2. Political Regimes in Latin America, 1900-2007 (with Daniel Brinks)*

This chapter has two objectives. First, we attempt to contribute to broader theoretical issues and methodological debates about classifying political regimes. Second, we hope to make an empirical contribution by presenting an original classification of Latin American regimes during the period since 1900. We explain the methodology used to generate our classification and compare it to other existing datasets. This classification underpins our subsequent analysis of waves of regime change in the region.

We advance five general propositions about classifying regimes. First, if a regime classification is intended primarily to measure democracy, as is the case with ours and many others, it should be hinged on a definition of democracy. We define a democracy as a regime 1) that sponsors free and fair competitive elections for the legislature and executive; 2) that allows for inclusive adult citizenship; 3) that protects civil and political rights; and 4) in which the elected governments really govern and the military is under civilian control. This minimalist procedural definition contrasts with nonprocedural definitions such as Bollen's (1980, 1991) and with subminimal procedural definitions such as Schumpeter's (1947) and Przeworski et al.'s (2000), which are limited to elections and leave out some elements that are essential to democracy. A conceptually sound measurement of democracy must build on the dimensions that characterize democracy.

Second, explicit coding and aggregation rules are important for classifying regimes. Without such rules, other researchers cannot understand the procedures used to classify the

* Daniel Brinks coauthored this chapter and two earlier iterations thereof (Mainwaring et al. 2001; Mainwaring et al. 2007). This version extends our regime coding back to 1900 (from 1945) and forward (from 2004) to 2007 and makes some other minor changes.

regimes, and the classification will be vulnerable to serious problems of reliability. Our regime classification is based on first disaggregating the concept of democracy into the four defining criteria discussed in the previous paragraph and then reaggregating to form an overall regime assessment. Many classifications of political regimes fall far short on both of these first two points (Munck and Verkuilen 2002).

Third, regime classification demands some subjective judgments about political regimes. Our viewpoint challenges Tatu Vanhanen (1990, 2000), who argues for purely objective measures of democracy based on electoral participation and results. By "subjective" we do not mean arbitrary, but rather an informed judgment based on knowledge of the cases and guided by explicit coding rules. An assessment limited to elections leaves out some elements that are essential to a democracy, producing a subminimal definition.

Fourth, in agreement with Bowman, Lehoucq, and Mahoney (2005), regime classification demands reasonably good knowledge about the countries in question. Scholars must be able to assess whether elections were reasonably free and fair, whether protection of human rights and civil liberties was reasonably solid, and whether the democratically elected government was thwarted by non-elected actors in anti-democratic ways. As part of a commitment to historical accuracy, we have revised our earlier regime classification (2001, 2007) in response to criticisms that we deemed accurate and to new information. Although most scholars would agree in principle with the idea that regime classification should be accurate and that accuracy demands reasonably good information, some influential measures of democracy such as Freedom House in its early years and Polity made mistakes that suggest limited knowledge of these cases. For Polity for the long period until 1945, codings of Latin American countries suggest many problems of accuracy.

Finally, we argue that dichotomous classifications are insufficiently sensitive to regime variations because many regimes fall into an intermediate semi-democratic zone. An ordinal, trichotomous classification—democracy, semi-democracy, and non-democracy or authoritarian—better captures the significant observable variation in regime types. Our trichotomous classification builds on all four dimensions of our definition of democracy. This trichotomy achieves greater differentiation than dichotomous classifications and yet reduces the massive amount of information that a fine-grained continuous measure would require.

Based on these general theoretical and methodological claims, we classify the political regimes in twenty Latin American countries from 1900 to 2007. In the final section of the chapter, we compare our trichotomous measure with the three most widely used measures that provide annual ratings of democracy over a long period of time: Freedom House, Polity IV, and Przeworski *et al.* (2000). We point out some deficiencies of the existing measures and argue that our trichotomous classification is a useful alternative.

