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Bringing the Global Political Economy Back In: Neoliberalism, Globalization, and Democratic Consolidation¹

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How do we promote regime stability especially in the Global South? In the current issue of *International Studies Perspectives*, I argue that the life expectancy (or stability) of nominally electoral democratic regimes in the developing world is highly contingent upon responding to the material needs of its people, and maintain that material distributive issues within those countries are highly dependent upon a given regime's position within the broader global political economy. The article is highly theoretical, and it is inspired with a critical political economy perspective.

Perhaps one of the principal messages of the article is that regime stability in the Global South necessarily depends (but not sufficiently) upon carefully addressing issues of material distribution within those countries. In praxeological terms, regime distribution is not a task that can be solely done by the national institutions themselves, but perhaps by transforming the over-all structure of the current global political economy. In academic terms, regime stability (and in this case, democratic consolidation) is a subject of scholarly investigation that should bring scholars of comparative politics (who tend to be 'methodological nationalists') and international relations into one discussion table. The article explains these theoretical points in much detail, and make some illustrative examples in order to reinforce those arguments.

The article was written in 2010 to 2011 during my Master's studies in *Osnabrück*, and it underwent several stages of peer-reviewed revisions since then until its acceptance in *International Studies Perspectives* in 2013. Indeed, the article is highly pessimistic of the future of the current neoliberal democratic regimes in the Global South, and quite radical in terms of its criticisms of the moral failings of the global political economy (as well as the academic scholarship that underpins it). In retrospect, however, I now tend to reconsider those arguments I've made in this article with much caution and intellectual humility.

While my *long-term research agenda* still focuses on the transnational-domestic linkages that produce local political change in the developing world, I am more predisposed to more empirically driven (but theoretically grounded) research, rather than theoretical musing as exhibited in the current article. Notwithstanding, I invite readers to read the article ([contact me by email](#) in case you don't have online access), and to engage in a productive and critical discussion about the points raised (and not raised) in the article.

Finally, interested readers might also consider other highly recommended works on the topic:

- Alexander, Gerard. *The sources of democratic consolidation*. Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Diamond, Larry Jay. "Toward democratic consolidation." *Journal of democracy* 5.3 (1994): 4-17.
- Schedler, Andreas. "What is democratic consolidation?." *Journal of Democracy* 9.2 (1998): 91-107.
- Ulfelder, Jay. *Dilemmas of democratic consolidation: a game-theory approach*. FirstForum-Press, 2010.