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Varieties of Limited Access Orders: The nexus between politics and economics in hybrid regimes

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This article advances our understanding of differences in hybrid stability by going beyond existing regime typologies that separate the study of political institutions from the study of economic institutions. It combines the work of Douglass North, John Wallis, and Barry Weingast (NWW) on varieties of social orders with the literature on political and economic regime typologies and dynamics to understand hybrid regimes as Limited Access Orders (LAOs) that differ in the way dominant elites limit access to political and economic resources. Based on a measurement of political and economic access applied to seven post-Soviet states, the article identifies four types of LAOs. Challenging NWW's claim, it shows that hybrid regimes can combine different degrees of political and economic access to sustain stability. Our typology allows to form theoretical expectations about the kinds of political and/or economic changes that will move different types of LAOs toward more openness or closure.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The majority of states today are neither fully autocratic nor fully democratic, but stabilized as hybrid regimes combining elements of democracy and autocracy (Diamond, 2002; Levitsky & Way, 2010). While political scientists developed typologies of political systems (see, for example, Bogaards, 2009; Collier & Levitsky, 1997; Merkel, 2004), political economists analyzed varieties of capitalism pointing to different state–economy relationships underpinning various regimes (Myant & Drahokoupil, 2011). However, rarely have these perspectives been merged to generate a typology that integrates the configurations of political and economic institutions in hybrid regimes.

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An exception is Douglass North, John Wallis, and Barry Weingast's (NWW) typology of social orders. They argue that the modern world can be divided into two stable types of social orders. Each is characterized by a balance of access to economic and political resources, the so-called double balance: Open Access Orders (OAOs) are marked by open political and economic competition, as opposed to Limited Access Orders (LAOs) that are dominated by a rent-seeking elite that restricts access to both economic and political resources (North, Wallis, & Weingast, 2009).

NWW provide for some differentiation of LAOs into fragile, basic, and mature LAOs, which suffers from two major weaknesses. First, as this article will show, the threefold distinction has trouble accounting for many pertinent, and seemingly stable, hybrid regimes that classically feature among LAOs. Second, NWW do not specify measurements of political and economic access (see also Dellepiane-Avellaneda, 2012), which renders a systematic empirical assessment of the double balance-hypothesis difficult.

Students of transition investigated the interplay of political and economic institutions to explain transition processes, especially in the post-Soviet space (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; McMann, 2009; Stefes, 2006). They indirectly challenge NWW's double balance-hypothesis by suggesting that the opening of economic access, for example, through market reforms, may also lead to more rather than less restrictions of political access (McMann, 2009). While transitologists analyzed the political and economic processes that underlie transitions, they have so far not suggested a typology of specific configurations of political and economic institutions that would help to understand the dynamics underlying hybrid regimes in the spirit of NWW.

This article brings these different perspectives together by conceptualizing hybrid regimes as LAOs. Unlike NWW's typology and other concepts of hybrid regimes, our typology accounts for variation in how LAOs structure access to political and economic resources and what combinations of such access patterns are associated with hybrid (in)stability. The article makes two contributions to the literature. First, it develops and operationalizes a theoretical heuristic to measure political and economic access and identifies different types of LAOs empirically. Second, on the basis of a comparison of seven post-Soviet states that classically feature among hybrid regimes (Hale, 2015; Levitsky & Way, 2010), it is argued that there is more than one type of stable social equilibria emerging in these LAOs. The article identifies four types instead; two of which allow for relatively balanced forms of access to political and economic resources, but differ in their overall degree of openness or closure, and two in which this access is unbalanced, allowing either for more access to political than to economic resources or vice versa. Importantly, the unbalanced "halfway houses" differ in their stability: Regimes that are economically more open and politically more closed, such as Armenia between 2005 and 2015, can maintain their basic access structure over a longer period than politically open and economically closed regimes, exemplified by Georgia between 2004 and 2007.

Understanding these various equilibria is crucial in two ways. First, the finding that multiple equilibria of political and economic access provide for relatively stable types of LAOs is important to advance the theoretical debate on the double balance underlying NWW's theory of social orders. The presence of multiple equilibria raises the question of what specific thresholds of political and economic opening are associated with regime inertia, rather than change.

Second, and unlike most existing conceptualizations of hybrid regimes, our typology shows systematic variation in how incumbents in hybrid regimes undermine a level playing field by restricting or opening access to political *and* economic resources. As other typologies, it allows us to uncover distinct operating logics of regime types (Bogaards, 2009, p. 413ff.). Importantly, it also helps us to form expectations about what kind of change is relevant for moving a social order toward more openness or closure: LAOs characterized by a dominant elite that tightly controls access to political resources, but relaxes control of economic resources, for instance, require systematic changes to

political access in order to move toward openness. Armenia between 2005 and 2015 demonstrates why this is far from trivial: While many observers place emphasis on the fight against oligarchs and thus increasing economic access, our typology suggests that oligarchic market structures are a symptom, not the cause of political closure. A focus on increasing political access in Armenia will consequently be more effective for fostering a higher degree of overall openness moving forward.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. Section 2 situates the approach of this article in the literature on transition, regime typologies, and regime dynamics. Section 3 suggests a way to conceptualize and measure different degrees of political and economic access. Section 4 presents our refined typology that is based on this measurement coupled with qualitative illustrations of different types of post-Soviet LAOs. The conclusion summarizes our results and suggests avenues for further research.