We undertake this classification because of a conviction that the existing ones that provide annual democracy measures over a long period of time have flaws that require more than piecemeal reform. Compared to the existing measures, our classification yields different substantive results on several questions: how pervasively authoritarian Latin America was before 1978, how profound the change between earlier decades and the post-1978 wave of democratization has been, and whether the region suffered a minor democratic erosion in the 1990s.

Without careful regime classification, it is impossible to adequately study these and other important substantive issues related to political regimes. For example, any attempt to

assess whether democracy in Latin America suffered a minor decline in the 1990s (Diamond 1996, 1999) must rest on careful regime measurement. Classifying regimes is a necessary step to asking important questions about the causes and consequences of different regimes and of transitions from one kind of regime to another. For decades, these have been leading questions in comparative politics and political sociology, and they are likely to remain at the center of intellectual debates for decades to come. If we cannot measure democracy, these enterprises are impossible. Hence, regime classification and the measurement of democracy are important scholarly endeavors.

A Definition of Democracy

By political regimes, we mean the formal and informal rules of the game that, following Schmitter (1988: 11) "determine the forms and channels of access to principal governmental positions, the characteristics of the actors who are admitted or excluded from such access, and rules determining how collective decisions are made." These rules of the game determine who has the formal positions of political power, how they get these positions, how the government exercises power, how the opposition functions, and how citizens relate to government (see also Fishman 1990).

We propose a definition of democracy that we argue is *minimal* and *complete*. Modern representative democracy has four defining properties.

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[6] Przeworski et al. equivocate on this latter point. On the one hand, they note that "In a democracy, the offices that are being filled by contested elections grant their occupants the authority to exercise governance free of the legal constraint of having to respond to a power not constituted as a result of the electoral process." This criterion would seem to entail calling any regime in which the military overshadows elected officials as non-democratic. On the other hand, they vigorously assert that they do not include civilian control over the military in their regime classification (Przeworski et al. 2000: 15, 35).

A definition of democracy should be minimal but not subminimal; it should include all essential features of democracy but not properties that are not necessary features of democracy. All four elements of our definition are necessary and must be included even if doing so requires making subjective judgments about regimes. A definition is minimal but complete if a) all four criteria are necessary components of democracy, without which a regime should be not considered democratic; and b) no other discrete features are necessary to characterize a democracy. We believe that this definition meets both conditions, while some recent definitions fail the second by neglecting some essential characteristics of a democracy.

Our definition is focused on procedure but adds a concern for civil liberties and effective governing power. It is close to that proposed by many scholars (Collier and Levitsky 1997; Diamond, Linz, and Lipset 1989b: xvi-xviii; O'Donnell 2001). It diverges from nonprocedural definitions that do not explicitly refer to elections (e.g., Bollen 1980, 1991: 5) and from subminimal definitions.

Finally, following Przeworski et al. (2000), it is useful to make explicit two points that our definition does not include. First, it leaves out substantive results such as social equality. We limit the definition of democracy to procedural issues and leave as an empirical question the relationship between democracy and equality. It muddles the picture to include social equality in the definition of democracy, even though high levels of inequality might well work against democracy. Second, again following Przeworski et al., our definition says nothing about accountability, defects in the rule of law except those that impinge on civil liberties and political rights, and instances of "decretismo," that is, the use of decree powers by the executive except when they involve abuse of

power. Adding such criteria that are not inherent in the nature of democracy leads to a nonminimal definition.

We focus mainly on the country level political regime and pay less attention to subnational political regimes. If a few provinces or states have subnational authoritarian regimes, this does not affect how we code the country level regime. However, when substantial parts of the national territory and population live under authoritarian subnational regimes, as occurred in Peru in the 1980s and Colombia in the 1990s, this situation does affect our coding of the national level regime.

