrow margins of as little as one thousand votes. The charismatic government of Dom Mintoff, the leader of the Labour party in government

between 1971 and 1987, was particularly controversial. Mintoff steered Malta toward the
non-aligned movement, and tightened relations with such countries as Libya and North
Korea. Eventually, civil liberties were tightened during the final years of Labour government.
This reflects in Freedom House rankings, where Malta is classified as Partly-Free between
1983 and 1987. That was a short parenthesis, however; for the rest of the period covered by
Freedom House, independent Malta was always classified as a free country. In 2004, forty
years after gaining independence, Malta became a member of the European Union; four years
later, it introduced the Euro as its currency.

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