2 | CHALLENGES FOR UNDERSTANDING LIMITED ACCESS ORDERS

The transition literature can be divided into two research strands: The first develops political and economic regime typologies; the second investigates regime dynamics. The political science scholarship on regime typology focuses on the political fundamentals of regime types. Scholars stress the importance of free and fair elections, the rule of law, and show how hybrid regimes combine democratic features (e.g., frequent elections) with autocratic ones (e.g., political repression, political clientelism) (see, for example, Bogaards, 2009; Collier & Levitsky, 1997; Diamond, 2002; Hale, 2015). Yet, such accounts predominantly neglect associated economic structures. In turn, students of economic systems rarely capture associated political structures. The emerging literature on varieties of capitalism in transition economies, for instance, accounts for different state-economy relationships that affect economic performance (Myant, 2015; Myant & Drahekoupil, 2011). From this perspective, post-Soviet states vary with regard to the role of the state in economic affairs, the protection of property rights, and the degree of private ownership, among others (Myant, 2015; Myant & Drahekoupil, 2011). Yet, these features have not been systematically linked to the political regime in terms of competition, accountability, and representation.

The limited dialogue between these literatures is striking, in particular with regard to the post-Soviet space: Scholars demonstrated how the interconnectedness between the political and economic spheres in the region shapes hybrid (in)stability. Hellman's (1998) seminal article on the origins of partial reforms showed why states that face weak political competition are less effective economic reformers. Olson (2000) offered a prominent explanation for why rent-seeking elites become interested in property rights institutions when faced with increasing political competition. In a similar vein, scholars identified state capture, clientelism, corruption, and the absence of market-enhancing institutions as key factors affecting post-Communist regime dynamics (Grzymala-Busse, 2008, 2010; McMann, 2009; Stefes, 2006, 2008): In the absence of strong regulatory institutions, economic opening through liberalization and deregulation can arguably lead to political closure (McMann, 2009). Stefes (2008) argues that political control over corrupt state agencies allows co-opting business elites. In turn, loyal business elites help secure the steady flow of rents and undermine a level playing field at election times to the incumbent's benefit (see also Levitsky & Way, 2010). Despite these findings, existing typologies of post-Soviet regimes rarely use the political economy literature of post-Soviet transition to arrive at theoretically informed expectations regarding the variation and stability of hybrid regimes. More precisely, they say little about the kind of political and/or economic change that is likely to move a regime toward more openness or closure, and how these expectations vary across different types of hybrid regimes.

The article aims at filling this gap drawing on the concept of varieties of social orders by North et al. (2009). Their concept is based on the hypothesis that economic and political competition sustain each

other, an interdependence which North et al. (2009, p. 20) call the “double balance”: In OAOs, unrestricted access and impersonal competition in the economy undermine the abuse of economic power for political purposes. In turn, political competition and open access to political resources, such as executive, legislative, and judicial power, prevent the abuse of political power for the manipulation of the economy. In LAOs, the dominant coalition restricts access to political and economic resources for private gains. Following the “double balance” logic, the ability of dominant elites to manipulate elections and to undermine the leveling of the playing field in LAOs depends on their ability to extract rents thanks to their control over economic resources, such as trade or capital, and vice versa.

Although NWW theorize that there must be a balance between political and economic access, they do not suggest a measurement that would allow for a systematic empirical evaluation of their theory. What is more, despite NWW's focus on the interplay between political and economic competition, their suggested typology of LAOs is not based on different degrees of openness, that is, how access to political and economic resources is restricted. Instead, NWW differentiate between fragile, basic, and mature LAOs. From this perspective, LAOs differ in their capacity to monopolize the use of violence, as well as in the variety and density of public and/or private organizations supported by the state (North et al., 2009, pp. 41–49).

This differentiation has trouble capturing some central characteristics of regimes that did not fully transform into OAOs. The literature has labeled them “hybrid,” prominently those regimes in the post-Soviet space (Diamond, 2002; Levitsky & Way, 2010). It is difficult to characterize post-Soviet LAOs as fragile LAOs: Limited statehood characterizes these countries, but is not constitutive for them. Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova lost control over parts of their territories, for example, but hold the monopoly over the use of force, and set and enforce collectively binding rules in other parts. Their capacity to do so may be weak, but limited statehood does not turn them into “failed states” where order has broken down completely (cf. Risse, Börzel, & Draude, 2018). While fragile LAOs underestimate the role of the state, basic LAOs, in which organizations, such as courts, are controlled by the state and where any private organization is a potential threat to dominant coalitions, overestimate it: In autocratic regimes with a strong “power vertical,” like Russia and Azerbaijan, which come closest to a basic LAO prototype, private business has developed in the process of post-Communist privatization and liberalization, albeit to different degrees. Arguably, the majority of post-Soviet countries, except for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, could be placed into the “mature LAOs” category, where ruling elites support a variety of organizations outside the state, which are run by dominant elites. Yet, this categorization neglects substantial differences in the degree of openness within this grouping.

In sum, NWW provide a convincing theory of the interaction of politics and economics for stabilizing LAOs and OAOs. They, however, are relatively silent on whether LAOs achieve a double balance between economic and political access to maintain their stability. It is an empirical question with far-reaching theoretical implications for the literature to what extent some LAOs find stability without maintaining similar degrees of access in the political and economic sphere, and if so, how they combine forms of limited and more open access. This knowledge is crucial to understand the diverse dynamics underlying hybrid stability and to form differentiated expectations about change.

