Leaders' Foreign Travel and Democracy

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Abstract

This paper examines whether the number of trips by a country's leader to the United States allows the country to adopt a more democratic system of governance and to embrace better democratic practices. To achieve its objective, the paper introduces a novel variable that indicates the number of trips by a leader or a head of a government to the United States of America from 1960-2015. The paper uses Panel estimation techniques to examine the effect of this variable on the Polity score and the Freedom House democracy indicator. The results show that the leader's trips have a statistically significant and positive effect on democracy, especially during the cold war era. This is case using alternative econometric techniques and different democracy indicators. The results are also robust to the exclusion of observations and countries where the democracy score is higher than that of the United States. The paper also uses alternative techniques to deal with potential endogeneity and the possible persistence in democracy. The estimation provides evidence for a high level of persistence in democracy and confirms our previous findings that leader's trips have a statistically significant positive effect on democracy.

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Keywords : Executive, Democracy, Leader Foreign Travel.

"It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." George W. Bush in his inaugural address after the swearing-in ceremony of 2005.

1. Introduction

This paper examines the effect of the number of trips by the leader of a country, or the head of a government, to the United States on democratic governance in their home country. To be specific, we investigate whether the visit of a country's leader to the United States allows the country to adopt a more democratic system of governance and to embrace better democratic practices. This is the first attempt in the literature to consider the number of trips by a country's leader as a determinant of democracy.

To achieve its objective, the paper uses a novel variable that indicates the number of trips by a leader, or a head of a government, to the United States of America from 1960-2015. This variable is derived from the historical archives of the U.S. Department of State. As our dependent variable, we use alternative indicators of democratic governance such as the polity score and Freedom House. The Pooled OLS and the Fixed Effects OLS estimations show that the number of leaders' trips to the United States has a statistically significant positive coefficient whether we use the Polity score or the Freedom House indicator. These results are robust even after the inclusion of several control variables identified by the literature as confounding factors of democracy. To test the robustness of our results, we compare the effect of the leader's trips to the United States before and after the end of the cold war. The results show that leader's trips have a statistically significant positive effect during the cold

war only. We also exclude observations and countries whose democracy score is higher than that of the United States. The results are robust, and provide evidence that our variable of interest maintains a statistically significant positive coefficient.

In this context, the problem of endogeneity cannot be ignored. As much as the leader's trips to the United States may enhance the level of democratic governance, leaders from more democratic governments are likely to be invited more to visit the United States. To deal with potential endogeneity, we use the Anderson Hsiao (1982) and the Arellano Bond (1991) techniques. These estimations confirm our previous findings that the number of leader's trips has a favorable effect on democracy.

The paper's main contribution to the literature is that it is the first attempt to examine the effect of foreign travel by heads of state on democracy. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: section 2 discusses the hypothesis, section 3 discusses the literature survey, section 4 includes the detailed description of the data, section 5 includes the empirical estimation and the robustness tests, and section 6 concludes. References, tables and figures are included thereafter.

2. Hypothesis

We focus on the leader's trips to the United States since American foreign policy typically swings between two approaches. The first is to stand for the promotion of democratic governance, political freedoms, and human rights. The second is to safeguard American strategic interests even if it entails fostering alliances with totalitarian states. This section argues that each one of these approaches lead to a different effect of the leader's foreign travel on democratic governance.

This dichotomy in U.S. foreign policy implies that, on one hand, there is an ideological position that considers democracy promotion in the core of a national security doctrine.

Accordingly, some American administrations elevate democratic imperatives and voice their concern whenever they encounter serious violations to democratic practices. These Administrations attempt to pressure governments to embrace democratic systems of governance through the carrot of foreign aid or debt relief or the stick of sanctions, censure or isolation. One of the common ways to cajole countries into democratic transition is to persuade or to pressure the leaders of these countries during their official visits to the United States. This is because power in non-democratic countries is usually concentrated in the person of the leader. Thus, such transition can only be undertaken after the consent of the leadership of the country. This approval can be obtained during their visit by enticement or coercion. In this context, we expect that the number of leader's trips to the United States to have a positive effect on democratic governance.

Another channel through which the leader's visits to the United States can enhance the level of democracy is "socialization." Social psychology theories posit that attitudes spread through interpersonal contact. In our context, visiting the United States allows the leaders to interact with American political figures, and to be exposed to the functioning of American political institutions in a dynamic democratic environment. This socialization allows the leaders to experience the advantages of a vibrant democracy and to observe its beneficial economic outcomes. This may lead the leaders to implement more democratic practices. Some studies also argue that foreign education of leaders expose them to the democratic ideals and political norms that can affect their choices as leaders. In our context, the direct interaction and interpersonal contact with political figures who are involved in one of the most spirited democratic experiences in the world can be more powerful than their exposure to democratic ideas in an academic setting.

There is also the "transnational linkage" channel as the leaders who visit the West cultivate close ties that they can depend on after returning to their home countries. These

connections operate through "push" and "pull" factors that increase the ability and willingness of leaders to democratize. Pull factors are pertinent when leaders seek assistance for their democratization efforts. Leaders use their influential connections and close contacts in the West to lobby for democracy assistance and to broker deals through formal and informal channels. Thus, these leaders are better poised to enlist the democratization aid of governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the West. On the other hand, push factors can also create incentives to democratize. Leaders maintain close ties with influential figures in the West, but they are also susceptible to their pressure. This is because Western states can leverage these connections with leaders by threatening to withhold foreign aid or to impose conditionalities on their assistance, or because these leaders feel hesitant not to deliver on democratization in order to preserve their status and connections in the West.

On the other hand, American foreign policy has another pragmatic approach aimed at achieving strategic objectives and ensuring economic interests without being preoccupied with the type of government that delivers. This approach is willing to overlook non-democratic behavior as long as other practices are conducive to achieving these foreign policy goals. In this case, intervention for democracy is used only as a pretext for pressure on other more expedient issues to the United States. In this context, the leaders may be emboldened to continue with their autocratic practices as long as they perceive themselves indispensable strategically to the United States, which they can guarantee during their visits. Thus, we expect that the leader's trips to have an adverse effect on democracy.

Given that the effect of the number of leaders' foreign travel on democracy is inconclusive, an empirical analysis is warranted.

3. Literature

This paper contributes to a new burgeoning literature on the determinants of democracy that follows the seminal work in Barro (1999). The studies in this literature specifically focus on the political outcomes of the background of the country's leadership, in addition to the foreign experiences by the people and the leaders of the country. These experiences include foreign education or living abroad. Our paper contributes to this literature by considering the effect of foreign travel by the leader of the country on democracy.

Some studies show that there is an association between a leader's educational background and democracy. For instance, Besley and Reynal-Querol (2011) use a data set on over 1,400 world leaders to show that democracies are 20% more likely to select highly educated leaders. Mercier (2016) shows a positive correlation between the fact that leaders studied abroad, especially in high-income countries, and the evolution of democracy during their tenure. Gift and Krcmaric (2017) show that leaders educated at Western universities significantly improve a country's democratic prospects. Barceló (2020) shows that leaders who attended a university in a Western democratic country, are less likely to initiate interstate disputes. Spilimbergo (2009) shows that foreign-educated individuals foster democracy in their home country, only if the education is attained in democratic countries. This obviously applies to a country's leadership as well.

