Does consensus democracy improve the quality of government?

In *Patterns of Democracy*, Arend Lijphart (2012) argues that having executive-parties institutions that are consensual rather than majoritarian makes a wide variety of desirable outcomes – including a few that might be considered as indicators of ‘high quality government’ – more likely. In this essay, I will argue that many of Lijphart’s regression results linking consensus democracy to these outcomes are spurious, and that climate is an especially important confounding variable that Lijphart fails to control for (with a greater impact on government quality than consensual institutions). Although Lijphart’s sample does suggest that inflation, political participation and civil liberties are correlated with consensus democracy even when climate is controlled for, I will point out that the correlation with inflation looks likely to be driven by a single element of Lijphart’s composite measure of consensus (viz. interest group pluralism). I will also review some of the recent work that considers the effects of consensus democracy on regime stability, discussing the implications of these findings for Lijphart’s conclusion that newly democratizing countries should strive to adopt consensual institutions.

In this section, I want to explain the theoretical grounds for my decision to rerun Lijphart’s multivariate regression analyses controlling for climate. I also intend to: explain my operationalization of this variable; illustrate how the thirty-six democracies are distributed by climate; and explain which of Lijphart’s dependent variables I consider to be aspects of overall ‘quality of government’.

The idea of bad equilibrium is common to several contemporary theories of political development. Acemoglu & Robinson (2012, p. 343ff.) argue that extractive political institutions (institutions designed for repression, and therefore incapable of the sort of complex policy administration needed for high quality government) create economic conditions and incentives that mitigate against the adoption of politically inclusive institutions (institutions designed to limit repression, and therefore a precondition for high quality policy administration). Fukuyama (2014, pp. 233-234) echoes Acemoglu & Robinson, and also argues (pp. 123-125) that corrupt, poor-quality government causes a loss of trust in political institutions, killing off the norms of law-abidingness that are necessary to sustain high-quality governance. On these accounts, institutional quality is persistent over time: political history matters.

Much of the institutional baggage of non-Western democracies can be attributed to Western and/or colonial influences. According to theorists like North & Thomas (1973), North and South America have differing institutions because they were colonised by empires with differing political cultures. Given the failure of North & Thomas’ theory to predict the institutional variety of British colonies (ranging from extractive Barbados to inclusive Massachusetts), climate seems to do a far better job at explaining ‘sticky’ variation in institutional quality. Acemoglu et al. (2001) argue that tropical diseases discouraged Europeans from establishing mass settlements in hotter countries, and that this is what explains variation in colonial-era institutions: only where there was no settled yeomanry to demand otherwise could extractive institutions be developed. Essentially the same relationships between climate, settlement, and political institutions have been explained differently by those who argue (Engerman & Sokoloff, 1997; 2002; Fukuyama, 2014, pp. 245-248) that Europeans settled temperate climates because of their suitability for the family farming of staple crops. In contrast, the tropics were
suitable for export crops like sugar and cotton, giving rise to polities dominated by the “plantation complex” (Curtin, 1998).

‘Consensus democracy is uncorrelated with good government when political history is held constant.’ If one wanted to test this theory, one would have to rerun Lijphart’s regression analyses controlling for some variable that operationalizes the historical inclusivity of a country’s political institutions. However, any procedure for coding such a variable would be highly subjective, and would in any case be beyond the limits of my time and expertise. To avoid these problems, I have opted to test the theory that consensus democracy is uncorrelated with good government when climate is held constant. For now, I will suspend judgement as to which factor(s) might be mediating the causal link between climate and institutions that this theory posits.¹

I have chosen to use the distance of a country’s centroid from the equator as a proxy for the tropicality of its climate. Since climate is not exclusively determined by latitudinal position, this operationalization is fairly crude, but it does suit my lack of expertise and unwillingness to use a subjective coding procedure.² I have drawn data on the latitudinal positions of Lijphart’s thirty-six democracies from their country profiles in the CIA World Factbook. Figure 1 illustrates in a boxplot how Lijphart’s sample is distributed by distance from the equator: the distribution is very slightly negatively skewed, has a standard deviation of 15.58, and has no outliers. The distribution covers most of the range of possible distances from the equator, affording us some confidence that conclusions about the effects of climate inferred from this sample can be generalized to the whole population. As figure 2 illustrates, there is a statistically significant correlation (p = 0.003) between distance from the equator and consensus score, although (at an adjusted R² value of 0.213) the vast majority of variation in consensus score is left unexplained by this model.

