

Elite Consolidation, Peace, Development and Democracy

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In Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda, former republics of Yugoslavia, Iraq, Haiti, South African Republic, former republics of the Soviet Union and in many other countries of the world "consolidation, peace, democracy and development" are on the tip of the lips of every politician and citizen. Individuals, groups, parties, and international organizations are highlighting these objectives and values.

In very few countries, peaceful and democratic regimes are emerging without or with very little external interference. In many countries, however, including those listed above, the situation is disappointing.

What are the major factors that determine peace and democracy? There have been many responses to this problem: cultural background, level of education, international understanding, economic development, and class struggle are among the responses.

However, peace and democracy seem to be dependent, more than anything else on the national elite structure. Since this structure is predominantly determined by internal factors, there is little room for external power to be able to affect peace and democracy making processes.

This paper tries to analyze the role of the structure of national elite in, peace and democracy making process.

Concepts and Definitions

There is a conventional wisdom and also some theories (for example Lipset in "Political Man", theories of Marxian and post-Marxian schools, etc.,) which assume that stable democracy and peace are by products of social, economic, and cultural development. Comparative political analysis seems to justify this believes: in the contemporary world, with the exception of few, almost all democratic countries are economically developed and politically stable, exceptions are few. On the other hand; almost all underdeveloped countries, with few exceptions, are undemocratic and politically unstable; exceptions are too few to discredit the argument.

In fact, the existing democratic regimes are better off in social, economic and cultural development. Does this mean that one is a cause the other is an effect? Does it prove that if a country is underdeveloped, then democracy and peace are impossible? Does it prove that if a country is developed, then democracy and peace are expected happy byproducts?

We remember the euphoria of the late 80's and early 90's in Eastern and Central Europe. Craig Calhun recalls, "In 1989, the self-declared free world reveled in the collapse of communism. Capitalism and democracy seemed simply triumphant. The cold war was over. Every one would live happily ever after. /.../ Even thinkers on the left joined the enthusiasm and, hastened to forget the lessons of history and the need for serious analysis. /.../But 1989 imperceptibly gave way to 1991, and anxiety began to regain /.../from Ethiopia to the former Soviet Union and especially Yugoslavia /.../ started to occur dramatic events" (,1992: .1).

Even now, after witnessing not only the II world war, but also the contemporary world history, many people continue to believe that development and democracy are triumphant.

The commonsense argument to justify that democracy as a by-product of development may be summarized as follows: in developed societies citizens act more rationally than those in underdeveloped societies. If everybody or at least the majority acts rationally, they collectively will form a rational society. This argument fails to understand that what is rational to the individual is not always rational to the society. In addition, aggregation of individual preferences is a difficult (or impossible) task¹.

¹. See also The Logic of Collective Actions. The Impossibility theorem of Arrow that individual interests cannot be aggregated; Prisoners dilemma games

A stronger argument in favor of the theory may be that of the post-Marxian school. Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens, for example, (in "Capitalist Development and Democracy") argue "capitalist development is associated with democracy because it transforms the class structure, strengthening the working class and the middle class and weakening the landed class. It was not the capitalist market nor capitalist as the new dominant force, but rather the contradiction of capitalism that advanced the cause of democracy"(1992). According to them, initially capitalist democracy was designed only to the capitalists. As the working class started to demand for an inclusion into the system and for a larger share from the fruit of the system, then democracy becomes a realm for the whole citizens. As the working class itself is a result of capitalist development, this theory seems to assert that capitalist development is a cause, though not sufficient, of democracy. Capitalist development plus labor movements is considered to be the major factors for maintaining democracy. However, this point of view could not convince me because in practice labor movements may or may not contribute to the struggle for democracy they may support populist, nationalist, neo-fascist, and communist movements as well. We have witnessed this in Russia 1905-17, Germany 1936-45, and elsewhere and at different times. Thus, there is no reason why we should label the working class should be labeled as a democratic force. As any other classes, it fights for its own benefits; its benefits should not necessarily be considered to be beneficial to society as a whole.