3 | MEASURING DEGREES OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ACCESS

This article wants to understand how hybrid regimes, which are conceptualized as LAOs, differ in structuring access to political and economic resources, what degree of access they allow for, and whether certain combinations of access are more stable than others, using seven post-Soviet countries

as an example.¹ The stability of regime types is classically defined as the “disposition of a ... system to react in a way to keep its identity” (Garzón Valdés, 1988 cited in Lauth, 2010, p. 29). The identity of a social order is defined by its distinct configurations of degrees of political and economic access and (in)stability as (a lack of) changes to these configurations. In order to provide a theoretical heuristic and an empirical measurement of these configurations, this analysis relies on the literature of political regime types for assessing political access and on the literature on transition economies for economic access.

While North et al. (2009, pp. 111–147) refer to democratic processes, the rule of law, and competitive parties that structure political access, scholars working on varieties of political regimes have substantially advanced our understanding of access to political resources (Geddes, 1999; Hadenius & Teorell, 2007; Merkel, 2004). In line with this literature, this article broadly distinguishes between more formal and more informal institutions that grant or restrict access to political resources.

In a more formal institutionalist perspective, Merkel (2004) identifies five partial regimes that are constitutive for embedded liberal democracies. Next to the electoral regime based on free and fair elections, these are the presence of political rights (i.e., the right to freedom of speech and opinion, right of association, free media), horizontal accountability (i.e., the executive's control through parliaments, judiciary, and other institutions, such as party apparatus), civil rights (i.e., equality before the law), and the effective power to rule (i.e., control of the military and police). Schmotz (2017) draws on Merkel to develop the concept of an “embedded autocracy.” While any regime that does not hold democratic elections is an autocracy, Schmotz notes variation in the way autocratic regimes operate with regard to other partial regimes, that is, how they restrict civil liberties and political rights, and constrain horizontal accountability in order to undermine political competition.² Drawing upon Merkel (2004) and Schmotz (2017), this article defines access to political resources as the extent to which various partial regimes constrain political competition in such a more formal institutional setting. As Table 1 shows, we use well-established indicators to measure the quality of elections, horizontal accountability, and the protection of political and civil rights in order to account for the degree of access to executive, legislative, and judicial power in the spirit of NWW.

The literature on neopatrimonialism reveals, however, that even if formal open access institutions are in place, informal practices may undermine or complement their functioning. State capture, for instance, often undermines democratic development and sustains authoritarian rule, irrespective of formally established impartial institutions (Grzymala-Busse, 2008, 2010). In order to measure political access, such informal, neopatrimonial institutions have to be taken into account. In neopatrimonial regimes, the persistence of patron-client relationships allows for rent extraction at all levels of authority (Gel'man, 2016). In the absence of a legal-rational bureaucracy, members of the dominant elite use public resources for private gain through informal networks. Neopatrimonial regimes also vary with regard to more formal institutions outlined earlier, such as the degree of elite competition and the concentration of power to organize access to patronage (Erdmann, 2013; Fisun, 2012). This study measures the degree of neopatrimonialism in its subcomponents of clientelism (indicator: vote buying), and regime corruption (judicial corruption, legislative corruption, executive embezzlement, executive bribery) to assess the prevalence of neopatrimonial practices empirically (cf. Sigman & Lindberg, 2017). A measure of public sector corruption is also included. While corrupt public sector workers may not be directly linked to those elected or appointed to office, their practices facilitate the limitation of access to economic resources (e.g., through business registrations).

In the economic sphere, this article draws on the literature on transition economies to define two concepts that help account for varieties of economic access: the role of the state and the power of market-enhancing institutions. With regard to the first, Myant and Drahokoupil (2011) differentiate

TABLE 1 Variables, summary statistics, data sources—post-Soviet sample

Concept	Variable	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Data set (source, varname)
Political access	Election	77	5.07	2.42	1.11	8.89	BTI (2.1 free and fair elections)
	Political rights	77	3.51	2.54	0.00	6.67	QoG ^a (Freedom House, fh_pr)
	Civil liberties	77	4.59	2.06	1.67	8.33	QoG (Freedom House, fh_cl)
	Horizontal accountability	77	5.67	2.90	1.67	10.00	VDem (PolityIV, e_exconst)
	Horizontal accountability	77	4.09	2.03	0.56	8.33	Vdem (v2elembaut)
	Horizontal accountability	77	4.12	1.50	1.04	6.69	Vdem (v2juncind)
	Horizontal accountability	77	4.01	1.70	1.04	7.28	Vdem (v2juhcond)
	Horizontal accountability	77	4.84	2.26	0.00	8.03	Vdem (v2juhcomp)
	Horizontal accountability	77	4.72	2.15	0.00	9.26	Vdem (v2jucomp)
	Horizontal accountability	77	3.90	1.92	1.44	7.72	Vdem (v2exrescon)
	Horizontal accountability	77	3.68	2.16	0.69	7.64	Vdem (v2lgotovst)
	Horizontal accountability	77	5.09	2.93	0.00	9.18	Vdem (v2lgfunds)
	Horizontal accountability	77	5.21	3.07	0.43	9.80	Vdem (v2lgqstexp)
	Horizontal accountability	77	4.40	2.61	0.00	8.90	Vdem (v2juorrdc)
	Neopatrimonialism	77	3.87	1.92	1.43	8.21	Vdem (v2lgcrpt)
	Neopatrimonialism	77	3.01	1.68	0.42	7.00	Vdem (v2exbribe)
	Neopatrimonialism	77	3.32	1.49	1.32	6.46	Vdem (v2exembz)
	Neopatrimonialism	77	4.65	2.62	0.00	9.86	Vdem (v2elvtobuy)
	Neopatrimonialism	77	4.35	2.53	0.00	10.00	Vdem (v2excrptps)
Economic access	Market-enhancing institution	77	4.04	1.34	1.25	6.25	BTI (7.1 market-based competition)
	Market-enhancing institutions	77	4.30	1.44	1.25	7.50	BTI (7.2 antimonopoly policy)
	Market-enhancing institutions	77	3.86	2.20	0.00	7.50	BTI (9.1 property rights)
	Interest groups	77	3.16	1.09	1.25	5.00	QoG (BTI, bti_ig)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Concept	Variable	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Data set (source, varname)
Trade liberalization	Libtrade	77	6.57	1.72	2.50	10.00	BTI (7.3 liberalization of foreign trade)
Capital	Libbank	77	5.06	1.78	1.11	6.67	BTI (7.4 banking system)
Privatization	Privateenterprise	77	4.96	2.35	0.00	7.50	BTI (9.2 private enterprise)