There is also another stream of literature that focuses on the effect of foreign experiences of leaders or individuals, who lived abroad, on democracy in their home countries. This is because migrants may transmit to their home communities the political ideals they adopted while living abroad. These political spillovers have the potential to change political preferences and to increase the support for political change.

In this context, Chauvet and Mercier (2014) explore the connection between return migrants and political outcomes in their home country, using the case of Mali. The authors

find a positive effect of return migrants, from non-African countries, on political participation and on electoral competitiveness. The authors also provide evidence of a diffusion of political ideas from these returnees to non-migrants. Batista et al. (2018) explore the role of migrants in shaping political attitudes in sending countries, with a focus on Mozambique. Their analysis shows that the number of migrants an individual is in close contact with significantly increases political participation in that area. Batista and Vicente (2011) conduct an experiment to examine whether migration increases the demand for political accountability in the country of origin. The authors find a positive effect which is stronger for migration to countries with better governance. Docquier et al. (2016) find that openness to emigration, in a large sample of developing countries, has a positive effect on home-country democratization.

Karadja and Prawitz (2019) study the political effects of the mass emigration to the United States in the nineteenth century from Sweden. Their estimates show that emigration substantially increased the likelihood of adopting more inclusive political institutions, and of increasing the demand for political change captured by labor movement membership, labor strike participation, and voting. Barsbai et al. (2017) show that the wave of emigration in the aftermath of the Russian crisis of 1998 affected electoral outcomes and political preferences in Moldova. The authors document a significant negative effect of emigration on the share of votes for the Communist Party in the elections of 2009–2010. Grewal (2020) examine the factors that cause Islamists to become Muslim Democrats in Tunisia after the Arab Spring. The author shows that members of parliament who had lived in secular democracies held more liberal voting records as they were more likely "to defend freedom of conscience and to vote against enshrining Islamic law in the constitution."

Our paper contributes to this literature by arguing that if the experience of living abroad by citizens affects the political outcomes in the home country, it is more likely that the

experience of travelling abroad by the country's leaders will have more of an effect on democratic governance.

4. Data

The dependent variable in our analysis is democracy. We use three measures of democratic governance during the period understudy. The first variable is the average polity score during the period understudy. The democracy variable is extracted from the Polity IV Project. The Polity score captures a country's political regime on a 21-point scale ranging from -10 (strongly autocratic) to +10 (strongly democratic). The paper uses the Polity2 variable which is a modified version of the Polity variable by applying a simple treatment to convert instances of "standardized authority scores" (-66,-77,-88) to conventional polity scores within the range between -10 to +10. The second variable is the Freedom House democracy score. "A country or territory is awarded 0 to 4 points for each of 10 political rights indicators and 15 civil liberties indicators, which take the form of questions; a score of 0 represents the smallest degree of freedom and 4 the greatest degree of freedom. The political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: Electoral Process (3 questions), Political Pluralism and Participation (4), and Functioning of Government (3). The civil liberties questions are grouped into four subcategories: Freedom of Expression and Belief (4 questions), Associational and Organizational Rights (3), Rule of Law (4), and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights (4). The political rights section also contains an additional discretionary question addressing forced demographic change. The highest overall score that can be awarded for political rights is 40 (or a score of 4 for each of the 10 questions). The highest overall score that can be awarded for civil liberties is 60 (or a score of 4 for each of the 15 questions)."

The variable of interest is leaders' trips, which is calculated as the number of trips by the country's leader to the United States of America during the period 1960-2015. This data is derived from the Office of the Historian, which is affiliated to the Department of Sate of the United States of America.[1] Figure 1 shows a world map of leader's trips to the United States during the period 1960-2015. To collect this variable, we use historical data from the Department of State of the United States of America. These include state visits, official working visits, summits, private visits, informal visits, meetings, and working visits. Initially, the objective was to use the total number of leaders' trips to all countries. However, instead of considering all destination countries we only focus on leaders' trips to the country whose foreign policy focuses on democracy promotion more than any other country. This fact can justify our focus on leaders' trips to the United States.

Table 1 presents the data sources and descriptions of all the variables used in this study. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for all the variables used in the analysis. The list of countries included in the analysis is in appendix 1. The sample is restricted by the availability of data.

5. Estimation

This section conducts an empirical estimation of the effect of the number of leaders' trips to the United States of America on democracy in their home country during the period 1960-2015. Figure 2 shows a positive association between leader's trips and two measures of democracy. To estimate this relationship empirically, we use the following equation

$$Democracy_{it} = \theta + \delta_i LeadersTrips_{it} + \aleph_{it}\gamma + \mu_i + \sigma_t + e_{it} \quad (1)$$

Where $Democracy_{it}$ is either the Polity score or the Freedom House democracy indicator in country i in year t. $LeadersTrips_{it}$ is the number of trips by the leader of country i to the United States in year t. $\aleph_{it}$ is a vector of control variables in country I in year t. The vector of

[1] https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory.

control variables includes those commonly identified in the literature as determinants of democracy. Thus, we control for the logarithm of GDP per capita, natural resource rents, continental dummies, and legal origins. The μ_i denotes a full set of country dummies, the σ_t denotes a full set of time effects that capture common shocks to democracy of all countries, and e_{it} is an error term capturing all other omitted factors, with $E(e_{it}) = 0$ for all *i* and *t*.

5.1. Baseline Results

The baseline results using the Polity score are included in table 3. Column 1 of table 3 includes the Pooled OLS, while column 2 of table 3 includes the Fixed Effects OLS results using robust standard errors clustered by country. The Pooled OLS is identical to our regression equation except for the omission of the fixed effects that reflect country dummies. These country dummies capture any time-invariant country characteristics that affect democracy. When the true model is given by our regression equation, pooled OLS estimates are biased and inconsistent. In this context, the fixed effects estimator is more consistent. The results in table 3 show that the coefficient of leader's trips has a statistically significant positive effect in all specifications.

We include a Muslim dummy since some studies, as in Potrafke (2012), find that countries with Muslim majorities enjoy less freedom and are less democratic than countries in which Muslims are a minority. Our results show that the Muslim dummy is statistically significant and negative in all specifications. We also include the logarithm of GDP per capita since the central tenet of the modernization theory is that higher income per capita causes a country to adopt a more democratic system. Lipset (1959) suggests that the process of modernization involved changes in "the factors of industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education [which] are so closely interrelated as to form one common factor. And the factors subsumed under economic development carry with it the political correlate of democracy" (p. 80). Our results are consistent with this view and show that the logarithm of GDP per capita

has a statistically significant positive coefficient in all specifications. This differs from the findings of some previous studies such as Acemoglu et al. (2008) and Jha and Kodila-Tedika (2019). We also add total natural resources rents as a percentage of GDP. Some studies show a connection between oil abundance and the system of governance. For instance, Kevin Tsui (2011) finds that discovering 100 billion barrels of oil pushes a country's democracy level almost 20 percentage points below trend after three decades. Our results show that the coefficient is negative in the Pooled OLS but not significant in the Fixed Effects OLS. In all these specifications we add legal origins which influence the design of the political system and the separation of powers between the political branches.

5.2. Robustness

To test the robustness of our results, we estimate our relationship of interest using the Freedom House democracy indicator. In his seminal paper, Barro (1999) uses the Freedom House property rights and civil liberties indices as a measure of democracy. Since then, this measure has established itself in the literature as a commonly used indicator of democratic governance. The results, using the Freedom House score, are included in table 4. Our results show that the leader's trips variable does not have a significant effect in the Pooled OLS estimation in column 1, but a statistically significant positive effect in the Fixed Effects OLS estimation in column 2.