¹ I do assume, however, that level of development does not bridge the causal link I posit between climate and political institutions – although, it would not be obviously implausible to say that is does. It might be argued that lower worker productivity necessitates extractive political and economic institutions, and thinkers from Montesquieu (1989) to Lee Kuan Yew have advanced the idea that a tropical climate limits worker productivity (and hence economic development) – except, said Lee, in places where air-conditioning is widespread (Economist, 2015)! But Lijphart’s analysis has already shown that consensus score is correlated with quality of government even when controlling for levels of development; so – unless one wants to challenge Lijphart’s operationalization of ‘development’ – one cannot credibly argue that level of development is what mediates the causal link between climate and institutions posited by my theory.

² Strictly speaking, neither the theory of Acemoglu et al. nor the theory of Engerman & Sokoloff would predict that all differences in climate should give rise to differences in institutions, since neither theory would attach much importance to the difference in climate between, say Norway and Austria. This is another way in which my use of distance from the equator as a control variable is problematic: the difference (14.8) between the latitudes of Norway (62) and Austria (47.2) is of greater magnitude than the difference (13.85) between the latitudes of the United States (38) and the Bahamas (24.15)! If we were to assume that the climates of all European countries would be deemed to be qualitatively similar in the eyes of both theories, we could adopt the rough correction of assigning the EU’s central distance from the equator to every country in Europe. However, this assumption would not be entirely uncontroversial: the Italian Mezzogiorno, for example, has historically suffered from many of the same mosquito borne diseases as are found in countries bounded by the tropics (Townley, 2002, p. 9). Perhaps it would be more defensible to assume that in the eyes of both theories, the causal significance of a change in distance from the equator is inversely proportional to distance from the equator. Operating on this assumption, we might choose to control for logged distance from the equator, rather than distance from the equator per se. Although I have chosen not to follow that approach in this essay, there is certainly an opportunity for future work to investigate further whether similar or differing results to my own would be obtained if one were to control for logged rather than unlogged distance from the equator.
Figure 1: Distribution of National Distances from the Equator

Distance from the Equator (Degrees of Latitude)
Figure 2: The Relationship Between Distance from the Equator and Consensus Score
Finally, I have chosen to construe 'quality of government' fairly broadly, re-examining Lijphart’s regression results for the following variables: the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGIs); the macroeconomic performance indicators used by Lijphart; and the constituents of the EIU Democracy Index (the latter are included on the grounds that some of the factors measured by the EIU indices – political participation, or civil liberties, say – might be thought of as policy outcomes characteristic of countries with high quality governance).³

For ease of comparison, I have followed Lijphart’s (atypical) format for presenting regression results, although I have also reported the adjusted $R^2$ statistic for every regression model.

³ I consider minority representation, voter turnout and satisfaction with democracy to be outcomes that (probably) characterize high quality institutions rather than high quality governments, so in this essay I have chosen not to rerun Lijphart’s regression analyses for these variables. I have also avoided treating wealth equality as an outcome always to be found in democracies with high quality governance, preferring to focus on outcomes that can be less controversially categorized as indicators of 'quality of government'.
Lijphart’s own results (figure 3) show statistically significant – as well as substantively significant (Lijphart, 2012, pp. 262-265, 279) – positive correlations between degree of consensus and: three of the WGI outcomes; absence of corruption; control of inflation; the employment rate; and all five EIU sub-indices.

This picture looks somewhat different, however, when distance from the equator is controlled for (figure 4a). Although the regression coefficient on degree of consensus is still positive for all of the WGI outcomes, for the inverted corruption perceptions index and for the first and fourth EIU sub-indices, these correlations are no longer statistically significant, so we cannot rule out that they are merely artefacts of Lijphart’s case selection, as might reasonably be suggested (Bormann, 2010, p. 8; Müller-Rommel, 2008, p. 88). Nonetheless, even when distance from the equator is controlled for, there are still statistically significant correlations linking degree of consensus with all four variables measuring inflation, and with unemployment in 1981-2009,\(^4\) although – as Lijphart (2012, p. 273) acknowledges – little can be read into the

\(^4\) The t-values, regression coefficients and \(R^2\) statistics for all these regression models are little different whether climate is controlled for or not.