The Perils of a Subminimal Definition

Our definition bears one important similarity to Schumpeter's (1942) and to Przeworski et al.'s (2000): all three focus on procedures. In insisting on the second, third, and fourth dimensions of democracy, however, our definition differs from those used by Schumpeter and Przeworski et al. Both equate democracy with holding free and fair elections that allow for an alternation in power regardless of the lack of civil liberties or the presence of "reserved domains" in public policy that are under the control of unelected figures (Valenzuela 1992).[6]

Przeworski et al. carefully articulate their criteria for coding and anchor their regime classifications in a definition of democracy. But they use a subminimal definition of democracy, which results in counting some authoritarian regimes as democracies. Their definition of democracy revolves exclusively around competition for office. "Democracy…is a regime in which those who govern are selected through contested

elections." More specifically, in a democracy, the head of government and the legislature must be elected, and there must be more than one party (Przeworski et al. 2000: 15).

In his classic work, Schumpeter (1942: 269) also focused on electoral competition among political elites and parties: “the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.” In the past two decades, however, most political scientists have used a more expansive and less parsimonious definition, more akin to the one we presented above.

Przeworski et al. represent an outlier in defining democracy so parsimoniously, but the prominence of the scholars and their seminal book makes them an outlier to take seriously. They argue that classifications of political regimes should follow “an exclusive reliance on observables rather than on subjective judgments” (Alvarez et al. 1996: 3). Yet this distinction between “observables” and subjectivity is drawn too sharply; they understate the subjectivity involved in their own assessments of whether elections are free and fair. Regimes should be classified according to “observables,” but social scientists must make judgments about whether an infringement is sufficiently serious as to regard a regime as less than democratic. Moreover, relying on observables need not restrict a definition of democracy to the electoral sphere. The state of human rights and civil liberties, the breadth of participation, and the degree to which non-democratic actors have veto power over government policy are all observables.

An exclusive focus on political competition leads to a subminimal definition and to errors in regime classification. As Karl (1986) argued, “electoralism”—the equating of competitive elections with democracy—misses fundamental aspects of democracy (see

also Holston and Caldeira 1998; O'Donnell 2001). Competitive elections without broad adult suffrage can exist in an oligarchic pre-democratic regime or in a racially or ethnically exclusive regime that excludes the majority of the population (e.g., South Africa before the end of apartheid). But if a contemporary government is elected in contests that exclude most of the adult population, it violates the root meaning of democracy—rule by the people.

In their early work, Przeworski et al. explicitly rejected using judgments about civil liberties in classifying regimes (Alvarez et al. 1996).[7] Yet, as noted earlier, without respect for the core civil liberties traditionally associated with democracy, a regime is not democratic as we understand that word today. Without protection of civil liberties, the electoral process itself is vitiated; elections are not free and fair if the opposition risks reprisals for criticizing the government, opposing points of view are not permitted any outlet or dissemination, political parties cannot form or meet, journalists cannot publish freely, candidates are not permitted to travel, and so on.

Przeworski et al (2000: 24) attempt to correct for this shortcoming in their definition by counting as democratic only those regimes in which there has been at least one alternation in power, thus evaluating the effectiveness of the electoral process in retrospect. But this criterion is both over and under inclusive. The violations of civil liberties or political rights may be directed at one political viewpoint—even a dominant one—but still leave the electorate some choices, thus producing the required alternation in office without ever permitting free and fair elections. This occurred in Argentina

[7] In their later work, Przeworski et al. (2000: 34) are more equivocal about this point. They do not include protection of liberties in their definition of democracy, but they

between 1958 and 1966, when the Peronist party was proscribed, denying people the opportunity to vote for the party with broadest electoral support.

In addition, even if alternation in power showed that elections are free and fair at time *t*, it would hardly be an indicator of their fairness at *t-1*. Consider, for instance, the case of Jamaica. Given the alternation in power in 1989, Przeworski et al. (2000: 63) coded Jamaica retroactively as a democracy for the whole 1962-90 period even though the ruling Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) manipulated the electoral calendar and ran virtually unopposed in the 1983 election. The JLP controlled all seats in parliament between 1984 and 1989. This problem is important in some Latin American countries as well. Under these coding rules, given the alternation in power in 2000, Mexico's elections would presumably be considered free and fair during the late twentieth century and perhaps even earlier. Yet the fact that the 2000 elections permitted an alternation in power says nothing about the fairness of previous elections.[8]

The rule sometimes generates the opposite problem by excluding from the democratic category countries in which the liberties that underlie free and fair elections are present, but the electorate is satisfied with the party in power. Japan was a democracy for decades before there was an alternation in power. But under the alternation rule, it is

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acknowledge that "some degree of political freedom is a sine qua non condition for contestation."

