

## Effects of Economic Growth on Democratization in Transition Economies: A Panel Data Approach

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### Geçiş Ekonomilerindeki İktisadi Büyümenin Demokratikleşme Üzerindeki Etkileri: Bir Panel Veri Yaklaşımı

#### Abstract

Democratization had occurred in a long historical process and had developed itself by having different evolutions. It had been claimed that democratization was based on some social conditions until 1959. However, Lipset (1959) suggested that democracy is based not only on social conditions but also on economic growth. Relationships between economic growth and democratization have been a significant issue for many studies particularly in the last three decades. Within this study, the effects of economic growth on democratization have been investigated by using a panel data set for 1993-2005 periods for 24 transition economies. According to the estimating results, democratization process is positively affected by income level. Whilst democratization level is negatively affected by increasing population, the effect of inflation is ambiguous.

**Key Words** : Democracy, Economic Growth, Panel Data.

**JEL Classification Codes** : C12, I00, O10.

#### Özet

Demokratikleşme uzun bir tarihsel süreç içinde ortaya çıkmış ve farklı evrimler geçirerek kendi kendini geliştirmiştir. 1959 yılına kadar demokratikleşmenin bir takım sosyal şartların etkisine bağlı olduğu ileri sürülmekteydi. Bununla birlikte Lipset (1959) demokratikleşmenin yalnızca bazı sosyal şartlara değil aynı zamanda iktisadi büyümeyle de bağlı olduğunu ileri sürmüştür. Bu bağlamda iktisadi büyüme ve demokratikleşme arasındaki ilişkiler özellikle son otuz yılda literatürde sıklıkla ele alınmıştır. Bu çalışmada 1993-2005 dönemine ait panel veri ile 24 geçiş ekonomisi için iktisadi büyümenin demokratikleşme üzerindeki etkisi araştırılmıştır. Çalışmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre gelir düzeyi arttıkça ülkelerdeki demokratikleşme süreci olumlu olarak etkilenmektedir. Çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular literatürde yer alan ve demokratikleşmenin enflasyondan olumsuz olarak etkilendiğine dair görüşleri desteklememektedir. Elde edilen bir diğer sonuç ise nüfus artışının demokratikleşmeyi olumsuz olarak etkilediği yönündedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler** : Demokrasi, İktisadi Büyüme, Panel Veri.

### **Acknowledgement**

This paper presented at International Scientific conference under the name of “Georgia and The Middle East” in Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, on December 22-24, 2008.

### **Beyan**

Bu çalışma, Javakhishvili Tiflis Devlet Üniversitesi tarafından 22–24 Aralık 2008 tarihleri arasında Gürcistan’da düzenlenen “Gürcistan ve Orta Doğu” başlıklı uluslararası sempozyumda tebliğ olarak sunulmuştur.

## 1. Introduction

Economic dimension of democracy and democracy dimension of the economics and their interactions and relations carry utmost importance to fulfill democratization process. (Türkkan, 1996: 8). Within this context, Lipset's (1959) leading study gave acceleration to the relationship between democracy and economic growth that is discussed in scientific settings as a controversial issue. Lipset (1959: 75), pointed out the effect of economic development on democracy with the statement "The richer the nation is, the luckier is to maintain the democracy". At the same time, it is clear that most of the wealthiest countries of the world are among the most democratic countries. On the other hand, gulf countries are among the richest countries whereas they are not governed by democracy.

The effect of economic growth on democratization is explained with the concepts such as education, citizenship culture, view to political actions, urban middle class. According to Lipset (1959: 78–9), education level within the country increases together with the economic growth; the characteristics of "being comprehension" increases due to enhanced education level and this leads people have a broader view on social and political actions and they do not approve radical doctrines even after. Besides, Lipset (1959: 83–4) stressed that the effect of economic growth on democracy has been effected by political culture and social structure which are mutually related. According to this, structure of social stratification with economic growth and development are parted from being widening sharp pyramid to enlarging diamond section and thus political role of the middle class appeared prominently. An educated middle class softens the conflicts among the extreme groups by punishing and encouraging the moderate and democratic parties. Where a country is poor and life standards of the lower classes are not adequate; upper classes have strong pressure to isolate lower classes from the society and qualify them as lower class. In such circumstances, upper classes do not accept lower classes to have sharing rights on political power. The same thoughts are conveyed by Huntington (1991). Huntington (1991: 68–9) explains the correlation between economic growth and democratization via education. Population will have better access to education through increasing funds to education after growth. Middle class will enhance qualitatively with educated population and stated population will have citizenship culture as much as they can. Increase in citizenship culture will contribute to democratization.