Note: This table presents summary statistics for the post-Soviet sample after rescaling all variables in the full sample of 24 countries to range from 0 to 10 so that a numerical increase of each indicator represents an increase in openness (see, for example, Dreher (2006) for a similar procedure). BTI source data has been inter/extrapolated to transform the biannual BTI rating (2006–2016) into a country–year data set (2005–2015). Values for *votebuying* in a given election year have been carried forward until the next election year.

^aQuality of Government Dataset (Teorell et al., 2017).

between post-Soviet transition economies, where the state holds most of the economic assets, and controls funding opportunities for businesses; and economies where private ownership of large shares of economic assets exists alongside close links between state and business (see also Myant, 2015). In a similar vein, McMann (2009) defines the degree of privatization, liberalization, and deregulation as key to reducing state involvement and providing private actors with opportunities to access economic resources, such as land, labor, capital, and other activities, including trade (cf. North et al., 2009, p. 30). Further, McMann points to the importance of market-enhancing institutions in bringing about conditions of economic competition, including property rights. In the absence of such market-enhancing institutions, reforms that reduce economic state intervention rather risk proliferating informal institutions, such as clientelism and bribes (McMann, 2009). To capture the degree of access to economic resources, the degree of state intervention in the economy is measured by the presence of interests groups, the extent to which trade and banking is liberalized and privatization progressed. Further, this study assesses the functioning of market-enhancing institutions by the degree of market competition, the protection of property rights, and the quality of antimonopoly policies. Table 1 details all variables used to measure political and economic access alongside summary statistics for the post-Soviet sample (Table 2). We discuss how we merge them into distinct measurements of political and economic access next.

While theory tells us how to measure political and economic access in general, there is no theoretical argument to inform how, that is, with what weight, the individual variables should be aggregated to measure the degree of political or economic access prevailing in a certain country. Being interested in capturing the variation in political and economic access in hybrid regimes, this analysis proceeds as common in the construction of indices (see, for example, Dreher, 2006; Mungiu-Pippidi & Dadašov, 2016) and defines such weights with the help of principal component analysis (PCA). PCA reduces all variables in a data set into different orthogonal dimensions—so called principal components—that are linear weighted combinations of the original variables and designed to capture a maximum of variance of the data set (Vyas & Kumaranayake, 2006).³ Separate PCAs of our political and economic access variables are performed using standardized data for the sample of seven post-Soviet states from 2005 to 2015: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine.⁴ The weights identified through the respective first components (see Table A2) are employed to construct two new variables that we call political and economic access. These variables

TABLE 2 List of countries (full sample, by region, 2005–2015)

Central Asia (CtrA)	Post-Soviet sample	New EU MS (NMS)	Western Balkan (WB)
Kazakhstan	Georgia (GEO)	Estonia	Albania
Kyrgyzstan ^a	Ukraine (UKR)	Czech Republic	Serbia ^b
Uzbekistan	Azerbaijan (AZ)	Bulgaria	Macedonia
Tajikistan	Armenia (AM)	Romania	
Turkmenistan	Moldova (MD)	Latvia	
	Belarus (BY)	Slovenia	
	Russia (RUS)	Poland	
		Lithuania	
		Hungary	

Note: Countries for which variable values are based on less than three VDem expert assessments are excluded from the sample.

^aMissing values for *executiveconstr* in the transition phase of Kyrgyzstan in 2010 have been interpolated.

^bValues for 2005 extrapolated.

have a mean of zero in the post-Soviet sample, which allows us to interpret positive or negative deviations from this joint zero mean as indicative of more or less access to political or economic resources. This also allows us to assess these LAOs in relation to each other, as opposed to some OAO standard, and reveal variation in how LAOs restrict political and economic competition.

The PCA for political access shows that the first principal component accounts for 64% of the variance and is most strongly defined by variables that capture the prevalence of free and fair elections, political rights, and horizontal accountability. This suggests that formal political institutions identified by the literature on democracy and autocracy account for most of the variation in political access between LAOs in our data set. The second most important component of political access captures an additional 24% of variation in the data set and is most strongly associated with corruption indicators, representing the informal dimension that relates to the literature on neopatrimonialism. The first component used to generate the economic access variable accounts for 61% of the variation and is most strongly associated with property rights protection and the extent to which private enterprises are permitted, fundamentals of market-based competition have been established, and trade and banking have been liberalized. The measure of economic access is thus strongly associated with variables that capture both the role of the state and certain market-enhancing institutions, such as property rights. The second component resulting from the PCA of economic access captures less additional variance (18%) and is almost exclusively defined by our indicator of antimonopoly policy.

Hence, in order to best discriminate between and thus identify types of LAOs among post-Soviet states, it is necessary to analyze variation in formal political institutions, including free and fair elections, horizontal accountability, and political rights, as well as the variation associated with the role of the state in the economy and property rights protection. After having established the theoretical heuristic and the empirical measurement of political and economic access, the article now turns to analyzing the configurations of degrees of political and economic access and their (in)stability.