[8] In order to minimize this problem, Cheibub and Gandhi (2004: 3) reformulated the alternation rule to require that for an incumbent to be coded democratic "an alternation in power *under identical electoral rules* must have taken place." Under the modified rule, the incumbent regime is retrospectively coded as democratic back to the point when major electoral rules ("who votes, how votes are counted, and who counts the votes") were altered. In the case of Mexico, because the ruling PRI relinquished control over the Federal Electoral Institute in 1996, the transition was dated in 2000 when the next election took place. This coding strategy requires a much more nuanced historical knowledge of the cases than the original alternation rule suggested.

unclear whether Japan would have qualified as a democracy had Przeworski et al. coded this case a few years earlier. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) never left power between 1955 (when the party was born) and 1990 (the last year in the Przeworski et al. dataset). The presence of a dominant party that consistently wins elections for a few decades is not inherently incompatible with democracy.

Przeworski et al. claim that we should empirically investigate whether freedom from arbitrary violence is associated with democracy rather than include such a freedom in the definition. But one of the defining characteristics of modern representative democracy is its liberal dimension: limited government and adherence to some core values about the sanctity of the individual. Some competitively elected governments have seriously infringed upon such rights. In parts of Colombia (1980s to the present) and Peru (1980s and early 1990s), governmental or paramilitary campaigns against guerrillas and drug trafficking have meant a less than democratic experience for peasants caught in the middle. When these conditions are generalized, affecting a large portion of the population, the country should not be labeled a democracy. In short, it is important to distinguish between illiberal elected governments and liberal democracies.

In addition, a government is not democratic unless the elected officials actually govern. Przeworski et al. explicitly reject this criterion and maintain that regime classifications should not be based on judgments about the actual exercise of power: "In some democracies (Honduras and Thailand are prototypes) civilian rule is but a thin veneer over military power, exercised by defrocked generals. Yet as long as office holders are elected in elections that someone else has some chance to win and as long as they do not use the incumbency to eliminate the opposition, the fact that the chief

executive is a general or a lackey of generals does not add any relevant information" (Przeworski et al. 2000: 35).

We are skeptical about this argument when "civilian rule is but a thin veneer over military power." If the government elected by the people does not actually govern, it is not democratic. The contrary argument appears to be premised on the assumption that voters can choose between the lackey of a general and someone who is not a lackey. But in some cases, all the candidates are not so much lackeys as hostages. In these cases, decision-making in fundamental areas is constrained by the threat of military intervention or by a lack of control over the military.

In Latin America, examples abound of freely elected governments constrained by a military "guardianship." In Argentina from 1955 to 1966, certain electoral outcomes were ruled out *a priori* because the military proscribed the party that enjoyed most popular support. Guatemala's military played a *de facto* guardian role in the 1980s and early 1990s. About two years after winning in the largely free and fair 1985 elections, President Cerezo admitted that when he took office, the military permitted him to exercise only an estimated 30% of his constitutional powers. He claimed that the situation improved thereafter, while another local observer estimated that the percentage of power he could exercise actually decreased to 10% or 15% by 1988.[9] A similar situation prevailed in El Salvador from 1982 until shortly before the 1994 elections. The military and the paramilitary were beyond the control of the civilian government and ruthlessly killed tens of thousands of leftists and purported leftist sympathizers. Electoral outcomes unacceptable to the military were ruled out.