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**Figure 4a:** Multi-variate regression analyses of the effect of consensus democracy (executive-parties dimension) on government performance variables, with controls for the effects of
1. the level of economic development (HDI),
2. logged population size, and
3. distance from the equator,
with extreme outliers – as identified by Lijphart (2012, pp. 267, 279) – removed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Variable</th>
<th>Estimated Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Absolute t-value</th>
<th>Adjusted (R^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government effectiveness (1996-2009)</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>0.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory quality (1996-2009)</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.272</td>
<td>0.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule of law (1996-2009)</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of corruption (1996-2009)</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>0.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption perceptions index (2010)</td>
<td>0.268</td>
<td>0.980</td>
<td>0.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita growth (1981-2009)</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>0.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita growth (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>0.558</td>
<td>0.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer price index (1981-2009)</td>
<td>-1.092*</td>
<td>1.696</td>
<td>0.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP deflator (1981-2009)</td>
<td>-1.137**</td>
<td>1.553</td>
<td>0.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer price index (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-1.213**</td>
<td>1.974</td>
<td>0.542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP deflator (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-1.147**</td>
<td>1.920</td>
<td>0.518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (1981-2009)</td>
<td>-1.927**</td>
<td>1.934</td>
<td>0.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-0.918</td>
<td>1.314</td>
<td>0.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIU Democracy Index (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.153*</td>
<td>1.562</td>
<td>0.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Electoral process and pluralism (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.978</td>
<td>0.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Functioning of government (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.258*</td>
<td>1.582</td>
<td>0.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Political participation (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.375**</td>
<td>2.012</td>
<td>0.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Political culture (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>1.264</td>
<td>0.668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Civil liberties (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.172**</td>
<td>1.754</td>
<td>0.257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at the 10 percent level (one-tailed test)
** Statistically significant at the 5 percent level (one-tailed test)
*** Statistically significant at the 1 percent level (one-tailed test)
latter result, as consensus shows no statistically significant correlation with unemployment in 1991-2009.

Moreover, controlling for climate does not drastically reduce the statistical and substantive significances of the correlations Lijphart observes between consensus and three of the EIU sub-indices. This being said, adding ‘distance from the equator’ as an independent variable does moderately improve the explanatory capacity ($R^2$ statistic) of Lijphart’s models for all of the EIU sub-indices, because each sub-index exhibits a statistically significant correlation with distance from the equator (figure 4b). Figure 4b also reveals that there are positive correlations (each statistically significant at the 1 percent or the 5 percent level) linking distance from the equator with all four of the WGI outcomes, and with the inverted corruption perceptions index, validating the theory that having a tropical climate indirectly causes lower (contemporary) quality of governance. To get a rough idea of the substantive significance of these correlations, we can follow Lijphart (2012, p. 262) and multiply the regression coefficients by (twice the) standard deviation of the independent variable. The results (figure 5) show that climate has a pretty substantive effect on all of the non-macroeconomic aspects of government quality.