According to Muller (1995: 968–9) who investigates the effect of economic culture on democratization, as far as economic growth sustains, either urban or working middle class will develop. Increase in the urban middle class after workforce flow from agricultural sector to industry and service sectors will contribute to the increase in democratization level. On the contrary, there will be distortion in growth and income inequality within the context of Kuznets curve. This inequality will make working groups radicalize and will increase polarization among the classes. Consequently, the effect of

economic growth on democratization will be determined according to the magnificence of the two contrast effects.

In the second part of this study, that the effect of economic growth on democratization in transition economies studies will be classified as multi country, sub-region and one country. In the third part, countries' scores will be given that represent the democratization and some data will be dealt to evaluate the level of democracy. In the fourth and fifth parts, the effect of growth on democratization is tested empirically. In the final part of the study, findings and evaluations are mentioned.

## **2. Literature Review**

The studies with regard to the effect of economic growth on democratization will be classified as multi country, sub-region and one country.

First study was implemented on multi country by Lipset (1959). In the leading study that the relationship between income level and democratization was mentioned was classified European and English speaking countries and Latin American countries relatively as stable democracies and stable dictatorships. To the results of the study, democratization process increases as the income level increases. Later studies by Coleman (1960), Cutright (1963), Helliwell (1992, 1994), Burkhart et al. (1994), Boix et al. (2003), Epstein (2006) support the Lipset's findings (1959). Not similar findings are supported by some studies. Neubauer (1967) argued that no evidence is available to prove developed societies developed tend to be more democratic. Similarly, Jackman (1973) concluded that Neubauer's hypothesis (1967) is more consistent when compared with Lipset's (1959) and Cutright's (1963) hypothesis. To these findings, there is no linear relationship between economic growth and democratization. Again, Arat (1988) verifies Neubauer's (1967) and Jackman's (1973) claims after long term analyzes that there is no positive relationship between economic growth and democratization as supposed by Lipset (1959) and Coleman (1960).

Arguments kept going on with the years 1990s. Inglehart (1990) argued that democratic stability is affected by the variables such as GNP and the percentage of the population in service sector. To the findings of the study, it was stressed that variables in question have positively and statistically significant effects on democratic stability. Alesina et al. (1996) concluded that low growth increases the propensity of political instability. Londrugen et al. (1996) stated that the effect of income on democratization is an important stimulant that creates democratic political bodies. Contrarily, Przeworski and Limogni (1997) denied Lipset's (1959) hypothesis, and concluded that income is important in transition to higher democracy levels. Barro (1999) stressed that democracy increases with GNP, school numbers in primary education, the gap between girls and boys in attending the schools in primary education, however it tends to decrease due to over

independence to urbanization and natural resources. Acemoglu et al. (2005) stated that positive relation appears between democracy and income when historical factors have not been taken into consideration, but in case of including historical factors with long term analyzes, no evidence is available verifying the effect of income on democratization.

First study in sub-region level was conducted by Landman (1999). Landman (1999) conducted a study in 70 countries within Latin America and tested whether Lipset's theory (1959) is valid in the region in question. To the findings of the study, no relationship can be proposed between GNP per person and democracy measures. On the contrary, Bernhagen (2001) tested Landman's (1999) theory in which there is a positive relationship between democracy and economic development and concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between democracy and economic development. Alfaro (2002) examined Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua countries within Central America to verify Lipset's theory (1959) in sub-region. To the findings, democratization is not dependent upon economic growth and development in terms of the mentioned countries.