Governments in these countries were chosen in elections that were reasonably though not completely free and fair. But the military and paramilitary controlled a wide range of policy choices, including the range of permissible political opinion (the military violently repressed the left), human rights policy, the means employed in fighting the civil war, important aspects of labor policy (labor unions were brutally repressed), agrarian policy, and many other policies. The governments chosen by the people did not effectively govern in important policy areas. In these policy areas, the ruler was the military and/or paramilitary, and none of the options on the ballot provided an alternative. To call such a government "democratic" does not do justice to the word.

The use of a subminimal definition of democracy leads Przeworski et al. (2000) to see many regimes as democratic despite practices that would lead most observers to a contrary judgment.

The criteria in our definition of democracy involve some discretionary coding—i.e., subjective assessments. But we prefer a complete definition even if it requires such assessments to one that is subminimal. Social scientists should not ignore major components of democracy because they are hard to measure. Informed judgment oriented by well-specified coding rules is better than no measurement.

Our Rules for Classifying Regimes

Our coding rules build explicitly and directly on our definition of democracy. They assess to what extent the four defining criteria for democracy are violated. They typify possible violations of these democratic principles and rank them as major failures or partial ones. The coding scheme follows.

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[9] Statements reported in the International Human Rights Law Group and Washington

Elections for the Legislature and the Executive

Has the head of government (in Latin America, the president) been freely and fairly elected or is he/she a constitutionally designated replacement for a head of government who died, resigned, or was impeached? By "elected" we mean that he/she was chosen in fair direct popular elections or elected in a constitutional process by a legislature that was itself mostly chosen in direct elections (as in a parliamentary system). In a similar vein, is there a legislative body in which the vast majority of the members have been fairly elected?

In a *democracy,* the head of government and the legislature are chosen in free and fair elections.

A *major violation* of this democratic principle occurs if:

a) the head of government or the legislature is not elected;

b) the government uses its resources (patronage, repression, or a combination of both) to ensure electoral victory—i.e., there are systematic complaints about fraud or repression, and there is virtual certainty about the outcome of presidential elections (e.g., Mexico 1945–87, Argentina 1952–55, El Salvador 1952–63, Paraguay 1960–89); or,

c) through fraud, manipulation, or outright repression, the government makes it impossible for a wide gamut of parties to compete (or if they do compete, to take office).

A *partial violation* occurs if:

Office on Latin America (1988: 11-12 and footnote 10).

a) there are systematic complaints of rigged elections and/or harassment of the opposition but there is still uncertainty about electoral outcomes and the government fails to capture large majorities in the legislature; or

b) the military vetoed a few "unacceptable" but important presidential candidates (e.g., Argentina 1958–66);[10] fraud affected but did not thoroughly skew electoral results; or the elections were conducted under substantially unequal playing rules (e.g., Nicaragua in 1984 because the Sandinistas dominated the media and pressured opposition groups, El Salvador in the 1980s because the left faced massive repression); or

c) the government creates a substantially unequal playing field by using state resources and/or by harassing the competition, but there is still uncertainty about electoral outcomes and the government fails to capture large majorities in the legislature.

Franchise

In a *democracy,* the franchise is broad compared to other countries in the same historical period, and disenfranchised social categories (e.g., children) are not seen as politically excluded groups with distinctive electoral preferences.

A *major violation* of this democratic principle occurs if a large part of the adult population is disenfranchised on ethnic, class, gender, or educational grounds in ways that:

[10] We did not automatically consider all proscriptions a partial violation. In the late 1940s and 1950s, many Latin American countries proscribed communist parties. Provided that a wide range of other electoral options existed, we did not code this proscription as a partial failure. Few of the communist parties proscribed in the 1940s and 1950s were electorally significant. Moreover, at that time many people regarded proscribing openly anti-system parties in Linz's (1978) sense as consistent with and even necessary for democracy. The Peronist party is different because it was Argentina's largest party, and it was not patently anti-system.

a) likely prevent very different electoral outcomes (or so is widely believed);

b) are unusually exclusionary for that historical period; or

c) trigger mass social protests.