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Figure 4b: Multi-variate regression analyses of the effect of distance from the equator on government performance variables, with controls for the effects of
1. the level of economic development (HDI),
2. logged population size, and
3. consensus democracy (executive-parties dimension),
with extreme outliers – as identified by Lijphart (2012, pp. 267, 279) – removed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Variable</th>
<th>Estimated Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Absolute t-value</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government effectiveness (1996-2009)</td>
<td>0.018***</td>
<td>3.242</td>
<td>0.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory quality (1996-2009)</td>
<td>0.010**</td>
<td>1.841</td>
<td>0.615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule of law (1996-2009)</td>
<td>0.016**</td>
<td>2.439</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of corruption (1996-2009)</td>
<td>0.022***</td>
<td>2.823</td>
<td>0.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption perceptions index (2010)</td>
<td>0.045**</td>
<td>1.957</td>
<td>0.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita growth (1981-2009)</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.943</td>
<td>0.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita growth (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td>0.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer price index (1981-2009)</td>
<td>-0.084*</td>
<td>1.511</td>
<td>0.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP deflator (1981-2009)</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td>1.236</td>
<td>0.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer price index (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-0.070</td>
<td>1.258</td>
<td>0.542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP deflator (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-0.066</td>
<td>1.215</td>
<td>0.518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (1981-2009)</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.454</td>
<td>0.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (1991-2009)</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td>0.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIU Democracy Index (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.027***</td>
<td>3.192</td>
<td>0.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Electoral process and pluralism (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.010**</td>
<td>1.785</td>
<td>0.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Functioning of government (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.039***</td>
<td>2.750</td>
<td>0.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Political participation (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.022*</td>
<td>1.394</td>
<td>0.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Political culture (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.030***</td>
<td>2.695</td>
<td>0.668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Civil liberties (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.010*</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>0.257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at the 10 percent level (one-tailed test)
** Statistically significant at the 5 percent level (one-tailed test)
*** Statistically significant at the 1 percent level (one-tailed test)
To summarise so far: Does consensus democracy promote government effectiveness, rule of law, control of corruption and an electoral level playing field? Not if climate is held constant. Does consensus democracy improve political participation, civil liberties and control of inflation? Perhaps. In this section, I want to present some considerations that firmly qualify that ‘perhaps’, and to argue that Lijphart fails to consider the possibility that consensus democracy might negatively affect government quality as a result of its impact on regime stability.

In the first place: whilst the theory that a country’s quality of governance causes it to have a certain climate is obviously unreasonable, one could quite reasonably infer from Lijphart’s dataset that having a high quality of government causes a democracy to adopt consensual institutions. Perhaps in deference to the “conventional wisdom” (Lijphart, 2012, p. 255ff.), it is only countries with a heritage of high capacity institutions that feel secure enough (in their welfare) to risk losing some government “effectiveness” in return for the “kinder and gentler” payoffs of consensus democracy. Lijphart offers no grounds at all for rejecting reverse causal stories like this, yet he needs to be able to offer them if his confidence in his theory is to be fully justified (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2013, p. 55).

Moreover, adding controls for climate to Lijphart’s regression analyses should by no means be thought of as the end of the story when it comes to the idea that political history determines institutional quality. Perhaps controlling for the year from which Lijphart begins his analysis of a country (a rough proxy for when the country first democratized) further undermines Lijphart’s conclusions? Actually, although this hypothesis is not a priori unreasonable – the bivariate correlations linking ‘year first analysed’ with consensus score and with CPI inflation (1991-2009) are statistically significant at the 1 percent level (figures 6 and 7) – it in fact turns out to be false. Controlling for year first analysed does not significantly change the coefficients on consensus score (or the associated t-values) for any of its more resilient correlations with government quality (figure 8).

Comparing the regression results in figure 3 to those in figure 4a provides some clues as to the real problems with Lijphart’s evidence. Whereas adding a control for climate to Lijphart’s regression analyses causes the statistical and substantive significances of the correlations between consensus democracy and all of the WGI indicators (plus the corruption perceptions index) to drop significantly, adding the same control variable causes only marginal changes in the statistical and substantive significances of the correlations between consensus democracy and all of the macroeconomic performance variables. This seems to suggest that in Lijphart’s original analyses, differing components of his composite consensus index were responsible for the observed correlations linking consensus with the WGI outcomes and with macroeconomic performance. In fact, the evidence both from Lijphart’s own data (Holden, 2015) and from data on the OECD countries (Anderson, 2001) suggests that the macroeconomic benefits Lijphart attributes to consensus democracy are driven solely by differences in interest group pluralism. This seriously undermines Lijphart’s claim that consensus democracy (in toto) improves the quality of government, since “there is no obvious