Kim (1971) conducted the first study in one country level. Kim investigated Lipset's (1959) and Cutright's (1963) hypothesis regarding "to be in a specific level for socio-economic development is necessary for the stability of the democracy", whether it is consistent for Japan or not according to the data of 1968. Monshipouri et al. (1995) proposed that economic growth in Pakistan did not create a strong and wealthy middle class but led elite groups to appear and strengthen. In the study, it was stressed that economic growth in Pakistan does not support sustainable democracy, but supports authoritarian democracy.

### **3. Measuring the Level of Democracy**

It is hard to measure the democracy directly. Dahl's (1971) Poliarchy study has been accepted as a reference in measuring the democracy by some investigations. Poliarchy means the sovereignty of the majority. The concept was coined by Alstedius in the 17th century. Alstedius described poliarchy as a system that keeps the highest power by the public (Maier, 1985: 190).

To Dahl (1989), these following characteristics are required to mention about a fully developed poliarchy: i) election of people in charge, ii) elections executed regularly and fairly, iii) an election system being voted by all adults, iv) a passive voting right that all adults have, v) freedom of thought, vi) freedom of communication, vii) freedom of organizing and coalition. Dahl (1971), taking into consideration these characteristics, presents indicators to demonstrate the availability of democracy. Democracy can be measured accurately under this context.

In 1980s and 1990s, many democracy measures, taking Dahl (1971) as a reference, have been developed so as to compare especially the countries. These measures are Polity I (Gurr, 1974), Sussman (1982), Coppedge et al. (1990), Polity II (Gurr, 1990), Arat (1991), Inkeles (1991), Hadenius (1992), Bollen (1993), Banks (1994), Beetham (1994), Poe and Tate (1994), Polity III (Jagers and Gurr, 1995), Gasiorowski (1996), Przeworski and Limogni (1997), Vanhanen (1997), Polity IV (Marshall and Jagers, 2002), Freedom House (2005).

One of the frequently experienced democracy indices is Freedom House Democracy Index. It analyzes the democratization process in the World and Freedom House (USA), one of the independent NGOs, is available in Freedom in the World reports annually. This index having published since 1972 consists of two time series: Political Rights and Civil Rights. By the index, it may be possible to determine the political regime of one country whether it is democracy or not. Indicators necessary for democracy is existence of multi party and competitive system, preference by citizens among many candidates freely and fairly, coming to power by opponents in an official way.

Political systems having these kinds of qualifications are classified as democratic systems. Political systems of the governments are categorized as free, partially free, and not-free according to political rights and civil freedoms. Countries within the index are numbered between '1' and '7'. Score '1' means fully developed democracies and score '7' means non democratic democracies. According to this, if annual average of political rights and civil rights in Freedom House Index is between '1' and '2,5', this means free, if average is between '3' and '5,5', this means partially free, and if the average is between '5,5' and '7', it is called as non-democratic political systems.

Another democracy index is Polity Democracy Index. Polity I (Gurr, 1974), Polity II (Gurr, 1990), Polity III (Jagers & Gurr, 1995) and Polity IV (Marshall & Jagers, 2002) data set means the levels of Polity (political system or governing style) that codes the governing characteristics of the countries in the world system. The number of the countries is increased in every level when compared with the prior level. Polity IV that composed the final form of this study has 161 countries.

In Polity data set, democracy score takes '0'-'10' values and '0' means no democracy is available; '10' means fully developed democracy. Index in question was prepared by the codes such as Competitiveness of Executive Recruitment, Openness of Executive Recruitment, and Constraints on the Chief Executive. Beside, autocracy score changes between '0' and '10'. '0' means no autocracy, and '10' means fully developed autocracy. Autocracy score like democracy score was prepared by the codes as Competitiveness of Executive Recruitment, Openness of Executive Recruitment, and Constraints on the Chief Executive. Polity index is obtained by deriving autocracy score from democracy score. Polity index, that means the difference between democracy and autocracy scores, is widely used measure for democracies. In that index, '-10' (powerful

autocracy) and '+10' (powerful democracy) values are available. Polity IV data set is somewhat different from other data sets, because Polity II score was supplemented to index in question so as facilitate Polity Democracy Index to be used time series analyzes. Standard governing scores (-66, -77, -88)<sup>1</sup> in Polity index with Polity II score were transformed to traditional governing scores<sup>2</sup> (Marshall and Jaggers, 2002). Table: 1 presents the Freedom House and Polity Democracy Indices for Various Countries

