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Civil Society, Party System Institutionalization and Democratic Stability: Explaining deviant democracy

This article develops a theoretical framework that can give us systematic understanding of deviant democracies. It suggests that the interaction of political parties and civil society can account for the remarkable stability of electoral democracies with poor structural conditions in the contemporary world. More particularly, if programmatic, democratically organized political parties have roots in a vibrant civil society, democracy is likely to endure. The democratic learning of political elites in well-organized parties enables them to

pursue democratic principles and seek compromises once in government, and the democratic learning of voters in civil associations enables them to hold the elites accountable of democratic rights. Moreover, the programmatic character of parties makes them distinguishable and durable for longer time periods. In sum, democratically reconciled political elites can count on firm support of their voters thanks to their engagement in associations with diverse interest representation, enabling them to reach necessary compromises with otherwise opponents. The framework is inspired by Thomas Ertman's study of democratic survival against the odds in the interwar period, and has been supported in a ten-

tative test of two historical anomalies, India and Costa Rica. This article tests the framework on contemporary cases of deviant democracy – more particularly Ghana and Mongolia. Moreover, the analysis uses Côte d'Ivoire and Kyrgyzstan respectively as negative control cases to test the validity of the argument.