deviations”) do not carry over particularly well to thinking about distances from the equator: the range of distances from the equator (55) is more like three-and-a-half standard deviations than four, and in any case Lijphart’s intention to compare “the ‘average’ consensus democracy and the ‘average’ majoritarian democracy” doesn’t really have an analogue when considering distances from the equator. Still, multiplying the coefficients on distance from the equator by two standard deviations does gives a good enough ‘ball park’ figure for illustrating the substantive significant of the correlations that link climate to Lijphart’s indicators of government quality.
Figure 5: Rough guide to the substantive significances of the correlations (see figure 4b) between distance from the equator and Lijphart’s government performance variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Variable</th>
<th>Theoretical:</th>
<th>Sample:</th>
<th>Estimated Effect of a 2*SD Increase in Distance from Equator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Min.</td>
<td>Max.</td>
<td>Min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government effectiveness (1996-2009)</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory quality (1996-2009)</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule of law (1996-2009)</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of corruption (1996-2009)</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption perceptions index (2010)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIU Democracy Index (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Electoral process and pluralism (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Functioning of government (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Political participation (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Political culture (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Civil liberties (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The sample range for the fifth EIU sub-index (civil liberties) excludes Israel as an outlier. Data for theoretical ranges, and for the sample range of the fifth EIU sub-index (when Israel is excluded), are drawn from Lijphart (2012, pp. 264-265, 279).

Figure 6: The Relationship Between Year First Analysed and Consensus Score

Graph showing the relationship between consensus score and year first analysed by Lijphart.
Figure 8: Multi-variate regression analyses of the effect of consensus democracy (executive-parties dimension) on government performance variables, with controls for the effects of
1. the level of economic development (HDI),
2. logged population size,
3. distance from the equator, and
4. year first democratized,
with extreme outliers – as identified by Lijphart (2012, pp. 267, 279) – removed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Variable</th>
<th>Estimated Regression Coefficient</th>
<th>Absolute t-value</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumer price index (1981-2009)</td>
<td>-1.065*</td>
<td>1.598</td>
<td>0.542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP deflator (1981-2009)</td>
<td>-1.096*</td>
<td>1.449</td>
<td>0.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer price index (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-1.107*</td>
<td>1.677</td>
<td>0.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP deflator (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-1.031*</td>
<td>1.610</td>
<td>0.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (1981-2009)</td>
<td>-1.504*</td>
<td>1.411</td>
<td>0.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (1991-2009)</td>
<td>-0.765</td>
<td>1.046</td>
<td>0.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIU Democracy Index (2006-2010)†</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>1.117</td>
<td>0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Functioning of government (2006-2010)†</td>
<td>0.179</td>
<td>1.081</td>
<td>0.423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Political participation (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.304*</td>
<td>1.577</td>
<td>0.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Civil liberties (2006-2010)</td>
<td>0.156*</td>
<td>1.512</td>
<td>0.239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Statistically significant at the 10 percent level (one-tailed test)
** Statistically significant at the 5 percent level (one-tailed test)
*** Statistically significant at the 1 percent level (one-tailed test)
† Correlation with ‘year first analysed by Lijphart’ is statistically significant at the 10 percent level (one-tailed test) and negative
structural connection between … consensus democracy and corporatism” (Anderson, 2001, p. 449)⁶ – indeed, a number of authors have found that the clustering of majoritarian and consensus variables in Lijphart’s sample is not replicated in other geographical contexts (Croissant & Schächter, 2010; Fortin, 2008; van Cranenburgh & Kopecký, 2004). It is quite possible to sustain a corporatist interest group structure alongside majoritarian institutions – with Lijphart (2012, pp. 28-29) describing Barbados in precisely these terms – and the benefits (to majoritarian democracies) of doing so have already been empirically demonstrated (Anderson, 2001, p. 437), as well as theoretically explained (Cameron, 1984, p. 157).⁷

Finally, the idea of governance at any decent level of ‘quality’ is quite obviously predicated on the existence of a stable political regime. By his own admission, Lijphart (2012, p. 50) restricts his sample to democracies that are “stable and consolidated”, so his research design affords him no insight at all into the relative regime stability of majoritarian and consensus democracies.⁸ Although some studies find a positive correlation between consensus democracy and regime stability (Cohen, 1997; Reynal-Querol, 2002; Saideman, et al., 2002), they share methodological errors in failing to control for levels of societal division and polarisation (Clark, et al., 2013, p. 800).⁹ Higher quality work by Selway & Templeman (2012) – controlling for a wider range of potentially confounding variables – finds that consensus democracy is if anything likely to decrease regime stability.