Compared with democracy, peace² is relatively, easily achievable. Peace can be won; democracy can only be negotiated. Peace can be maintained by eliminating the enemy; democracy can be maintained by consulting and cooperating with the enemy. Peace can be maintained by ideological "hypnosis", by paralyzing the creativity of the individual mind by means of propaganda. Democracy makes sense only if there are different policy orientations, beliefs and attitudes. Peace can be maintained by regressing back to old traditions; democracy is associated with modernity. And last, but not the least, peace needs relatively simple institutions. A strong army and security force, or a strong monarchy with traditional rules, or a fundamental religion or ideology, or some other similar institutions or combinations of the above are enough to get hold of peace. However, democracy needs institutions that are by far more complicated: explicit rules of political conduct, liberty, civic organizations, representations, parliament, constitutional court, responsible government, and so on and so forth. Absence of even one of its elements can make democracy impossible.

² Throughout this paper the term "peace" is understood as internal -domestic- peace, i.e. a state of rule with out violence and civil unrest.

For development, peace and “tolerable administration of justice” are vital. Peace, easily taxes and tolerable administration of justice are all what are needed to development; the rest will be brought about by the natural course of things, maintains Adam Smith.

Political democracy and economic democracy³ are different concepts. According to J. A. Dorn (1993), political democracy has had virtually nothing to do with the rapid growth of East Asian economies. Economic democracy is necessary for economic growth, may be for development as well, if the economy is based on private ownership. On the other hand, “political democracy is neither necessary nor sufficient for economic democracy and a spontaneous market order. /.../ Democratic government is no substitute for the market, and majority voting is no substitute for the consensus that occurs with every voluntary exchange. /.../. Under majority rule, there is no automatic feedback mechanism like the price system to discipline inefficiency. /.../ Economic democracy is the natural outcome of consumer sovereignty and economic liberty; it is not dependent on political democracy. Whether democracy promotes or inhibits the market depends on governmental policies (Dorn1993).”

In fact, economic democracy, in the long run, may call for political democracy. To avoid such confusions, based on mixing economic, cultural, political, and other “types” of democracy, in this paper the term “democracy” is understood solely as political democracy. Democracy is a political regime characterized by free and open elections with relatively low barriers to participation, genuine political competition and wide protection of civil liberties. It is a regime which allows “the free formulation of political preferences, through the use of basic freedoms of association, information, and communication, for the purpose of free competition between leaders to validate at regular intervals by non violent means their claim to rule, /.../ without excluding any effective political office from that competition or prohibiting any members of the political community from expressing their preference (J. Linz, 1975).”

If democracy is understood in this notion, it seems clear why in reality we get them as twins; it might be because of the fact that both are functions of a third independent variable - the national elite structure.

If we accept that there exists a variable on which both development, on the one hand, democracy and peace, on the other, are dependent upon, then there will not be any surprise why almost all democratic countries are developed and stable, whereas almost all less developed countries are

³ Here economic democracy is understood as a regime without any serious barriers to enter into or to exist from any market in the economy

undemocratic and unstable. According to this assumption, depending on the national elite structure, it is likely to notice both development and democracy to rise and fall together.

Therefore, the crucial point in understanding the nature of peace and democracy is to understand the nature and structure of the national elite.

National Elite Structure, Peace, and Democracy

"Elites are persons who are able, through their positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes individually, regularly, and seriously." National elite encompasses both 'establishment' and 'counter elite'. That is, national elite is a set of elites (singular) who actually rule or experience power, and those who pro-exist rules even though they do not directly participate, and those who in opposition. "Structure" means "the amalgam of attitudes, values, and interpersonal relations among factions making up the [national] elite (Burton and Higley, 1987)."

According to M.Burton, R.Gunther, and J.Higley (1987, 1989, 1991) a national elite may take one of the following three types of structures: disunified, ideologically unified, or consensually unified.

A disunified national elite is "characterized by ruthless, often violent, inter-elite conflicts. Elite factions deeply distrust each other, interpersonal relations do not extend across factional lines, and factions do not cooperate to /.../ avoid political crises. (Burton and Higley, 1987: .296)." The basic situation of persons composing this elite type is one of deep insecurity - the fear, usually rooted in experience, that all is lost if some other person gets the upper hand. Accordingly, members of disunified [national] elite routinely take extreme measures to protect themselves and their interests: killing, imprisoning, or banishing opponents (Higley and Burton, 1989). Probably the most prominent characteristic feature of a disunified national elite structure is that there is no general agreement between elite factions considering the worth of existing institutions and rules. Politics is conceived as a "dirty" zero-sum game⁴. The term "peace" is understood by each elite group as a temporary situation when one national elite faction gains an absolute victory over all others. Ruling without opposition is what is meant by "peace". Here the term "democracy" has special meaning. If an elite group won absolute victory, then it may wish to loosen its security ties, and this is what is meant by democracy. Thus, democracy is something that can be delivered by the rulers to the citizens. If citizens are quiet and calm, they may have it, if not they do not deserve it. In a country where this type of national elite structure exists, coups, forcible power