4 | TOWARD A REFINED TYPOLOGY OF LIMITED ACCESS ORDERS

What configurations of political and economic access emerge in the post-Soviet space if measured this way? Is there a balance between political and economic access as theorized by NWW? Or is economic opening also associated with political closure, as suggested by McMann (2009)? In order to understand how this structure of access varies across a broader sample of countries, the suggested political and economic access measures are calculated for a larger sample of 24 countries (using the post-Soviet sample weights), additionally comprising nine Central and East European new member states (NMS), five post-Soviet countries from Central Asia (CtrA), and three countries from the Western Balkans (WB) (Table 2).

Figure 1 shows averages for these samples and specific periods in which states in the post-Soviet sample were governed by different dominant coalitions that we identified based on Hale's (2015) work on patronal politics, coupled with country expert assessments.⁵ Figure 1 suggests a noticeable double balance: NMS combine a high degree of economic access with a high degree of political access. Western Balkan states have medium degrees of political and economic access, and states in Central Asia combine limited access to political resources with limited access to economic ones. Hence, on average, economic access and political access go together in this larger sample of countries. Still, many post-Soviet countries are located in an area of hybridity. The analysis delves deeper into the specific combinations of degrees of access for this sample next.

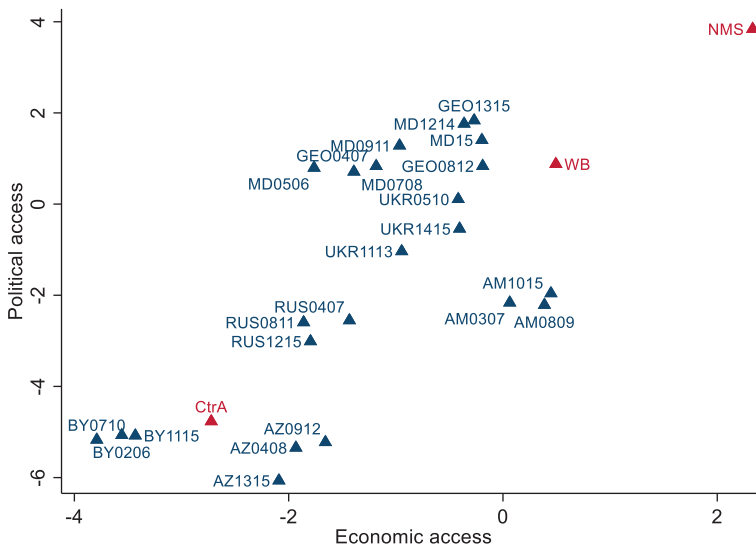


FIGURE 1 Relationship between political and economic access (full sample)

Figure 2 shows the configurations of political and economic access in the seven post-Soviet countries. It displays patterned differences in the way they restrict access to political and economic resources. Relative to their post-Soviet peers, some dominant coalitions sustain a double balance and allow for similarly more or less access in both the political and economic sphere [(1) and (4)]. Others structure access in an unbalanced way and allow for greater access in only one area [(2) and (3)].

This results in four distinct configurations of political and economic access that characterize social orders in these hybrid regimes. They are labeled “balanced openness” (1), “balanced closure” (4), “unbalanced openness” (2), and “unbalanced closure” (3) orders (Table 3). Note that the Type 3 configuration is labeled unbalanced closure, as it provides on average for slightly less access than the unbalanced openness (Type 2) order. In addition, this label originates in the fact that political access captures more variation between the LAOs in our data set (Table A1).

As any typology, these four types bundle a number of complex empirical phenomena to describe patterned variation (Lauth, 2003). Next to showing these diverse combinations of access, this article aims to provide insights into the distinct operating logics of these different configurations of political

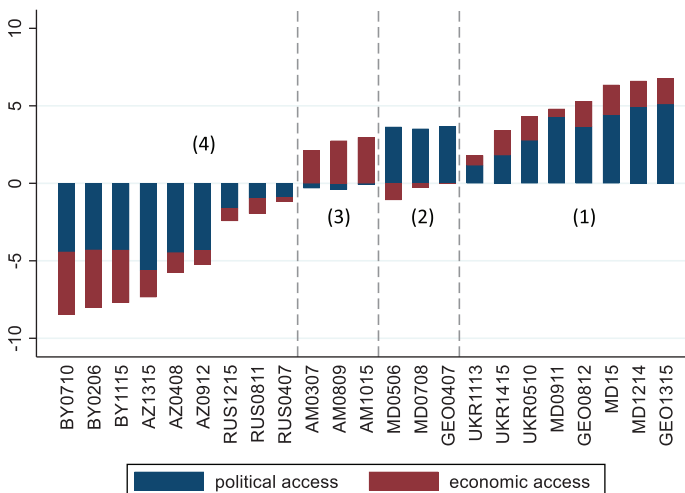


FIGURE 2 Configurations of limited access (post-Soviet sample)

TABLE 3 Four types of Limited Access Orders

	Allowing for relatively more access	Allowing for relatively less access
Balanced	1 Balanced openness <i>GEO08-15</i> <i>MD09-15</i> <i>UKR</i>	4 Balanced closure <i>BY</i> <i>AZ</i> <i>RUS</i>
Unbalanced	2 Unbalanced openness <i>GEO04-07</i> <i>MD05-08</i>	3 Unbalanced closure <i>AM</i>

and economic access, and the corresponding patterns of stability. Toward this end, these configurations are illustrated with examples of each type of LAO in the next subsection. To demonstrate their relevance, the resulting expectations for making orders move further toward opening or closure are discussed.