We also conduct other tests to check the robustness of our results. The first test compares the effects of the leader's trips on democracy before and after the end of the cold war. This is because the confrontational climate during the cold war caused countries around the world to attempt to cope with a highly antagonistic environment, and to survive in a global arena squeezed between the conflicting interests of the two super powers. This implies that high level visits to the United States before the end of the cold war likely focused on dealing

with the geopolitical developments of the time. On the other hand, leader's visits to the United States after the end of the cold war likely focused on strengthening bilateral economic ties through the promotion of trade exchange, capital flows and foreign aid. In addition, many countries became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the cold war. This implies that there are more countries whose leaders became interested in visiting the United States, and eager to promote bilateral relationships through trade and capital flows.

The results of this robustness test are included in table 5. Columns 1-4 show the results using the Polity score. In this context, columns 1 and 2 show the Pooled OLS estimation before and after the Cold war while columns 3 and 4 show the Fixed Effects OLS estimation before and after the Cold war. Columns 5-8 show the results using the Freedom House score. In this context, columns 5 and 6 show the Pooled OLS estimation during and after the Cold war while columns 7 and 8 show the Fixed Effects OLS estimation before and after the Cold war. Ours results show that the coefficient of the leader's trips is statistically significant and positive during the Cold war era. This variable, however, does not have a statistically significant effect after the end of the cold war in most of the specifications. The results imply that the visit of a country's leader to the United States was used to pressure for democratic transition during the cold war. This is because democratization inherently signified a transition to the Western bloc as well.

To further test the robustness of our results, we use alternative measures of natural resource rents. Boschini et al. (2007) find that different types of natural resources have different effects on economic growth. Thus, several studies considered the effects of alternative types of natural resources on democracy (Asiedu and Lien, 2011; Ross, 2001, 2015; Wantchekon, 2020; Jensen and Wantchekon, 2004; Brückner et al., 2012; Tsui, 2011). In this context, we control for forest rents, coal rents, mineral rents, natural gas rents and oil rents as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product. This data is derived from the World

Development Indicators. The results are included in table 6. The top part of the table uses the Polity score, while the bottom part uses the Freedom House indicator, as our measure of democracy. Our results show the leader's trips variable has a statistically significant positive effect in all specifications. The coefficient is, however, higher when we use the Polity score compared to the Freedom House indicator.

Thus, this paper provides evidence that high level contact with the United States improves the level of democracy. However, this is not the case with countries which already have a higher level of democracy compared to the United States. Therefore, including these countries in the sample bias the results. To take this issue into account, we first exclude the observations where the democracy score is higher than that of the United States. Second, we eliminate the countries that have a higher average democracy score than that of the United States for the entire period. The results are included in table 7. Columns 1 and 2 exclude observations that have a democracy score higher than the United States. Columns 3 and 4 exclude countries that have a higher democracy score than the United States for the entire period. Ours results show that the leader's trips have a statistically significant and positive effect whether we use the Polity score or the Freedom House indicator.

5.3. Lagged Effects

We also examine the effect of lagged leader's trips on current democracy. Thus, we estimate the following equation

$$Democracy_{it} = \theta + \delta_i LeadersTrips_{it-1} + \aleph_{it-1}\gamma + \mu_i + \sigma_t + e_{it} \qquad (2)$$

Where $Democracy_{it}$ is the democracy score in country i in year t. $LeadersTrips_{it-1}$ is the number of trips by the leader of country i to the United States in year t-1. $\aleph_{it-1}$ is a vector of control variables in country i in year t-1. Table 8 includes the results of the Fixed Effects OLS estimation with robust standard errors clustered by country. The results show that the lagged

leader's trips have a positive but not so significant effect on the current level of democracy using the Polity score or the Freedom House indicator.

5.3. Endogeneity

The relationship found so far assumes that leaders' trips are exogenous to democracy. However, the problem of endogeneity cannot be ignored. First, the association may be spurious due to the failure to account for an unobserved channel which is affecting both variables. It is likely that economies that are different for a variety of causes will differ both in the number of leaders' trips to the United States and their democracy scores as well. Second, as much as the leader's trips to the United States may enhance the level of democratic governance, leaders from more democratic governments may be invited more to visit the United States. This indicates an issue of reverse causality.

To account for these sources of potential endogeneity, we implement two estimation techniques. The first is the Anderson and Hsiao (1982) approach. This technique eliminates the fixed effects by taking first differences, and then conducts instrumental variable estimation using lagged values as instruments. Table 9 includes the estimation results. The results show that the coefficient of the lagged leader's trips variable is positive and statistically significant using the Polity score but not the Freedom House indicator. However, the Anderson and Hsiao (1982) estimator does not exploit all the pertinent moment conditions. Alternatively, Arellano and Bond (1991) develop a generalized method of moments GMM estimator using all of these moment conditions. When these conditions are valid, this GMM estimator is more efficient than the Anderson and Hsiao (1982) estimator.

In addition, the previous analysis does not consider the possibility of persistence in democracy. It is possible that a high level of democracy in one period of time leads to higher democracy scores in the subsequent periods. Therefore, we estimate the following equation

$$Democracy_{it} = \theta + \delta_i LeadersTrips_{it-1} + \sigma_i Democracy_{it-1} + \aleph_{it-1}\gamma + \mu_i + \sigma_t + e_{it} \quad (3)$$

The standard techniques that can be employed for panel estimation, such as fixed effects and random effects, cannot be used in this case. The problem with these techniques is that the equation contains a lagged endogenous variable, which is lagged democracy. In this case, estimation by fixed effects and random effects is not consistent. In addition, we also have the problem of endogeneity of leader's trips. To deal with potential endogeneity and the lagged dependent variable, we use the Arellano and Bond (1991) estimation technique. This generalized method of moments (GMM) estimator first-differences each variable so as to eliminate the country specific effect and then uses all possible lagged values of each of the variables as instruments. This not only corrects for the bias introduced by the lagged endogenous variable but also allows for a certain degree of endogeneity in the other explanatory variables.

The results of the Arellano and Bond (1991) estimation technique are included in table 10. Column 1 shows the results using the Polity score, while column 2 shows the results using the Freedom House indicator. The results show that democracy exhibits a high level of persistence, since the coefficient of lagged democracy is positive and statistically significant. The leader's trips variable, however, is not statistically significant in both specifications. As discussed earlier, this analysis includes countries and observations with a higher democracy score than that of the United States. To deal with this issue, we exclude the observations with democracy scores higher than that of the United States in columns 1-2, and we exclude countries whose average democracy score in the period under study is higher than that of the United States in columns 3-4. The results confirm the persistence in democracy, but also show that the leader's trips variable has a statistically significant positive effect using the Polity score, but not the Freedom House indicator. This confirms our previous findings.

6. Conclusion

This paper investigates whether the number of trips by a country's leader to the United States allows the country to adopt a more democratic system of governance and to embrace better democratic practices. To achieve its objective, the paper introduces a novel variable that indicates the number of trips by a leader or a head of a government to the United States of America from 1960-2015. The paper uses Panel estimation techniques to examine the effect of this variable on the Polity score and the Freedom House democracy indicator. The results show that the leader's trips have a statistically significant and positive effect on democracy, especially during the cold war era. This is case using alternative econometric techniques and different democracy indicators. The results are also robust to the exclusion of observations and countries where the democracy score is higher than that of the United States. The paper also uses alternative techniques to deal with potential endogeneity and the possible persistence in democracy. The estimation provides evidence for a high level of persistence in democracy and confirms our previous findings that leader's trips have a statistically significant positive effect on democracy.