**Table: 1**  
**Freedom House (PR, CL) and Polity IV (POLITY) Scores for Preferred Countries**

Countries/Index	PR	CL	POLITY	Countries/Index	PR	CL	POLITY
Ukraine	3	2	7	Latvia	2	1	8
Tajikistan	6	5	-3	Kyrgyzstan	5	4	4
Slovenia	1	1	10	Kazakhstan	6	5	-6
Slovakia	1	1	10	Croatia	2	2	9
Russia	6	5	7	Georgia	4	4	7
Romania	2	2	9	Estonia	1	1	6
Poland	1	1	10	Armenia	5	4	5
Uzbekistan	7	7	-9	Czech Rep.	1	1	8
Moldova	3	4	8	Bulgaria	1	2	9
Macedonia	3	3	9	Belarus	7	6	-7
Hungary	1	1	10	Azerbaijan	6	5	-7
Lithuania	1	1	10	Albania	3	3	9

*Source: Freedom House (2008) and Polity IV Project (2006).*

To the table scores,, Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Slovenia with market economy, in terms of democratization, ascend the throne with 1990s. On the contrary, countries such as Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have significant inadequacy in democratization process.

#### 4. Data and Methodology

Panel data set analyzes was applied within the study where the effect of economic growth democratization was investigated. Panel data set offers a wide range of opportunities in terms of spatial and temporal dimension for researchers within regression analyzes. Panel data set was divided into three as Constant Coefficient Model (CCM), Fixed Effect Model (FEM) and Random Effect Model (REM). Constant and coefficients are fixed in CCM. Data is gathered and estimations were made by OLS method. CCM is also named as pooled regression model.

<sup>1</sup> (-66) score represents interregnum in governing of the countries, (-77) represents anarchy period, and (-88) represents transition period.

<sup>2</sup> Traditional governing score changes between -10 and +10.

In FEM, slope is fixed to sections but cutting edges are different. So as to define a section in FEM, dummy variable is used in  $i - 1$  and sometimes this model is named as least squares dummy variable model. A FEM is written as below;

$$y_{it} = a_1 + a_2 group_1 + a_3 group_2 + \beta_2 x_{2it} + \beta_3 x_{3it} + e_{it} \quad (1)$$

REM can define as a regression having random constant term (Greene, 2003). The random error ( $v_i$ ) is heterogeneity-specific to a cross-sectional unit –in this case, country.

A Random efficient model is as follows;

$$y_{it} = \beta_{0i} + \beta_1 x_{it} + \beta_2 x_{it} + e_{it} \quad (2)$$

$$\beta_{0i} = \beta_i + \beta_1 x_{it} + \beta_2 x_{it} + e_{it} + v_i \quad (3)$$

$$\therefore y_{it} = \beta_i + \beta_1 x_{it} + \beta_2 x_{it} + e_{it} + v_i \quad (4)$$

Here, Random error term ( $v_i$ ) is constant over time. As regards this acception  $E = [v_i^2 | x] = \sigma_i^2$ . Individual effects must be vertical in order to set  $v_i$  conveniently (Yaffee, 2003, Greene 2003, Baltaghi, 2005).

24 countries were taken into consideration and data of 1993–2005 was used for this study. Democracy variable represents the Polity IV score of the Polity Democracy Index. Though Polity score changes between -10 and + 10, variable in question was re-scaled. Inflation (INF) represents the annual inflation ratio that is calculated according to the GDP deflator. Income level (Y) was calculated as GDP per capita in US Dollar according to the PPP. POP variable shows the population of the country as million people.

## 5. Findings

Having a temporal dimension of panel data set leads to search unit root process. Availability of general unit root in series was investigated by Levin, Lin and Chu test; unit root process within sections was investigated by Im, Pesaran and Shin test. All variables were evaluated within individual trend and intercept process. Lag length in unit root tests were determined with Schwarz Information Criteria (SIC). Barlett Kernel method was applied to Spectral estimation and bandwidth was evaluated with Newey-West method. Findings for unit root tests are as Table: 2.