4.1 | Type 4: Balanced closure

The simultaneity of massive limits to political and economic resources is characteristic of the operating logic of “*balanced closure*” orders. They are marked by the absence of free and fair elections, a lack of horizontal accountability and political rights, combined with an all-dominating role of the ruling elite in the economic sphere.

Belarus is a case in point. The process of increasing political closure has its roots in 1994, when Alyaksandr Lukashenka became president. Ever since, elections in Belarus are deemed as neither free nor fair. Lukashenka started to control the media and to consolidate the control of all sources of political power, undermining horizontal accountability to the judiciary and the parliament. In 1996, Lukashenka pushed through changes in the constitution, which allowed the president to issue decrees to override existing legislation. At the same time, he started to increasingly restrict the independence of various political parties whose representatives had taken an active stance against these constitutional changes (Levitsky & Way, 2010).

In the economic realm, Lukashenka ensured that the institutional framework for market competition would remain weak. Belarusian state authorities have been interfering with private sector development, including in the banking sector, since he came to power. As a result, Belarus remains largely a non-market economy (Dabrowski, 2016). Privatization is de facto dependent on presidential consent and state ownership of production means is used to keep unemployment low and wages high, with seemingly disciplined fiscal policies to guarantee a high level of social spending (Yarashevich, 2014, p. 1717).

The drastic limits of access to political and economic resources are mutually reinforcing and are associated with stability during our period of observation (2005–2015): As privatization is strongly contingent of the control of the president, for instance, the opposition is deprived of an important source of funding. Hence, economic closure limits political competition in Belarus (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 206). This general operating logic has not been challenged by the slight economic opening from 2011 onward that is shown by the data in Figure 2. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, Belarus engaged in a slow private sector liberalization and formally improved its property registration to give boost to economic growth. Its implementation in practice, however, is incoherent and subject to state interference if authorities' interests are at stake (BTI, 2016b). In turn, severe restrictions of political competition put the

dominant elite under Lukashenka in a powerful position that allows it to limit access to basic economic resources, such as property and trade, and vice versa.

Our typology leads us to expect that a system whose operating logic tightly combines highly restrictive access to political and economic resources is unlikely to change in a gradual way, as gradual opening in one area, for example, economics, will not be supported by the openness of the respective other area, for example, politics. What is more, balanced closure types also imply that the room for promoting political and economic opening from the outside may be fairly limited, as there are no domestic “hooks” that external actors may exploit given that both the economic and political spheres are firmly controlled.

4.2 | Type 3: Unbalanced closure

The operating logic of “*unbalanced closure*” orders is marked by a mutually enforcing pattern of strong limits to political access, combined with—for LAOs—relatively high degrees of economic access: While elections, political rights, and horizontal accountability remain highly flawed or severely restricted, unbalanced closure orders allow for more access to economic resources with view to private sector safeguards and the role of the state in the economy, for example, with regard to trade and banking liberalization.

Armenia figures in this category from 2005 to 2015. Despite the fact that multiple political parties have been founded since Armenia's independence in 1991, political competition has been drastically limited inter alia by vote-buying, and the use of administrative resources favoring the ruling dominant coalition (BTI, 2016a). Unlike in neighboring Georgia, where electoral competition has increased since 2003, elections in Armenia have thus only had limited influence for deciding about the governing authority (BTI, 2016a, 2016c). Moreover, the executive's systematic interference with the judiciary undermined horizontal accountability (BTI, 2016a; Paturyan & Stefes, 2017). Since the early 1990s, dominant coalitions also used a well-organized security apparatus to suppress regime opposition by violating political rights and civil liberties (Levitsky & Way, 2010; Stefes, 2006). In political terms, Armenia hence qualifies as a severely closed regime.

Economically, however, Armenia has opened up since the late 1990s. An increasing trade deficit and the prospect of membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) made the new dominant coalition under President Robert Kocharian, who had won the 1998 presidential elections based on massive manipulation (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 201 f.), pursue liberal policies toward trade, investments, and capital (Rutland, 1998, p. 364). What is more, the government worked toward improving the business climate for private firms, albeit with ambivalent results. While registration procedures became less burdensome, state control over tax reporting by small businesses remains significant (BTI, 2012, 2016a). Notwithstanding, up until 2007, Armenia has been more open with respect to liberalization policies and the protection of property rights than Moldova, Ukraine, and even Georgia, making it one “of the most open economies among former Soviet states” (BTI, 2008b, p. 14). These initial liberalization reforms supported massive growth and—to some degree—poverty reduction in Armenia (Mitra et al., 2007, p. xx). This form of economic openness coupled with high degrees of political closure has been mutually reinforcing in the case of Armenia. In line with McMann (2009), Armenia's unbalanced closure order has manifested itself as relatively stable halfway house over a decade, combining political closure with specific economic opening in the form of liberalization and privatization.