This line of research can be extended in two ways. Future research can consider the effect of the visits by officials, other than the country's leaders, on democracy. This study can also be extended to consider the effect of leader's visits to other countries, once this data becomes available.

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Table 1. Data Definitions and Sources

Variables	Definitions	Sources
Polity	The Polity score captures a country's political regime on a 21-point scale ranging from -10 (strongly autocratic) to +10 (strongly democratic).	Polity IV Project
Leaders' trips to USA	Number of trips by heads of governments or state leaders to the USA during the period 1960-2015.	https://history.state.gov/department history
GDP growth (annual %)	Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita 1960-2015.	World Bank WDI online Database
Oil or gas discovery	A time-invariant dummy for the presence of at least one petroleum (oil or gas) reserve.	Arbatli et al. (2020)
Log of GDP per capita	GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2011 international $) 1960-2015.	World Bank WDI online Database
Africa	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a Africa and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
Asia	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a Asia and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
America	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a America and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
Oceania	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a Oceania and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
Europe	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a Europe and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
English legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system based on the English common law.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
French legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system based on the French civil law.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
German legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system based on German civil law.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
Scandinavian legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system based on Scandinavian legal system.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
Socialist legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system is Socialist.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
Muslim	Dummy indicating the main religion in the country is Islam.	La Porta et. al. (1999).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Leaders' trips to USA	149	16.315	17.902	0	111
GDP growth (annual %)	149	4.002	2.127	-1.490	16.497
Oil or gas discovery	149	0.658	0.476	0	1
Log of GDP per capita	146	8.895	1.239	6.458	11.673
Africa	141	0.255	0.438	0	1
Asia	141	0.269	0.445	0	1
America	141	0.149	0.357	0	1
Religios Fractionalization	100	0.286	0.238	0.001	0.782
Europe	141	0.248	0.433	0	1
English legal origin	102	0.275	0.448	0	1
French legal origin	102	0.451	0.500	0	1
German legal origin	102	0.049	0.217	0	1
Scandinavian legal origin	102	0.029	0.170	0	1
Socialist legal origin	102	0.196	0.399	0	1
Muslim	142	0.190	0.394	0	1

Table 3. Baseline Results estimated with Polity score

	Pooled OLS	Fixed effects OLS
	(1)	(2)
Leaders' trips to USA	0.376***	0.536***
	(0.127)	(0.133)
Muslim dummy	-3.010***	-6.622***
	(0.885)	(0.813)
GDP per capita (log)	0.983***	3.397***
	(0.371)	(0.678)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.142***	0.070*
	(0.034)	(0.038)
Continental effects	YES	YES
Legal Origin effects	YES	YES
Countries effects	NO	YES
Constant	-4.685	-21.759***
	(3.338)	(3.170)
Number of observations	1 088	1 088
R2	0.487	0.700

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *; Pooled cross-sectional OLS and Fixed effects OLS regression in all columns estimated with robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

Table 4. Baseline Results estimated with Freedom House score

	Pooled OLS	Fixed effects OLS
	(1)	(2)
Leaders' trips to USA	0.041	0.082***
	(0.037)	(0.028)
Muslim dummy	-0.511**	-2.856***
	(0.201)	(0.255)
GDP per capita (log)	0.685***	0.926***
	(0.107)	(0.209)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.041***	0.005
	(0.008)	(0.007)
Contental effects	YES	YES
Legal Origin effects	YES	YES
Countries effects	NO	YES
Constant	-2.542**	-7.042***
	(1.046)	(1.032)
Number of observations	995	995
R2	0.701	0.886

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *; Pooled cross-sectional OLS and Fixed effects OLS regression in all columns estimated with robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

Table 5. Robustness Tests during and after the end of the Cold war (Fixed Effects OLS)

	Polity 2				Freedom House			
	Pooled OLS		Fixed effects OLS		Pooled OLS		Fixed effects OLS	
	Cold War	Post Cold War	Cold War	Post Cold War	Cold War	Post Cold War	Cold War	After Cold War
Leaders' trips to USA	0.557***	0.047	0.674***	0.134	0.146**	-0.009	0.102**	0.046**
	(0.177)	(0.093)	(0.229)	(0.096)	(0.060)	(0.033)	(0.051)	(0.020)
Muslim dummy	-1.941**	-3.565***	-8.295***	-3.339***	-0.161	-0.721***	-3.307***	-2.353***
	(0.964)	(1.029)	(1.812)	(0.673)	(0.173)	(0.245)	(0.528)	(0.197)
GDP per capita (log)	1.385***	0.321	0.130	2.512***	0.523***	0.751***	0.894**	0.992***
	(0.497)	(0.324)	(1.013)	(0.662)	(0.128)	(0.105)	(0.347)	(0.240)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.170***	-0.177***	0.032	0.003	-0.033***	-0.048***	-0.019*	-0.005
	(0.048)	(0.032)	(0.059)	(0.048)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Continental effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Legal Origin effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Countries effects	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES
Constant	-15.098***	3.370	-3.207	-11.003***	-0.942	-3.310***	-5.709***	-7.392***
	(3.305)	(3.253)	(7.654)	(3.211)	(1.380)	(1.247)	(1.582)	(1.132)
Number of observations	478	610	478	610	388	607	388	607
R2	0.608	0.577	0.874	0.885	0.724	0.715	0.946	0.942

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *; *; Pooled cross-sectional OLS and Fixed effects OLS regression in all columns estimated with robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

Table 6. Robustness using alternative measures of Natural Resource rents (Fixed Effects OLS)

	Polity IV				
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**
Leaders' trips to USA	0.541***	0.571***	0.538***	0.510***	0.579***
	(0.134)	(0.129)	(0.132)	(0.131)	(0.127)
Forest rents (% of GDP)	0.192				
	(0.142)				
Coal rents (% of GDP)		-0.005			
		(0.356)			
Mineral rents (% of GDP)			0.148*		
			(0.082)		
Natural gas rents (% of GDP)				0.734**	
				(0.362)	
Oil rents (% of GDP)					-0.008
					(0.040)
Control variables	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Continental effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Legal Origin effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Countries effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	-22.252***	-22.041***	-22.022***	-19.584***	-21.638***
	(3.645)	(3.753)	(3.351)	(3726)	(3.456)
Number of observations	1 088	1 005	1 088	1 027	1 020
R2	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.706	0.706
	Freedom House				
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**
Leaders' trips to USA	0.081***	0.081***	0.081***	0.071***	0.081***
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.025)	(0.029)
Forest rents (% of GDP)	0.063***				
	(0.020)				
Coal rents (% of GDP)		-0.023			
		(0.122)			
Mineral rents (% of GDP)			0.017		
			(0.021)		
Natural gas rents (% of GDP)				-0.214***	
				(0.053)	
Oil rents (% of GDP)					-0.006
					(0.006)
Control variables	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Continental effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Legal Origin effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Countries effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	-7.668***	-7.064***	-7.136***	-7.482***	-7.017***
	(1.125)	(1.049)	(1.065)	(1.046)	(1.029)
Number of observations	995	979	995	978	980
R2	0.887	0.886	0.886	0.890	0.886