**Table: 2**  
**Findings for Unit Root Tests**

	<b>ln DEM</b>	<b>ln Y</b>	<b>ln POP</b>	<b>INF</b>
Levin, Lin&Chu <i>t</i>	-8.8E+14 <sup>a</sup>	-9.912 <sup>a</sup>	-13.834 <sup>a</sup>	-249.98 <sup>a</sup>
Im, Pesaran, Shin <i>W</i>	-8.3E+13 <sup>a</sup>	-2.152 <sup>b</sup>	-3.195 <sup>a</sup>	-114.55 <sup>a</sup>

(<sup>a</sup>) and (<sup>b</sup>) represents 0.01 and 0.05 significancy level, respectively.

As seen in the table, all variables, whether general unit root or unit roots process within sections, are stationary in level values.

Following model, *i* for country and *t* for time, was estimated in investigation of the effects of growth on democratization.

$$\ln DEM_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \ln Y_{it} + \beta_2 INF_{it} + \beta_3 \ln POP_{it} + e_{it} \quad (5)$$

Equation (5) was estimated as CCM, FEM and REM, relatively. *F* value in the model shows the individual effects and Hausman statistics provides preference between FEM and REM in case of individual effects. Estimation results are as Table: 3.

**Table: 3**  
**Estimation Results (dependent variable ln DEM)**

	CCM	FEM	REM
<i>Constant</i>	-0.3002 (-0.4778)	-0.4778 (-0.7457)	-0.3002 (-0.4731)
Ln <i>Y</i>	0.5067 <sup>a</sup> (11.2615)	0.5294 <sup>a</sup> (11.3094)	0.5067 <sup>a</sup> (11.1504)
<i>INF</i>	4.85E-05 (1.2527)	3.02E-05 (0.7229)	4.85E-05 (1.2403)
Ln <i>POP</i>	-0.0975 <sup>a</sup> (-2.9010)	-0.0982 <sup>a</sup> (-2.8926)	-0.0975 <sup>a</sup> (-2.8724)
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.30	0.31	0.30
<i>F-ist</i>	43.6151 (0.00)	8.9548 (0.00)	43.6151 (0.00)
<i>F-değ.</i>		0.5039	
<i>Hausman</i> $\chi^2$			4.8475

Values in parenthesis show *t*-statistics.

(<sup>a</sup>) Represents 0.01 significance level.

To the findings, *F* value rejects hypothesis including the existence of individual effects. For this reason, comments must be made according to CCM. To CCM results, increase in income has significant and strong positive effect on democracy level. The effect of increase in inflation is not clear on democratization. Democratization level decreases with the increase in population.

## 6. Results and Recommendations

Within this study, the effects of economic growth on democratization have been investigated by for 1993-2005 period for 24 transition economies. According to the estimating results, democratization process is positively affected by income level. Findings of this study do not support the literature as “democratization level is negatively affected by inflation”. Other finding is democratization is negatively effected by population increase.

In line with the findings of the study, it can be argued that enhancing of growing processes for countries positively contribute to the democratization process. Under these circumstances, countries in pursuit of democracy must take economic factors beyond the political, bureaucratic and legal factors. Furthermore; we, upon a wide literature search, argue that policies, rather than the population increase, but towards the increase in the level of education, widely spread of education through social base and equal opportunities are able to contribute to the democratization process.

### Appendix: 1 List of Countries

Ukraine, Tajikistan, Slovenia, Slovakia, Russia, Romania, Poland, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Macedonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Croatia, Georgia, Estonia, Armenia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Albania.

### Appendix: 2 Descriptive Statistics

	$\ln DEM$	$\ln Y$	$INF$	$\ln POP$
Average	2.459513	8.472454	171.5570	15.80920
Median	2.833213	8.656955	13.00000	15.50018
Max.	2.995732	10.01010	15442.00	18.81623
Min.	0.000000	6.522093	-1.000000	14.11272
Standart Dev.	0.763490	0.830136	962.2064	1.095299
Skewness	-1.800384	-0.438921	13.49840	0.885177
Kurtosis	5.485462	2.175919	209.3890	3.486802
Jarque-Bera	244.8716	18.54427	554202.3	43.12238
Prob.	0.000000	0.000094	0.000000	0.000000

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