While our typology suggests that limits in access to political resources are most indicative of closure of Armenia's social order, many observers of Armenia might instead refer to the striking monopolization of the Armenian economy in politically viable sectors. Yet, developments in Armenia suggest that this

monopolization is a result—rather than the root cause—of the combination of political closure and economic liberalization that our typology points us to. To illustrate, when privatization in Armenia started in the mid-1990s, the political elite used it to cement its power, as state-owned enterprises in strategic sectors were sold to allies of then President Ter-Petrosian, while small businesses were sold en masse but suffered immensely from unofficial government activity in taxation or customs (Bremmer & Welt, 1997; Stefes, 2006). As a result, cartels and monopolies, often connected to the dominant coalition, undermined de facto competition in key sectors of the economy (BTI, 2012). Interestingly, however, the process of a partial demonopolization, which emerged since 2010 in response to the 2008 financial crisis and EU requirements during negotiations over an Association Agreement (Grigoryan, 2017), did not promote, but rather stabilized the lack of political competition. Jointly with a constitutional change toward a proportional voting system, the dominant elite used demonopolization to strip some regionally influential oligarchs off their assets, forcing them to take a cooperative stance toward the ruling elite to avoid tax controls (Liakov, 2017). This suggests that in order to move unbalanced closure orders toward more openness, access to political resources needs to be increased—a prerequisite for the impartial enforcement of antimonopoly legislation.

In the case of Armenia, the jury is still out on whether the Velvet Revolution led by the former journalist and protest leader Nikol Pashinyan leads to such greater access to political resources. While the public focus has been prominently on the fight against oligarchs in the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution, our typology suggests that external and domestic actors should focus on reforms that are designed to change access to political resources, as the overall development of Armenia's social order will crucially depend on whether the new authorities ensure that this access is granted widely and on an impartial basis.

4.3 | Type 2: Unbalanced openness

LAOs operating under the logic of “*unbalanced openness*” combine restricted access to economic resources with relatively high degrees of political access. Compared to unbalanced closure orders, unbalanced openness types of LAOs allow for comparatively more access to political resources, including elections, political rights, and/or horizontal accountability, but are marked by more severe restrictions with regard to the state's involvement in the economy, as well as property rights protection.

To illustrate this operating logic, the analysis zooms into the case of Georgia from 2004 to 2007. Under former President Eduard Shevardnadze, the civil society had developed, but political competition at the ballot box remained fraudulent (Tudoroiu, 2007). After the Rose Revolution of 2003 that brought Mikheil Saakashvili to power, Georgia has witnessed higher competition for political resources (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 227): The 2004 elections were characterized as relatively free and fair and their administration constituted a significant improvement to previous elections (BTI, 2008a). While Georgia differs substantially from Armenia or Belarus in this respect, the electoral improvements did not make Georgia an OAO: Mikheil Saakashvili's rise to power was accompanied by a concentration of power in the presidential apparatus and a weakening of the parliament (Papava, 2009). The country also still lacked a political opposition and a fully independent judiciary (Freedom House, 2006).

Economic competition remained highly limited. This was partially due to the legacy of Shevardnadze, under whom structural deficits and regulations, such as the issuing of import licenses, distorted economic competition, and thus lowered the starting point for the new government (BTI, 2006)—in contrast to Armenia where the dominant elite supported liberalization of trade and capital and improvements in property rights protection from the late 1990s onward (BTI, 2008b; Rutland, 1998). Saakashvili embraced a business-friendly agenda that included a massive deregulation of the economy

and privatization programs, but took some time to be implemented on the ground. Simultaneously, though, the new authorities engaged in processes of “deprivatization” (Papava, 2009, p. 203), in which the government forced owners to hand over property privatized prior to the Rose Revolution to the state, and resold it. The government drastically infringed property rights, intervened with tax audits, and pressured businesses into contributing to extra-budgetary accounts to grant favors to Saakashvili's political allies or punish political opponents (Wetzinger, 2017). The case of Georgia demonstrates, however, that this type of order was not particularly stable: Georgia shifted toward a balanced openness order in 2008.

Our typology points out that while access to political competition increased in Georgia, economic access did not in the direct aftermath of the Rose Revolution. Developments in the economic sphere were instead indicative of the prevailing elite corruption in Georgia (Papava, 2009). This observation differs from assessments at the time that were mostly intrigued by Saakashvili's free market rhetoric and the fight against lower level corruption (Freedom House, 2006), as well as those preoccupied with the need for improving horizontal accountability in the political sphere (Hale, 2016). Our typology instead points to the fact that Saakashvili used the limits to economic resources to undermine a level-playing field making it distinct from Armenia, where the dominant elite used its privileged access to political resources to weaken political opponents and/or strengthen its allies. Our typology thus leads us to expect that domestic and external strategies aimed at securing impartial access to economic resources in Georgia's unbalanced openness order are required to induce increasing overall levels of openness.

4.4 | Type 1: Balanced openness

The operational logic underlying “*balanced openness*” LAOs is based on the simultaneity of a relatively large degree of political and economic access. While political access is roughly comparable to the “unbalanced openness” cases, degrees of economic access are higher. The analysis zooms into the case of Georgia from 2008 to 2015 to illustrate the operational logic of a balanced openness order.

In terms of political access, concerns about Saakashvili's tendency to concentrate power increased after 2007. The violent clash with protestors in November 2007, and problems associated with the 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections sparked strong criticism (Freedom House, 2011). While the electoral process improved in the 2010 local elections (Freedom House, 2011), the dominant coalition only faced mounting political competition with the rise of billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, who managed to unite various opposition parties in the coalition Georgian Dream. Ivanishvili won the 2012 parliamentary elections, representing the first peaceful change in power via elections and a major demonstration of the relatively high degree of political access in Georgia.

In terms of economic access, privatization programs were close to be completed and the abolition of many business regulations contributed to Georgia's steep rise in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index from 2006 to 2008 (BTI, 2010). Formal rules of governing economic competition, which the Saakashvili government introduced in the immediate aftermath of the Rose Revolution, hence showed signs of being enforced on the ground during the time period (BTI, 2016c). In addition, pressure by the IMF had made the government abandon extra-budgetary accounts in 2006 (Papava, 2009). Such changes widened economic access for businesses in comparison to the early 2000s. Still, Georgia remained an LAO, as property rights violations remained widespread and deregulation had sensitive side effects, such as a drastic reduction of labor rights (Papava, 2009).