A *partial violation* occurs if disenfranchisement of some social groups occurs in ways that are not likely to significantly shape electoral outcomes.

A *partial violation* also occurs if a sizable percentage of voters, despite being legally enfranchised, de facto are electorally controlled by powerful local elites, such that their vote is not free. An example is what in Brazil was known as the "voto de cabestro," the harnessed or yoked vote, by which local landowners directly dictated how their tenants voted (Leal 1949).

With respect to the dimension of participation, a critical yet undertheorized issue in classifying democracies is whether scholars should use international standards for a given period (we call this a retrospective standard) or today's international standards. Most scholars (e.g., Gurr et al. 1990, Huntington 1991, Przeworski et al. 2000) implicitly use a retrospective standard; they view regimes based on nearly universal adult male suffrage as democratic. In a similar vein, Polity's regime codings do not take the expansion of citizenship into consideration and thus neglect one of the most important processes in the broadening of democracy. Paxton (2000) has persuasively argued that there is a contradiction between most definitions of democracy, which call for universal suffrage, and most operationalizations, which are based on adult male suffrage for earlier periods. She notes that regimes based on nearly universal adult suffrage are more democratic than those based on nearly universal adult male suffrage and calls for continuous measures of democracy to capture this qualitative difference.

With an ordinal classification such as ours, scholars can legitimately use either the retrospective or contemporary standards. But they should be clear about which they are using. Each mode of classification has an advantage and a disadvantage, and whether a regime was democratic by standards of the time and how democratic is it by contemporary standards are both legitimate questions. The retrospective standard fails to capture some changes over time; it is predicated on the idea that democracy is an ever-changing type of political regime. Using today's standards to judge earlier regimes makes it easier to capture changes in how democracy is perceived and practiced, but it imposes an anachronism. As democratic rights expand, each new generation would have doubts about classifying *all* earlier regimes as democratic because earlier generations of democrats had not institutionalized or even conceived of some rights and practices.

We use a retrospective standard for earlier regimes to avoid the problems of anachronism.[11] For example, until shortly after World War II, we consider some countries democratic even if women had not yet gained the right to vote. In a similar vein, the non-enfranchisement of the illiterate did not automatically prevent us from coding a regime as democratic. Criteria for judging inclusiveness (and also criteria for judging the set of rights that democracies must respect) are historically contingent because democracy itself is ever changing (Markoff 1996)—although democracy also embodies a few core unchanging principles such as free and fair elections and respect for basic civil liberties. The breadth of the franchise filters out very few regimes in the contemporary world, as standards for inclusion have become quite universal in modern democracies.

Civil and political rights

In a *democracy,* violations of civil and political rights are uncommon, parties are free to organize, and the government respects constitutional guarantees.

A *major violation* of democratic principles occurs if:

a) gross violations of civil and political rights or censorship against opposition media occur systematically; or

b) political parties are not free to organize—i.e., most major parties are banned, just a single pro-government party is allowed to exist, or a few parties are tightly controlled by the government (e.g., Panama 1968–80, Paraguay 1947–59, Brazil 1965–79); or

c) the government illegally shuts down Congress or the institutions designed to protect civil liberties and political rights (e.g., courts) in order to eliminate checks and balances.

A *partial violation* occurs if:

a) violations of civil and political rights are less widespread but still affect the opposition's capacity to organize in some geographic areas or some social sectors; or

b) there is intermittent censorship of the media or regular prohibition of one major party or candidate; or

c) the government harasses the opposition in ways that affect its ability to organize, protest, and/or compete for elections, but without engaging in widespread repression; or

[11] As noted, a retrospective standard fails to capture important changes in participation. This creates acute problems for the long time frame Polity covers (since 1800) because its codings do not acknowledge the

d) The government undermines the institutions designed to protect civil liberties and political rights (e.g., courts) by harassing their members, not recognizing their constitutional powers, or using extraordinary measures to gain full partisan control of those bodies.