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *; Fixed effects OLS regression in all columns estimated with robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

Table 7. Results excluding countries with higher democracy score (Fixed effects OLS)

	Exclusion of observation		Exclusion of countries	
	Polity IV	**Freedom House**	**Polity IV**	**Freedom House**
Leaders' trips to USA	0.736***	0.106***	0.817***	0.114***
	(0.164)	(0.034)	(0.167)	(0.034)
Muslim dummy	-2.319***	-0.115**	-2.185***	-0.117**
	(0.283)	(0.057)	(0.285)	(0.058)
GDP per capita (log)	4.039***	0.932***	3.878***	0.523***
	(0.765)	(0.231)	(0.837)	(0.162)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	0.065*	0.006	0.055	0.000
	(0.038)	(0.007)	(0.039)	(0.005)
Continental effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Legal Origin effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Countries effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	-25.054***	-7.582***	-0.371	-0.057
	(3.572)	(1.156)	(3.249)	(0.623)
Number of observations	928	850	834	760
R2	0.638	0.811	0.579	0.726

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *; Pooled cross-sectional OLS and Fixed effects OLS regression in all columns estimated with robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

Table 8. The Effect of Lagged Leader's Trips on Current Democracy (Fixed effects OLS)

	Polity IV	Freedom House
Leaders' trips to USA $_{t-1}$	0.109	0.049*
	(0.108)	(0.025)
GDP per capita (log) $_{t-1}$	-2.230**	0.450**
	(1.078)	(0.197)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP) $_{t-1}$	-0.018	-0.004
	(0.033)	(0.006)
Muslim dummy	-3.720***	0.755***
	(1.004)	(0.178)
Continental effects	Yes	Yes
Legal Origin effects	Yes	Yes
Countries effects	Yes	Yes
Constant	2.486	-1.798
	(6.325)	(1.213)
Number of observations	977	971
R2	0.787	0.895

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *; Fixed effects OLS regression in all columns estimated with robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

Table 9. The Effect of Lagged Leader's Trips on Current Democracy (Anderson Hsiao)

	Polity IV	Freedom House
Leaders' trips to USA $_{t-1}$	0.216**	0.037
	(0.086)	(0.025)
GDP per capita (log) $_{t-1}$	0.600	0.804**
	(1.961)	(0.381)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP) $_{t-1}$	0.079	0.004
	(0.060)	(0.010)
Muslim dummy	1.602***	0.169***
	(0.407)	(0.054)
Continental effects	Yes	Yes
Legal Origin effects	Yes	Yes
Countries effects	Yes	Yes
_cons	4.389***	0.134*
	(0.504)	(0.073)
Number of observations	855	849
R2	0.091	0.117

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Table 10. The Effect of Lagged Leader's Trips on Current Democracy (Arellano Bond)

	Polity IV	**Freedom House**
Democracy $_{t-1}$	0.8154***	0.3407***
	(0.0562)	(0.1183)
Leaders' trips to USA $_{t-1}$	0.2130	-0.0487
	(0.1157)	(0.0355)
GDP per capita (log) $_{t-1}$	0.3310	0.0043
	(0.9106)	(0.1318)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP) $_{t-1}$	0.0009	0.0015
	(0.0327)	(0.0044)
Muslim dummy	Yes	Yes
Continental effects	Yes	Yes
Legal Origin effects	Yes	Yes
Countries effects	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	844	751

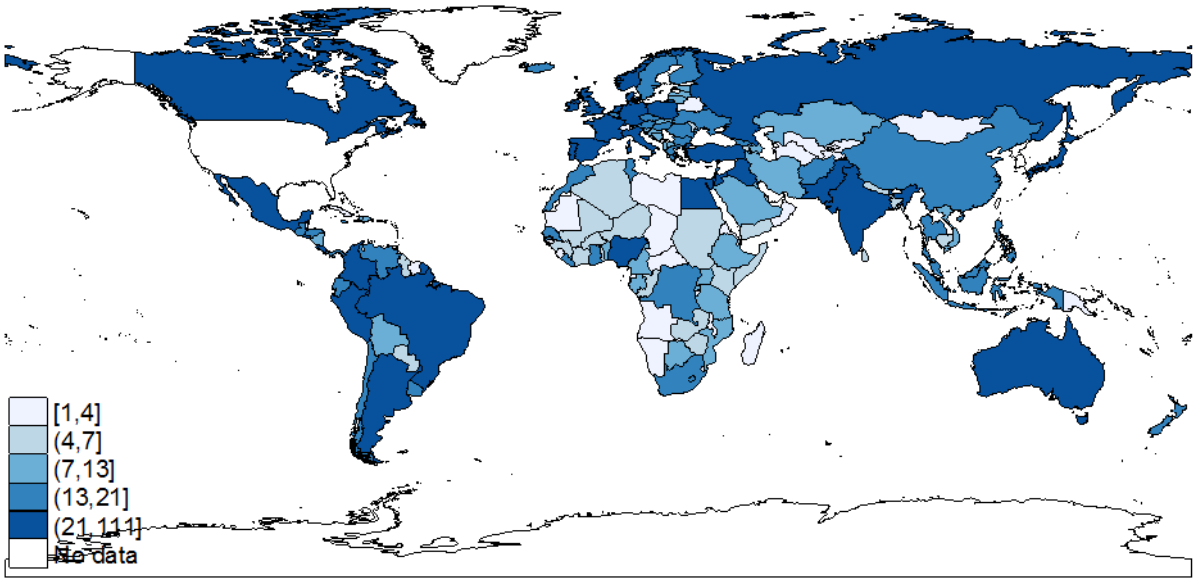
note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Table 11. Results excluding countries with higher democracy score (Arellano Bond)

	Exclusion of observation		Exclusion of countries	
	Polity IV	**Freedom House**	**Polity IV**	**Freedom House**
$Democracy_{t-1}$	0.6442***	0.6201***	0.7268***	0.3243***
	(0.0688)	(0.1861)	(0.0637)	(0.1204)
Leaders' trips to USA_{t-1}	0.4907**	0.0044	0.3274**	0.0150
	(0.1922)	(0.0272)	(0.1397)	(0.0305)
GDP per capita $(log)_{t-1}$	0.5146	0.0167	0.4104	0.1236
	(0.8785)	(0.1272)	(0.9123)	(0.1366)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP) $_{t-1}$	-0.0180	-0.0025	-0.0100	-0.0013
	(0.0317)	(0.0043)	(0.0314)	(0.0044)
Muslim dummy	YES	YES	YES	YES
Continental effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Legal Origin effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Countries effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Number of observations	640	569	718	643

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *; Pooled cross-sectional OLS and Fixed effects OLS regression in all columns estimated with robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

Figure 1. World Map of Leader's Trips



Appendix 1. List of Countries

Africa: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Europa: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bermuda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Maldives, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

Americas : Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela.

Asia : Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Georgia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Macao, Mongolia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Yemen.

Oceania : Australia, Belize, Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga.

Appendix 2: Cross Section Analysis

This section conducts a cross section estimation of the effect of the number of leaders' trips to the United States of America on democracy during the period from 1960-2015. Figure 2 shows a positive association between leader's trips and two measures of democracy.