In sum: Lijphart’s bold recommendation that new democracies should strive to adopt consensus institutions (Lijphart, 2012, p. 296) is seriously misguided, since these institutions look just as likely to cause a collapse in the quality of government as to improve it. Moreover, Lijphart’s dataset offers far stronger evidence for the theory that a tropical climate causes lower (contemporary) quality of government than for his theory that all of the features of consensus democracy in combination bring about a better standard of government.

Further research might seek to adjudicate between the competing theories that predict a causal link between climate and institutions, investigating whether the burden of disease, crop suitability or some other factor is most strongly correlated with quality of government. One challenge here is find appropriate operationalizations for each of these potentially mediating factors – Bennett & Nikolaev (2016) use a measure developed by Easterly (2007) of the share of a country’s arable land suitable for wheat relative to its arable land suitable for sugarcane to evaluate Engerman & Sokloff’s theory as it pertains to inequality; Acemoglu et al. (2001, pp. 1370, 1398) use data from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries “on the mortality rates of [colonial] soldiers, bishops, and sailors … largely based on the work of the historian Philip D. Curtin” to evaluate their own theory as it pertains to level of development and “expropriation risk”.

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⁶ In his earliest specification of the concept, Lijphart (1984) himself saw no reason to treat corporatism as an aspect of consensus.

⁷ Interestingly, analysis by Roller (2005, pp. 248-249) fails to reproduce Lijphart’s results linking consensus democracy to reduced inflation (in any way at all).

⁸ Lijphart (2004) elsewhere argues that “consociational” institutions – institutions that enforce a strong form of consensus by guaranteeing representation or policy-making power to certain groups – increase the likelihood of democratic survival in societies divided along ethnic or religious fault lines. Linz (1990, p. 56) likewise posits that in countries with consensual, collegial-type executives, small parties are given a more realistic expectation of sharing power, increasing the likelihood that these parties will operate within the regime rather than seeking to undermine it ‘from the outside’.

⁹ Clark et al. (2013, pp. 793-794) outline clearly the distinction between division and polarization.
WORKS CITED


ii BACKGROUND REFERENCES


iii R SCRIPT

data<-read.csv("http://andy.egge.rs/data/L.csv") #Assigns Lijphart's dataset to the object "data"
data$country #Shows me the order by which the 36 democracies are listed in Lijphart's dataset
dist_from_equator<-c(34,27,47.2,24.15,13.1,50.5,22.60,10,56,64,46,51,39,65,20.53,31.3,42.5,18.15,36,37,49.45,35.5,20.17,52,3,62,41,39.3,40,62,47,11,54.33,38) #Here, I have manually entered the distance of each democracy's centroid from the equator (measured in degrees of latitude), following the ordering of countries printed above. I accessed https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/ on 10/3/17 to collect the data.
data2<-data.frame(data,dist_from_equator) #Assigns my augmented dataset (incorporating Lijphart's data and data on each country's distance from the equator) to the object "data2"
data2[1:36,c("country","dist_from_equator")]
boxplot(data2$dist_from_equator,main="Figure 1: Distribution of National Distances from the Equator",xlab="Distance from the Equator (Degrees of Latitude)",horizontal=TRUE) #Generates figure 1
sd(data2$dist_from_equator) #Calculates the standard deviation of 'distance from the equator' for Lijphart's 36 democracies, which I mention when discussing figure 1, and which I also used to calculate some of the values in figure 5
summary(data2$dist_from_equator) #This data allows me to calculate the range of distances from the equator in Lijphart's sample, which I refer to in footnote 5
plot(data2$dist_from_equator,data2$exec_parties_1981_2010,main="Figure 2: The Relationship Between Distance from the Equator and Consensus Score",ylab="Consensus Score 1981-2010 (Executive-Parties Dimension)") #Generates figure 2
abline(lm(data2$exec_parties_1981_2010~data2$dist_from_equator)) #Adds a trendline to figure 2
text(data2$dist_from_equator,data2$exec_parties_1981_2010,labels=data2$country,cex=0.7,pos=4) #Adds country labels to figure 2
summary(lm(data2$exec_parties_1981_2010~data2$dist_from_equator)) #Runs the bivariate regression of consensus score against distance from the equator discussed in my essay

#Rerunning Lijphart's original regression analyses to record the Adjusted R^2 value for each regression (these values are included in figure 3):
#Lijphart excludes Israel as an outlier from the 1981-2009 deflation regressions, and Uruguay as an outlier from the 1991-2009 inflation regressions.