Control of Policy by Democratically Elected Officials

In a democracy, the democratically elected officials are able to determine policies. Military leaders and the military as an institution have negligible or minor influence in policies other than military policy, and their preferences (and threats) do not substantively affect electoral outcomes. Similarly, foreign governments do not *directly* dictate policy, and puppet presidents do not effectively rule the country. By puppets we mean people placed in office, to preserve a no-reelection rule, for example, while the former president still is the de-facto head of the government (e.g., Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic in 1938-42).

A *major violation* of this democratic principle occurs if:

a) military leaders or the military as an institution openly dominate major policy areas not strictly related to the armed forces, or

b) a foreign government directly (even if covertly) dictates policy.

A *partial violation* of this democratic principle occurs if:

a) the elected head of government is a puppet, such that the electoral process does not really determine who governs; or

b) military leaders or the military as an institution are able to veto important policies in a few areas not related to the armed forces (e.g., Ecuador 1961–62), or if or a foreign government can do so.

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massive expansion of citizenship. See Paxton (2000).

In this section we present our rules for classifying political regimes. Explicit and sound coding and aggregation rules form an important building block of regime classifications (Munck and Verkuilen 2002). Such rules promote evenness of assessments across cases and times. They reduce the subjectivity and measurement errors that affect regime classification (Bollen 1993, Bollen and Paxton 2000) unless one relies exclusively on strictly objective criteria, as Vanhanen (1990, 2000) does, but with considerable loss of conceptual soundness. They also make it easier for other scholars to assess criteria and actual classifications.[12]

One of the challenges in measuring democracy is ensuring that the measure is consistent with the definition. As Munck and Verkuilen (2002) noted, some prominent regime classifications and measurements (e.g. Polity, Freedom House until recent years) have not fully lived up to this stricture.

Open and fair elections require more than an accurate counting of ballots on election day. Early 20th century elections in countries with no prior experience with free and fair elections were usually not fair. We do not assume that those elections were transparent, unless historical sources emphasize this point. Elections won by huge landslides (70 or 80% for the victor) are suspicious. They might have been free but not

[12] One of the virtues of Bollen (1980), Coppedge and Reinicke (1990) and Przeworski et al. (2000) is the explicit coding and aggregation rules.
[14] Allende's depiction may or may not accurately portray events in Chile in the period she describes (see, e.g., Millar Carvacho 1982, or, more generally, Posada Carbó 2000). Still,

fair, and we double-checked historical sources before treating them as "no-violations." Finally, the rule involves electing both the president and Congress. As a result, if Congress does not exist yet, a major violation still takes place even if presidential elections are free and fair. If a Constitutional assembly, selected through free and fair elections, preceded the president, there is no violation.

This partial violation is limited to cases of outright control of the vote by powerful local elites such as those described by Isabel Allende in her acclaimed novel, *The House of the Spirits*. Allende humorously portrayed the domination of local elites over peasants' votes in Chile—one of the most democratic countries in Latin America—in the 1920s:

> "The patrones threw them (the peasants) a big party with empanadas and lots of wine, barbecued a few cows specially slaughtered for the occasion, serenaded them with songs accompanied on the guitar, beat them over the head with a few political harangues, and promised them that if the conservative candidate won the election they would all receive a bonus, but that if he lost they would lose their jobs. In addition, they rigged the ballot boxes and bribed the police. At the end of the party they piled the peasants onto wooden carts and hauled them off to vote, under careful observation… On the day of the election everything went according to plan, in perfect order. The armed forces were there to uphold the democratic process." (pp. 69-70)

Her portrayal might not be accurate for most of Chile, where many peasants had more political autonomy with respect to landowners in the 1920s than she indicates, but it serves to illustrate the issue. In this vignette, the landowners' control of the vote as described by Allende is sufficient to qualify as a partial violation if such practices prevail for a meaningful share of the electorate.[14] This situation of outright control of the

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it offers a vivid description of an ideal type that many Latin American elections approximated from time to time.

peasants' vote is far more blatant than routine clientelistic mobilization, which we would not classify as a partial violation.