The baseline results are included in table A3. In columns 1-6, the dependent variable is the fraction of years under democracy. The dependent variable in column 7 is domestic democratic capital, while in column 8 is the average polity score. The Ordinary Least Squares estimations in columns 1-6 show that the number of leaders' trips has a statistically significant positive coefficient in all specifications. This implies that a higher number of trips by the head of state to the United States is associated with a higher fraction of years under democracy during the period understudy. When we include all the control variables, the leaders' trips variable has a significant coefficient of 0.008. This implies that a one standard deviation increase in the number of leaders' trips to the United States translates into an increase in the fraction of years under democracy by 0.1432.

In column 7, the coefficient of the number of leader's trips to the United States is statistically significant and positive, when the dependent variable is domestic democratic capital and including all the control variables. The coefficient of 0.004 implies that a one standard deviation increase in the number of leaders' trips to the United States translates into an increase in the indicator of democracy by 0.0716. In column 8, the coefficient of the number of leader's trips to the United States is not statistically significant, when the dependent variable is the average polity score and including all the control variables. These results imply that the leader's trips to the United Sates have a favorable effect on the country's accumulated experience with democracy rather than with the average level of democracy during a period of time.

The Ordinary Least Squares estimates could be affected by the influence of a certain number of influential observations, or outliers. The estimation results after controlling for outliers are included in table A4. The dependent variable in the top part of the table is the fraction of years under democracy, in the middle part is domestic democratic capital, and in the bottom part is the average polity score.

Controlling for Outliers

Our first sensitivity check estimates our baseline specification, with our full set of control variables, after dropping the ten countries with the largest number of leaders' trips. The results are presented in column 1 of table A4. The number of leader's trips has a statistically significant positive coefficient when the dependent variable is the fraction of years under democracy, but not when the dependent variable is either the domestic democratic capital or the average polity score. However, this technique is generically weak and more robust estimations are warranted. Considering this issue, we apply Huber (1964, 1973) and Li (1985) Iteratively Weighted Least Squares estimation. This technique is used to mitigate the influence of outliers in an otherwise normally distributed data set. We omit all observations for which $|DFBETA_i| > 2/\sqrt{N}$, where N is the number of observations. The results are presented in column 2 of table A4. The coefficient of interest is positive and statistically significant when the dependent variable is the fraction of years under democracy, but not when the dependent variable is either the domestic democratic capital or the average polity score. We also use the procedure developed by Hadi (1992) to detect and control for outliers. The results of the estimation after correcting for the presence of outliers are shown in column 3 of table 4. The coefficient of the leaders' trips remains positive and statistically significant when the dependent variable is the fraction of years under democracy or domestic democratic capital.

In different terms, the outliers have no real impact on the direction, sign or significance of the relationship of interest. This is specifically the case when we use either the fraction of years under democracy or domestic democratic capital as our dependent variable.

Model Uncertainty

In Table A5, we account for model uncertainty. We follow the technique developed in Young et al. (2013). This framework allows us to address one of the concerns in empirical social science, which is the sensitivity of empirical findings to credible variations in model specification. Our findings using this framework are included in table A5. As shown in table A5, 4096 unique combinations of control variables were generated by the program. Moreover, the program ran each of those models using Ordinary Least Squares and storing the estimates from each model. It is established that the estimated coefficient of the leader's trips is positive and significant (sign stability: 100%, significance rate: 100%, positive and significance: 100%). The average estimate across all of these models is 0.0093. Given the total standard error of 0.0028, the robustness student test statistic is 3.3652.

Alternative Controls

In this section, we include alternative drivers of democracy to our estimation. This is to check the robustness of our results. In column 1 of table A6, we include educational attainment, measured by the average years of schooling amongst the population aged 25 and over. We test the modernization hypothesis that a high level of human capital allows democracy to consolidate. There are also studies that show that education fosters political participation. Glaeser et al. (2007) show that schooling increases the incentives for civic engagement and ensures a broader participation in the political process. We also add GDP per capita growth. Column 1 of table A6 shows that the number of leader's trips is statistically significant and positive when the dependent variable is the fraction of years under democracy, but not when we use domestic democratic capital or the average polity score. Schooling,

however, does not have a significant coefficient, while economic growth shows a statistically significant negative effect.

In column 2 of table A6 we add ethnic and religious fractionalization. In highly diverse societies, the group that dominates power tends to expropriate resources from the other groups and restricts the political rights of the members of those other groups. Therefore, we expect that fractionalization to have an adverse effect on democratic governance. Jensen and Skaaning (2011) show that at high levels of ethnic fractionalization, the positive effect of modernization decreases. Gerring et al. (2018) show that ethno-linguistic diversity increases the prospects of democracy, while religious diversity decreases these prospects. Column 2 of table 6 confirms the statistically significant positive effect of the number of leader's trips when we use any of the indicators of democracy, while the coefficients of the two types of fractionalization are not statistically significant.

In column 4 of table A6, we include a Catholic and a Protestant dummies. Bruce (2004) argues that Protestantism, compared to Catholicism, has been linked to generating a political culture that promotes individualism, engagement, and civic association. The results confirm our previous finding for the sign and significance of the number of leader's trips when the dependent variable is the fraction of years under democracy, but not when we use domestic democratic capital or the average polity score. The results also show that the coefficients of the religious dummies are not significant, with a positive sign for the Catholic dummy and a negative one for the Protestant dummy.

In the last column, we include all control variables and confirm the robustness of our results that show that the number of leader's trips to the United States has a significant positive association with democracy when the dependent variable is the fraction of years under democracy, but not when we use domestic democratic capital or the average polity score.

Potential Endogeneity

To deal with potential endogeneity, we need a source of exogenous variation in the number of leader's trips by using an instrumental variable approach. We compile two new instruments, namely capital distance and urban distance. The first instrument is capital distance, which is the distance in kilometers from Washington D.C. to the official place of the leader's residence in every country around the world. We use different sources for the distance calculations[2] to ensure robustness, reliability, and to check the conformity of the observations. This variable serves as a proper instrument as democracy does not affect the distance between capital cities.

This identification strategy is based on the intuition that leaders are more likely to visit the United States when their capital cities are closer to that of the United States. This proximity usually implies that the country is more likely to be within the sphere of influence of the United States and to be particularly of strategic significance to the United States. For instance, Latin America in closest proximity to the United States has been labeled as "America's Backyard" and was off limits to other powers. In addition, the "Monroe doctrine" stated that any efforts by European powers to take control of any state in North or South America would be viewed as "the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States." The close distance between the country and the United States also reflects lower transportation costs and thus a higher level of bilateral trade. These factors will cause the United States to be more interested in strengthening the bilateral ties with these countries through inviting their leaders to visit Washington D.C. more frequently.

The proximity of the two capitals also decreases the cost of the trip. Leaders travel with a large entourage. Thus, these trips are a burden on the coffers of the state, especially for developing countries. In addition to the direct cost of the trip, which may be of no

[2] https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/gccalc.shtml, and https://gps-coordinates.org/distance-between-coordinates.php; https://www.movable-type.co.uk/scripts/latlong.html

consequence in high level visits, longer trips take more time to conclude compared to shorter ones. These longer trips will take those officials who accompany the leaders away from their other duties for a longer period of time.