⁴ . It might be even a negative-sum game whereby although there might be large benefits to the winner, the collective outcome is negative; or where both parties loss.

seizures, revolutions, and violence are highly expected. The ruling elite often engages in national and international conflicts to direct the attention of the mass to something far from the problem of power at home. Today most of African, some Asian and Latin American countries have this type of national elite structure.

Ideologically unified national elite is a type of national elite structure "in which structural integration and value consensus are seemingly monolithic. Communications and influence networks encompass all elite factions, but they run through and are sharply centralized in a dominant faction and the party or movement it leads. Value consensus is uniform in the sense that elites publicly express no deep ideological or policy disagreements, but they instead conform their public utterance to a single, explicit ideology whose changing content and policy implications are officially construed by the uppermost leaders of the dominant faction, or movement (Burton, Guthrie, and Higley, 1991:11-12)." In a society, whose national elite is ideologically unified the term "politics" means obedience. The struggle for peace is understood as a struggle for the regime to last for long unchanged. Such a society is patriarchal. "Democracy" is understood as equality in distribution of national wealth. Equality and fraternity without liberty of any kind make up democracy. All past and present totalitarian regimes have had this type of national elite structure. Nevertheless, it does not mean that in totalitarian regimes there have not been people who opposed the system. They indeed have been, but since they played only marginal role on the total political outcomes, they do not qualify to be considered as members of the national elite.

Consensually unified national elite is the third type of national elite structure in which "structural integration and value consensus are relatively inclusive. Overlapping and interconnected communication and influence networks encompass all or most elite factions; no single elite faction dominates these networks; and most elites therefore have substantial access to government decision making. /.../ [all or most elite factions] tend to perceive political outcomes in 'positive sum ' or 'politics as bargaining' terms. Although they regularly and publicly oppose one another on ideological and policy questions, all important elite factions share an underlining consensus about rules of the game and the worth of existing political institutions. /.../ [they] compete for mass support by downplaying or avoiding especially explosive issues and conflicts and by sharply limiting the cost of political defeats (Burton, Guthrie, and Higley, 1991)." In a society whose national elite is consensually unified, politics is conceived as a positive-sum cooperative games in which, by their very nature, require strategic thinking, commitment, bargaining and negotiation. Here, politics resembles a market. In such a society, the terms "peace" and "democracy" have correlative meanings. One hardly could exist without the other. Democracy may sustain in such a national elite structure only. Most of today's North American, Central and Western European countries have this type of national elite structure.

Emergence of Consensually Unified National Elite

- If a society suffers from external power, then there will be a tendency for factions of the national elite to cooperate to fight against the external foreign power together. This type of cooperation creates some sort of "home rules" and maybe institutionalized in the form of coalitions. Many of such coalitions break apart soon after victory. However, in some cases they may survive even after victory has been achieved and may emerge as a consensually unified national elite. The consensually unified elites and, as a consequence, democratic traditions in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Philippines, ...etc. emerged in this way.
- If extremist national elite factions could not take power legally or forcibly, as time passes, they will understand that the better strategy will be to moderate their programs. Thus, in order to gain mass support and access to power, they not only will liberalize their programs but also will acknowledge the legitimacy of the existing institutions. They will try to change the system without violating the existing rules of the game. This process is known as "elite convergence". The consensually unified national elite of France, Norway, Denmark, Greece, Italy ...etc. emerged this way. In all the above-mentioned countries there have been anti-system national elite factions either on the right or the left or on both sides of the political spectrum. However, now many of them have moderated their political programs and are playing the political game under the rules which they had wanted to change.
- Elite settlement. "Elite settlements are relatively rare events in which warring elite factions suddenly and deliberately reorganize their relations by negotiating compromises on their disagreements." (Burton, Guther, and Higely, 1991) The commonsense thesis that the ruling class will never give up its power voluntarily is not always true. In England (1688-9), Sweden (1809), Colombia (1957-8), Venezuela (1958), Poland (1989), Republic of South African (1994) the ruling elites voluntarily gave or shared their power with their enemies. I use the word "voluntarily" because in all the above cases there was a possibility for the ruling faction to use military force against their enemies. Even if they might doubt of their success they might have engaged in "either destroy or will be destroyed" civil wars. Instead, they preferred to lose or share their power.