Georgia illustrates well the operating dynamic of this type of LAO. When faced with mounting political competition from Ivanishvili, an individual with abundant access to economic resources, the government—arguably selectively—enforced campaign financing laws that led to large fines, and in case of nonpayment, triggered seizures of bank accounts, businesses and property of Ivanishvili and

his supporters, some of which were then cheaply auctioned to supporters of the government (Fairbanks & Gugushvili, 2013, p. 121). Yet, the government did not ban Ivanishvili from participating or manipulate the election, arguably because it feared domestic and international scrutiny of the electoral process (Fairbanks & Gugushvili, 2013, p. 121). Ivanishvili's access to economic resources allowed him to use the relatively high degree of political access to gain power.

Our typology suggests that this specific type of LAO reached a degree of political and economic competition that facilitated peaceful changes of power via elections. While these developments may suggest that the “balanced openness” order is likely to be the first step toward transition to OAO, they seem relatively stable over time: None of the countries included in our analysis lapsed back into “unbalanced openness,” but the degree of political and economic openness has not continuously increased over time either (Figure 2). While balanced openness orders provide a variety of hooks for domestic and external actors to move the respective social order further toward openness, this would require addressing the remaining limits to economic and political access in a targeted way. Our typology leads us to expect that without the encompassing empowerment of actors committed to open access both in the political and economic sphere, we expect the balanced openness orders to stay LAOs.

5 | CONCLUSION

Transitologists traditionally stressed the importance of the interplay of economic and political institutions to understand regime dynamics. Yet, scholars working on typologies of political or economic regimes rarely investigated what configurations of political and economic institutions generate regime (in)stability. An exception is the work by NWW on the “double-balance” according to which political and economic competition sustain each other and result in either LAOs or OAOs. This work has trouble, however, capturing some of the most pertinent hybrid regimes. The applicability of the typology has additionally been constrained by a lack of clear measurement for political and economic access. Drawing on NWW, as well as the literature on regime typologies and regime transitions, this article developed and operationalized a theoretical framework to measure access to political and economic resources. It asked how LAOs differ in the way they structure political and economic access and what combinations of such access are associated with hybrid stability.

Conducting an empirical comparison of political and economic access in seven post-Soviet states, we identified four types of LAOs that characterize this set of hybrid regimes. Two allow for relatively balanced forms of access to political and economic resources. In the other two, this access is unbalanced, allowing either for more access to political resources than to economic resources or they pose fewer limits on accessing economic resources than political ones. The article finds that orders that restrict access to political resources while allowing for economic access are more stable than those that allow political access, but restrict economic access.

What are the implications of this typology for our understanding of hybrid stability? The typology questions the equilibrium hypothesis of the “double balance” and shows that hybrid regimes do not necessarily combine similar degrees of access in the political and economic sphere to sustain stability. Armenia represents the “unbalanced closure” type allowing for some economic access despite its political closure during the period under observation. This indicates that greater economic competition does not necessarily result in greater political activity of entrepreneurs, as NWW as well as proponents of modernization theory would have theorized (cf. Lipset, 1959; North et al., 2009). The cases of unbalanced openness have shown that an increase in political competition is associated with more economic competition relatively soon.

In addition, our typology demonstrates how hybrid regimes systematically vary in how they restrict or open access to political *and* economic resources. The article uncovered the distinct

operating logics of each type of order and developed expectations about what kind of political and/or economic change was relevant for moving a social order toward more openness or closure. The analysis showed, for instance, that Armenia and Georgia—often lumped together as a single form of hybrid regime—vary in this regard. Dominant coalitions in Armenia have for a long time used their privileged access to political resources to weaken political opponents, while Saakashvili in Georgia exploited the limited access to economic resources to undermine a level playing field. It is thus hypothesized that today's Armenia would especially require systematic changes to political access in order to move toward openness rather than a limited focus on the fight against oligarchs. In contrast, our typology suggests that changing regime dynamics in post-Saakashvili Georgia are best understood by analyzing changes in the degree of economic access. Future research can build on insights from this typology, and systematically investigate the causes for the shifts identified within and across types of LAOs, test our hypotheses as regards the conditions under which political and economic openness become more likely, and scrutinize what sequencing of reforms and what domestic and international support is needed toward that end.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Replication material can be accessed through the institutional website of the author, Esther Ademmer.
- ² Previous typologies of autocratic regimes distinguish different forms of organization (Geddes, 1999; see also Hadenius & Teorell, 2007), for example, between military and party autocracies. We draw on Schmotz' typology of defective autocracies because we are more interested in identifying variation in defects and associated restrictions of political access, than in developing a typology of LAOs that differentiates between forms of organizations.
- ³ After having rescaled all variables so that a numerical increase of each indicator represents an increase in openness (see, for example, Dreher, 2006), we implement separate PCAs for the analysis of political and economic access. A robustness check with a joint assessment of both areas is available upon request.
- ⁴ By the early 2000s, countries in the post-Soviet space—except for the three Baltic countries Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—were defined as hybrid regimes (Diamond, 2002) that were stuck in transition. Coupled with data availability reasons, the analysis therefore starts in 2005.
- ⁵ We label dominant coalitions according to their start and end dates, even when they started before the period covered by our data to facilitate interpretation. Empirical observations for a dominant coalition from 2004 to 2008, for instance, are based on data covering 2005–2008.

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