The second instrument we use is urban distance, defined as the logarithm of the degree of urban development in a country divided by the logarithm of the degree of urban development in the United States. We measure the degree of urbanization by the urban land area in square kilometers. The intuition is that the gap between the urban development in the leader's country and that in the United States justifies a leader's trip to the United States of America. This gap not only reflects contrasts in the extent of urbanization, but also captures differences in the level of economic and financial development that is more pronounced in urban centers. This implies that if the country is less urban compared to the United States, there is a higher incentive for the country's leader to visit the United States to take advantage of the ample financial possibilities and economic opportunities in the urban centers of one of the most developed countries. This provides these leaders with chances to increase trade and commercial exchange, to attract foreign capital inflows, to secure foreign loans and to bring foreign aid.

Table A7 shows the effect of the number of leader's trips on democracy, corrected for endogeneity using these instrumental variables. Column 1 shows the results when the dependent variable is the fraction of years under democracy, column 2 when the dependent variable is domestic democratic capital, and column 3 when the dependent variable is the average polity score. The Two Stage Least Squares estimations show that the coefficient for the leader's trips is positive and statistically significant only when the dependent variable is domestic democratic capital. This establishes a causal effect between the number of leader's trips and a country's historical experience with democracy. The coefficient of 0.003 implies

that a one standard deviation increase in the number of leaders' trips to the United States translates into an increase in the indicator of democracy by 0.0537.

In table A8, we restrict the sample to those countries whose polity score is less than that of the United States. The Two Stage Least Squares estimations also show that the coefficient for the leader's trips is positive and statistically significant only when the dependent variable is domestic democratic capital.

Table A1. Data Definitions and Sources

Variables	Definitions	Sources
Domestic Democratic Capital	A country's historical experience with democracy	Persson, and Tabellini (2009)
Polity	The Polity score captures a country's political regime on a 21-point scale ranging from -10 (strongly autocratic) to +10 (strongly democratic).	Polity IV Project
School	Average years of schooling amongst the population aged 25 and over	Barro and Lee (2010).
Leaders' trips to USA	Number of trips by heads of governments or state leaders to the USA during the period 1960-2015.	https://history.state.gov/department history
GDP growth (annual %)	Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita 1960-2015.	World Bank WDI online Database
Fractionalization	Ethnic, religious, and linguistic fractionalization.	Alesina et al. (2003)
Fraction of years under democracy	The fraction of years during the time period that a country spent as a democracy and as an autocracy, respectively.	Arbatli et al. (2020)
Oil or gas discovery	A time-invariant dummy for the presence of at least one petroleum (oil or gas) reserve.	Arbatli et al. (2020)
Log of GDP per capita	GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2011 international $) 1960-2015.	World Bank WDI online Database
Africa	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a Africa and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
Asia	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a Asia and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
America	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a America and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
Oceania	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a Oceania and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
Europe	Dummy variables that take on the value of one when a country belongs to a Europe and 0 otherwise	Own Calculation
English legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system based on the English common law.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
French legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system based on the French civil law.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
German legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system based on German civil law.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
Scandinavian legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system based on Scandinavian legal system.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
Socialist legal origin	Dummy indicating a country's legal system is Socialist.	Djankov et. al. (2007)
Muslim	Dummy indicating the main religion in the country is Islam.	La Porta et. al. (1999).
Catholic	Dummy indicating the main religion in the country is Catholicism.	La Porta et. al. (1999).
Protestant	Dummy indicating the main religion in the country is Protestantism.	La Porta et. al. (1999).

Table A2. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Domestic Democratic Capital	147	0.189	0.229	0	0.804
School	91	7.533	2.874	1.019	13.004
Leaders' trips to USA	149	16.315	17.902	0	111
GDP growth (annual %)	149	4.002	2.127	-1.490	16.497
Ethnic Fractionalization	100	0.418	0.281	0.010	0.959
Fraction of years under democracy	149	0.392	0.378	0	1
Oil or gas discovery	149	0.658	0.476	0	1
Log of GDP per capita	146	8.895	1.239	6.458	11.673
Africa	141	0.255	0.438	0	1
Asia	141	0.269	0.445	0	1
America	141	0.149	0.357	0	1
Religios Fractionalization	100	0.286	0.238	0.001	0.782
Europe	141	0.248	0.433	0	1
English legal origin	102	0.275	0.448	0	1
French legal origin	102	0.451	0.500	0	1
German legal origin	102	0.049	0.217	0	1
Scandinavian legal origin	102	0.029	0.170	0	1
Socialist legal origin	102	0.196	0.399	0	1
Muslim	142	0.190	0.394	0	1
Catholic	142	0.340	0.476	0	1
Protestant	142	0.123	0.330	0	1

Table A3. Baseline Results

	Fraction of years under democracy						Domestic Democratic Capital	Polity IV
Leaders' trips to USA	0.009***	0.009***	0.006***	0.006***	0.006***	0.008***	0.004**	0.030
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.020)
Musilm dummy		0.014	0.026	0.029	0.025	0.024	-0.092*	-2.896***
		(0.077)	(0.075)	(0.077)	(0.093)	(0.138)	(0.051)	(0.971)
GDP per capita			0.111***	0.117***	0.107***	0.106***	0.079***	0.580
			(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.037)	(0.022)	(0.545)
Oil or gas discovery				-0.068	-0.049	-0.060	-0.024	-0.148
				(0.060)	(0.063)	(0.080)	(0.040)	(0.767)
Asia					-0.184*	0.004	0.074	-4.263
					(0.109)	(0.168)	(0.100)	(1.628)
Americas					-0.238**	-0.155	-0.041	-1.333
					(0.099)	(0.150)	(0.085)	(1.502)
Africa					-0.187*	-0.095	-0.064	-5.723***
					(0.102)	(0.160)	(0.083)	(1.644)
Europe					-0.207**	-0.042	0.045	1.367
					(0.090)	(0.156)	(0.098)	(1.545)
legor_uk						0.239	0.209*	-0.693
						(0.219)	(0.119)	(1.535)
legor_fr						0.294	0.277**	-3.997***
						(0.219)	(0.117)	(1.439)
legor_so						0.129	0.150	-4.186***
						(0.217)	(0.116)	(1.515)
legor_sc						0.094	0.091	-0.864
						(0.224)	(0.123)	(1.170)
Constant	0.244***	0.250***	-0.681***	-0.692***	-0.428	-0.790*	-0.761***	2.681
	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.221)	(0.224)	(0.276)	(0.406)	(0.245)	(5.574)
Number of observations	149	142	139	139	138	99	99	111
R2	0.186	0.182	0.286	0.292	0.317	0.334	0.441	0.672

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Table A4. Controlling for Outliers