These three points summarize Higey's and other's account in the theory of emergence of the consensually unified elites in various conditions.

One can elaborate this theory a little further. The diagram below presents a scheme that illustrates the possible ways of transition from one form of national elite structure to another. It

also describes how the form of a regime in any country is determined by its national elite structure.

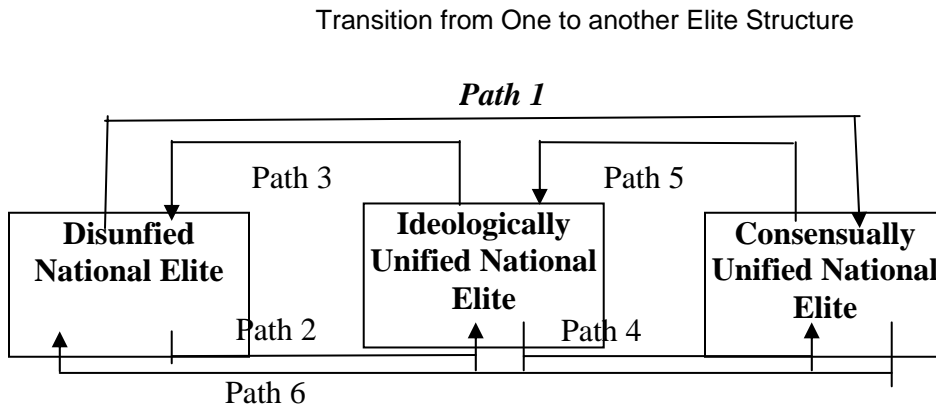


Figure 1: Paths of transition from one to another national elite structure

As is illustrated in fig.1, imagine 6 types of transitions.

- From a disunified to a consensually unified national elite structure (path 1);
- From a disunified to an ideologically unified national elite structure (path 2);
- From ideologically unified to a disunified national elite structure (path 3);
- From ideologically unified to a consensually unified national elite structure (path 4);
- From a consensually unified to an ideologically unified national elite structure (path 5); and
- From a consensually unified to a disunified national elite structure (path 6).

Higley, and Guthrie (1991), Burton (1989) and Wesolowski (mimeographed) studied predominantly the first path with pass-by observation on the sixth path as a democratic breakdown. Of course, not all of the six types are equally important for academic and practical reasons, and not all are equally likely to occur in reality. Nevertheless, each type had occurred in the past and, probably, may occur in the future as well. Therefore, both academically and practically it is important to study each path. However, detailed analysis of each transitional path is impossible for such a short paper. Hence, here each path will be dismissed briefly with no detailed theoretical and/or historical justifications.

In this paper, there is no value judgment attached to the term “transition” a process that changes one structural arrangement to an apparently different one, whether the outcome is for the better or worse, is associated with a period which embodies some important elements of the "old" and

the "new" and this period is referred to as "transitional period", the process - "transitional process".

The previous section, dealt with the first path under the sub-topic "emergence of consensually unified national elite structure". In all three cases, consensually unified national elite emerged from disunified national elite.

The second path, transition from a disunified to an ideologically unified national elite structure, is not a rare event. Almost all revolutions that ended with totalitarian rules went along this path. The Great October Socialist Revolution of Russia, The Great Chinese Revolution, The Iran is an Islamic Revolution, and , The Cuban Revolution are only, a few of the many examples. On the eve of these revolutions, the countries had had highly disunified national elite structures. Mass mobilization was at peak. Each elite faction tried to eliminate all others. In such situation one of the following outcomes may be expected:

- the warring elites may settle down their disagreement and form a consensus (path 1); or
- one of the many elite factions may gain relative victory and form authoritarian regime which is not structurally different from the "old" regime; i.e. no structural change; or
- one elite faction may gain absolute victory and may implement a totalitarian regime; i.e. a path under discussion; or
- a total collapse.