#Running regression analyses for the same dependent variables, this time including distance from the equator as an additional independent variable (results for these regressions are summarised in figure 4):


summary(lm(data2$corruption_perception_index_2010~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+data2$hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator))


summary(lm(data2$gdp_per_cap_growth_1991_2009~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+data2$hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator))


summary(lm(data2$electoral_process_and_pluralism_2006_2010~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+data2$hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator))


summary(lm(data2$political_participation_2006_2010~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+data2$hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator))

summary(lm(data2$political_culture_2006_2010~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+data2$hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator))

summary(lm(data2$civil_liberties_2006_2010~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+data2$hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator))

#Lijphart also excludes Israel as an outlier for the EIU Civil Liberties Index regression analysis
#Printing summary statistics for all of the variables that show a statistically significant correlation with distance from the equator, including the minimum and maximum values for each variable, which are summarised in figure 5:

- `summary(data2$govt_effectiveness_1996_2009)`
- `summary(data2$regulatory_quality_1996_2009)`
- `summary(data2$control_of_corruption_1996_2009)`
- `summary(data2$corruption_perception_index_2010)`
- `summary(data2$eiu_democracy_index_2006_2010)`
- `summary(data2$electoral_process_and_pluralism_2006_2010)`
- `summary(data2$functioning_of_government_2006_2010)`
- `summary(data2$political_participation_2006_2010)`
- `summary(data2$political_culture_2006_2010)`
- `summary(data2$civil_liberties_2006_2010)`

#data$country #Shows me the order by which the 36 democracies are listed in Lijphart's dataset

data2<-data.frame(data2,year_first_analysed) #Assigns my augmented dataset (now also including 'year first analysed' entries for each democracy) to the object "data2"

plot(data2$year_first_analysed,data2$exec_parties_1981_2010,main="Figure 6: The Relationship Between Year First Analysed and Consensus Score",xlab="Year First Analysed by Lijphart",ylab="Consensus Score 1981-2010 (Executive-Parties Dimension)") #Generates figure 6

abline(lm(data2$exec_parties_1981_2010~data2$year_first_analysed)) #Adds a trendline to figure 6

summary(lm(data2$exec_parties_1981_2010~data2$year_first_analysed)) #Runs the bivariate regression of consensus score against year first analysed discussed in my essay

plot(data2$year_first_analysed,data2$cpi_1991_2009,main="Figure 7: The Relationship Between Year First Analysed and CPI Inflation",xlab="Year First Analysed by Lijphart",ylab="Average Rate of CPI (1991-2009)") #Generates figure 7

abline(lm(data2$cpi_1991_2009~data2$year_first_analysed)) #Adds a trendline to figure 7

summary(lm(cpi_1991_2009~year_first_analysed,data=data2[-35,])) #Runs the bivariate regression of CPI (1991-2009) against year first analysed discussed in my essay (the final argument in the lm function excludes Uruguay as an outlier)

#Running the multivariate regression analyses summarized in figure 8:


summary(lm(data2$unemployment_1981_2010~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator+data2$year_first_analysed))

summary(lm(data2$unemployment_1991_2009~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator+data2$year_first_analysed))

summary(lm(data2$eu_i_democracy_index_2006_2010~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator+data2$year_first_analysed))


summary(lm(data2$political_participation_2006_2010~data2$exec_parties_1981_2010+hdi_2010+log(data2$pop_in_thousands_2009)+data2$dist_from_equator+data2$year_first_analysed))

summary(lm(civil_liberties_2006_2010~exec_parties_1981_2010+hdi_2010+log(pop_in_thousands_2009)+dist_from_equator+year_first_analysed,data=data2[-18,]))