	Omit 10 countries with most Leaders' trips	Omit if $\|DFBETA\| > 2/\sqrt{N}$	Hadi (1992)
Fraction of years under democracy			
Leaders' trips to USA	0.008***	0.012***	0.009**
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Muslim dummy	0.021	-0.010	0.022
	(0.137)	(0.146)	(0.137)
GDP per capita (log)	0.107***	0.078*	0.099**
	(0.038)	(0.042)	(0.040)
Oil or gas discovery	-0.051	-0.072	-0.036
	(0.083)	(0.080)	(0.082)
Legal origin	Yes	Yes	Yes
Continental effect	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	-0.643*	-0.395	-0.644*
	(0.370)	(0.518)	(0.328)
Number of observations	96	88	92
R2	0.324	0.377	0.275
Polity IV			
Leaders' trips to USA	0.013	0.016	0.050
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.045)
GDP per capita (log)	1.161**	0.991*	0.387
	(0.529)	(0.538)	(0.570)
Oil or gas discovery	-0.349	-0.194	-0.221
	(0.827)	(0.764)	(0.779)
Muslim dummy	-2.517**	-2.312**	-2.607**
Legal origin	Yes	Yes	Yes
Continental effect	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	-3.411	-2.443	3.880
	(4.542)	(5.453)	(6.003)
Number of observations	103	104	104
R2	0.648	0.689	0.647
Domestic Democratic Capital			
Leaders' trips to USA	0.001	0.002	0.004*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
GDP per capita (log)	0.062***	0.050**	0.028
	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.022)
Oil or gas discovery	0.016	0.026	0.011
	(0.042)	(0.038)	(0.037)
Muslim dummy	-0.087***	-0.075**	-0.096***
	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.028)
Legal origin	Yes	Yes	Yes
Continental effect	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	-0.177	0.026	0.312
	(0.199)	(0.246)	(0.275)
Number of observations	103	104	104
R2	0.663	0.716	0.677

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Table A5. Model Uncertainty and Robustness

Variable of interest		**Leaders' Trips to USA**		
Outcome variable		**Democracy**	Observations	99
Possible control terms	12		Mean *R*2	0.26
			Multicollinearity	0.26
Number of models	4.096		**Conventional Significance Testing:**	
Model Robustness Statistics:			Sign Stability	100%
Mean(b)	0.0093		Significance rate	100%
Sampling SE	0.0023		Positive	100%
Modeling SE	0.0015		Positive and Sig	100%
Total SE	0.0028		Negative	0%
Robustness Ratio	3.3652		Negative and Sig	0%

Model Influence		
	Marginal Effect of Variable Inclusion	Percent Change From Mean(b)
GDP per capita (log)	-0.0028	-30.2%
legor_ge	0.0005	5.3%
Asia	-0.0002	-2.4%
legor_uk	0.0002	2.2%
Oil or gas discovery	0.0002	2.2%
legor_fr	0.0002	1.6%
Mus	0.0001	1.6%
Africa	-0.0001	-1.5%
legor_so	0.0001	1.0%
Americas	-0.0001	-0.8%
legor_sc	0.0001	0.6%
Europa	-0.0000	-0.2%
Constant	0.0102	
R-squared	0.9837	

Table A6. Additional Controls

	Modernization Hypothesis	Fractionalization	Religion	All controls
Fraction of years under democracy				
Leaders' trips to USA	0.010***	0.010***	0.008***	0.011***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
School	-0.024			-0.029
	(0.017)			(0.026)
GDP growth (annual %)	-0.055***			-0.062***
	(0.016)			(0.018)
Ethnic fractionalization		0.124		0.136
		(0.166)		(0.180)
Religious fractionalization		-0.154		0.057
		(0.257)		(0.284)
Catholic dymmy			0.014	-0.046
			(0.117)	(0.179)
Protestant dummy			-0.080	0.034
			(0.199)	(0.238)
Constant	-0.458	-0.623	-0.634	-0.405
	(0.382)	(0.386)	(0.450)	(0.460)
Number of observations	89	78	85	63
R2	0.454	0.403	0.330	0.547
Domestic Democratic Capital				
Leaders' trip to USA	0.001	0.002*	0.002	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
School	0.027**			0.025
	(0.011)			(0.016)
GDP growth (annual %)	-0.001			-0.002
	(0.011)			(0.017)
Ethnic fractionalization		0.035		0.070
		(0.066)		(0.078)
Religious fractionalization		0.019		-0.044
		(0.110)		(0.126)
Catholic dymmy			-0.036	-0.037
			(0.038)	(0.056)
Protestant dummy			-0.039	-0.045
			(0.054)	(0.075)
Constant	0.175	-0.451*	0.142	0.037
Number of observations	100	90	111	83
R2	0.727	0.705	0.699	0.725
Polity IV				
Leaders' trip to USA	0.009	0.041*	0.030	0.026
	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.020)
School	0.605**			0.422
	(0.303)			(0.376)

GDP growth (annual %)	-0.037			0.202
	(0.331)			(0.452)
Ethnic fractionalization		0.351		1.011
		(1.797)		(1.930)
Religious fractionalization		-1.075		-2.414
		(2.649)		(2.878)
Catholic dymmy			0.189	0.506
			(1.069)	(1.217)
Protestant dummy			-0.324	-0.073
			(1.202)	(1.631)
Constant	2.964	-5.976	2.345	3.400
Number of observations	(6.388)	(6.109)	(6.025)	(8.482)
R2	100	90	111	83

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Table A7. Two Stage Least Squares

	Fraction of years under democracy	Domestic Democratic Capital	Polity IV
	Panel A : Two-Stage Least Squares		
Leaders' trips to USA	0.003	0.003*	0.048
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.052)
GDP per capita (log)	0.063	0.030	0.348
	(0.047)	(0.023)	(0.622)
Oil or gas discovery	-0.090*	0.021	-0.583
	(0.055)	(0.040)	(0.845)
Muslim dummy	-0.206***	-0.123***	-3.264***
	(0.069)	(0.036)	(1.001)
Legor_ge	-0.121	0.049	0.844
	(0.195)	(0.127)	(2.168)
Legor_uk	0.044	-0.076	0.544
	(0.116)	(0.067)	(1.829)
Legor_fr	-0.142*	-0.146***	-2.871**
	(0.075)	(0.055)	(1.180)
Legor_so	-0.173*	-0.427***	-3.787***
	(0.105)	(0.042)	(1.335)
Africa	-0.178	-0.214**	-5.903***
	(0.243)	(0.094)	(1.781)
Americas	0.101	-0.060	-1.353
	(0.224)	(0.087)	(1.753)
Asia	-0.051	-0.155*	-4.154**
	(0.230)	(0.086)	(1.779)
Eura	0.257	0.022	1.798
	(0.219)	(0.084)	(1.969)
_cons	0.052	0.174	3.652
	(0.550)	(0.255)	(6.507)
Number of observations	90	89	89
R2	0,606	0,693	0,679
Hansen J Statistic (p-value)	0.7119	0.1476	0.6796
	Panel B : First Stage		
Capital Distance	-0.003***	-0.003***	-0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Urban Distance	4.160**	4.184**	4.184**
	(1.769)	(1.767)	(1.767)
F(excluded instruments)	15.03	14.71	14.71

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Table A8. 2SLS with Sample Restriction.

	Fraction of years under democracy	**Domestic Democratic Capital**	**Polity IV**
	Panel A : Two-Stage Least Squares		
Leaders' trips to USA	0.002	0.003*	0.054
	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.067)
Cons	-0.037	0.174	-0.784
	(0.383)	(0.254)	(5.856)
Number of observations	67	89	72
R2	0.816	0.847	0.569
Hansen J Statistic (p-value)	0.5758	0.1476	0.3996
	Panel B : First Stage		
Capital Distance	-0.001***	-0.001***	-0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Urban Distance	3.963***	4.184**	2.447
	(1.112)	(1.767)	(1.767)
F(excluded instruments)	13.67	14.71	9.07

note: .01 - ***; .05 - **; .1 - *;

Figure 2. Leader's Trips and Democracy