In these countries mentioned above, for example, ideological, military and security power become the only things that bound the societies together in these countries were concentration of political and military power in the hands of the revolution leaders and the exigency of security.

The third path, transition from an ideologically unified to a disunified national elite structure, is what we are now witnessing in Eastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine, and some other Soviet successor states are clear-cut examples. They tried to go through the fourth path, from ideologically unified to a consensually unified national elite structure, but, unfortunately, they went on the third path.

The fourth path, transition from ideologically unified to consensually unified national elite structure, is a rare event. In an ideologically unified national elite structure, there is no strong opposition with whom the ruling faction will be forced to make consensus. However, this does not

mean that it is impossible. J. Higley, and M. Burton (1989), drew a table in which there is an entry for Germany. It shows that Germany had a disunified national elite from 1871-1933, an ideologically unified national elite from 1933-1945, and a consensually unified national elite starting from 1966. According to their chronology, Germany moved from an ideologically unified to a consensually unified national elite structure between 1945 and 1966. The Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) which are warranty in transition to democracy from Soviet imposed totalitarian regime are other examples of this transition. It was democracy that formed competing national elite factions which are consensually unified. Former dissidents were so weak as to affect the political output of their country; and so we cannot consider them as members of the national elite in the Soviet regime. One optimistic scenario considering the future of China might be the following: the ruling elite may liberalize the polity as it has done with the economy. This will be the fifth huge surprise in less than two decades if it happens in the near future⁵. The fifth surprise is likely to occur not because of economic factors. Economic democracy may be assumed to be in sufficient supply in today's China. If the ruling party liberalize the polity as it did with the economy, however, there is a possibility that a young Chinese "Gorbachove" may appear on the political scene.

The fifth path, transition from consensually unified to ideologically unified national elite, is the most reactionary path which is not rare. This was how Hitler's Germany arose. The Czech Republic after the II world war could be cited as another example. "It is more difficult to pass over from totalitarianism to democracy than from democracy to totalitarianism. /.../Democracy calls for deep - going, value-oriented changes in the public mentality - it calls for time (Karl R. Popper as quoted by P. Sztompka, 1993 : .85)."

The sixth path, from consensually unified to a disunified national elite structure, is what is commonly referred to as a break down of democracy. Interwar Western Europe is an example. Philippines is the 80th another example (Higely and Burton 1989, p. 22).

Elite Settlement

People in the third world, may hope for democratic transition that may come along the "first" path, from a disunified to a consensually unified national elite structure by means of elite consolidation. Then contemporary world situation is, paradoxically, both favorable and unfavorable for such settlement to take place. On the one hand, we have witnessed such phenomena not only in Central Europe but also in the Republic of South African and we are

⁵ The first nexpected collapse of communism in Europe, came as a surprise; the second wasthe unexpected slow-down of post communist transition, according to Piotr Sztompka, 1993; the third and the fourth, respecting were the collapse of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa and the rapid widespread of terrorism.

hopeful considering Israel and PLO. On the other hand, Ethiopia, Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti are demonstrating how hard is to maintain such a consensus.

Unfortunately, it is not well studied what makes elite settlement possible, and what makes it impossible. According to Burton, Guther, Higley, and others, elite settlement is likely to occur if:

- a) elites are more independent from the mass. If the top leaders, due to the prestige and trust they won, feel free to make vital decisions by themselves, then they tend to decrease the costs of brutal conflicts by negotiating with their enemies; or
- b) warring factions are equally powerful and no one faction could imagine to gain absolute victory over others; or
- c) major crisis occurred due to policy failure, power abuses, and demonstrated personal weakness.

Even when opposing elites are not equally powerful elite settlement is likely to occur if it is certain that the ruling elite may lose something more than state power if it loses the battle. Thus, in order to secure that "something" it may wish to give-up or share its political power. For England that "something" was the prestige of the throne; for the Republic of south African Republic it was the right of the white minority; for Poland it was independence from the influence of Russia ,etc.

Burton, Guther, and Higley noticed that elite settlements have certain interesting characteristics such as primary face-to-face negotiations and speed. In most cases it was only after the first secrete or semi-secrete face-to-face negotiations among top leaders of opposite factions that formal negotiations with neutral mediators take place. In addition, in all analyzed cases, the first phase of negotiation was speedy. Generally, the longer the duration of negotiation, the lower the possibility that settlement will take place in reality.

This theory leaves too little room for ordinary citizens, the mass, as independent political entity. It assumes that elites are the ones who are capable of shaping a country's destiny. Perceiving the mass as a political entity without explicitly defined leadership is hardly possible.

This theory may explain why external powers fail to make peace and democracy in countries like Somalia, Haiti and now Iraq. It helps us to understand some of the mystery of the contemporary world politics such as:

- Why it is so difficult to make peace and built democracy even in countries where there exists demonstrated political will from the part of the ruling faction.

- Why do world's esteemed politicians as mediators fail to settle down even relatively simple conflicts?
- Why, the UN became so helpless in the face of civil and limited international wars?
- Why international movements for peace and democracy with all their anthems, posters, songs and slogans are not listened seriously even by a single warring elite faction?
- Why are the Bible and Koran, voices the Church, Mosque, and intelligentsia are ignored or, even worse, and are interpreted very differently?

In the light of this theory, it is not hard to answer these and other similar questions. No matter under what flag they come, the role of external powers in peace-making process is much less than it is conventionally believed to be. The main factor that determines regime in a country is the structure of its national elite. If an external power is not able to change the structure, it cannot change the regime. The colonial system was successful in this case (for e.g. in the case of USA, Canada, Australia, India...etc.). The UN peacekeeping or peace-making force or the armies of developed countries are unlikely to play such a role. A attempt was Somalia which failed disastrously wasting billions and many lives (News Week, October 11, 1993). We shall see what will happen with Iraq.

Economic sanction is a traditional tool used by Western countries to force other countries change their policy. However, it is also less effective than it is conventionally believed to be. It is also very difficult to say that such acts are legitimate. In most cases, sanctions are not able to change the national elite structure. Secondly, each sanction has impacts on other countries trade balance. For instance, due to the international sanctions on Iraq during the Gulf war, many Latin American countries suffered greatly, whereas Libya, a country with authoritarian rule similar to Iraq, expanded its oil export by 24% in 1990s.

The problem is even more complicated if we consider the attempts to impose democracy and human rights by similar means. The Prime Minister of Malaysia Mahathir bin Mohamad said: "Western countries object to other ideologies being spread by subversion or force, however, they never hesitate to use these same methods of spreading their own ideology. Sanctions, arm-twisting of various kinds and sustained campaigns through their media are weapons that they never hesitate to use". (1994: .7).

Both national and international peace and democratic movements are less effective than conventionally believed to be because of the same reason that their impact in shaping the structure of the national elite is weak. However, from such movements a new national elite faction may arise in the name of peace and democracy - this is the best thing that we can expect from

such movements. If this does not happen, the hope that warring factions will settle down their disagreements being influenced by heart-shrinking anthems and songs, theological or academic speeches...etc. is a naive hope. The late General Aidid, the one of war lord of Somalia, led many such demonstrations for "peace and democracy". Marshal Idi Amin of Uganda was considered to be a "father of peace". Many of Yugoslavia's leaders of warring elite factions have declared that they are peace - loving. Each warring faction says: we are for peace and democracy but our enemies are not; so we are obliged to fight for peace and democracy.

SUMMARY

Development is impossible without peace. Economic democracy is vital for development. Political democracy is important for in its own right whether it contributes to economic development or not. Both peace and democracy are subject to the national elite structure. If the national elite is disunified, the regime is expected to be authoritarian with or without pseudo-democracy; domestic peace is less likely in such regimes. If the national elite is ideologically unified, totalitarian regime is most likely; democracy is impossible, but not peace. If the national elite is consensually unified, the regime is likely to be democratic and peaceful simultaneously.

Transition from one type of national elite structure to another is associated with transition from one type of regime to another.

To be able to shape the national elite structure is a key point in any attempt to maintain peace and democracy in any country. However, the national elite structure seems to be shaped predominantly by internal factors. This why the role of external factors as national or international peace movements, mediators, the UN peace - making force and so on is less than it is conventionally believed to be. To improve the role of external powers in peace and democracy making processes, there should be ways of influencing the national elite structure without being "colonizers".

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