The criteria for inclusion involve complex judgments, but the obvious and simple criterion—universal adult suffrage—is misleading and unrealistic if we use a contemporaneous standard for classifying regimes. Even today, few if any countries observe universal adult suffrage. Some countries that are widely seen as democracies exclude the insane, convicts, permanent residents, non-resident citizens, or members of the armed forces. In addition, we overlooked the disenfranchisement of women and the illiterate for the early part of the time period under consideration. These earlier exclusions were cultural artifacts of a time past; this criterion of democracy has changed over time.

In coding regimes for the period before nearly universal suffrage, we adopt a perspective between that of Przeworski et al. (2000) and Polity, on the one hand, and Paxton (2000) on the other. Przeworski et al. and Polity do not include any consideration of inclusiveness in their definitions and operationalizations. Paxton correctly argues that some definitions of democracy include a component of inclusiveness yet fail to consider inclusiveness in their measurement of democracy. Paxton (2000) advocates using *today's* standards of inclusiveness (as opposed to our preference for *contemporaneous* standards) for classifying regimes even when today's standards set a threshold that was unthinkable for most elites and citizens contemporaneously. Her argument for today's standards is entirely defensible, but we want to capture standards of inclusiveness that were thinkable and attainable at a given historical moment.

Operationally, we chose the following minimal thresholds for coding regimes as democracies and semi-democracies, based on turnout as a percentage of total population[15]:

1900-19
Minimum 2.5% turnout for semi-democracy and 5% for democracy

1920-39
Minimum 5.0% turnout for semi-democracy and 7.5% for democracy.

1940-59
Minimum 7.5% turnout for semi-democracy and 12.5% for democracy.

1960-79
Minimum 10% turnout for semi-democracy and 15% for democracy.

1980 on
Minimum 15% turnout for semi-democracy and 22.5% for democracy.

These minimum thresholds apply to *new* competitive regimes. An existing competitive political regime is not downgraded from democracy to semi-democracy or from semi-democracy to authoritarian if it temporarily falls below the threshold unless it is continuously below the threshold during that time period. The intuition behind this final rule is that it doesn't make sense to call a country semi-democratic one year and authoritarian the next, or democratic one year and semi-democratic the next, because of marginal shifts in turnout or because of the transition from one cut point to the next (e.g., 1919 to 1920, 1939 to 1940). As examples, it seems odd to call Chile semi-democratic in 1919 (turnout = 3.8% of population) and authoritarian in 1920 (turnout = 4.4%) or democratic in 1939 (turnout = 9.0%) and semi-democratic in 1940 (turnout = 8.8%).

[15] Theoretically, we would have preferred to base these minimum thresholds on a given turnout as a percentage of the voting age population of individuals qualified for citizenship. Practically speaking, given the great difficulty in finding such data for twenty countries for the whole 20th century, this was not possible.

These thresholds for turnout are relatively low but still high enough that they lead to downgrading some regimes during all of the time periods. Empirically, the mean turnout (as a percentage of total population) was 4.7% for 1900-19 (and hence lower than the threshold we require for a democracy for that period), 11.3% for 1920-39, 19.4% for 1940-59, 26.5% for 1960-79, and 34.9% for 1980-2004. The lowest scores for turnout were 0.1% for 1900-19, 1.5% for 1920-39, 2.3% for 1940-59, 2.5% for 1960-79, and 5.0% for 1980-2004. Our cut off points are generally lower than the mean, but still sufficiently strict that countries with significant restrictions on political participation or on the formal franchise can fail them.

We choose turnout rather than eligibility for our minimum thresholds because in Latin America, some important exclusions were not legally enshrined. We more accurately capture these exclusions through actual turnout levels than through legal eligibility. Theoretically, by coding the thresholds as a dichotomy (a country either reaches the threshold or does not), we are postulating that a regime must reach a certain level of inclusiveness to be considered a semi-democracy or democracy and rejecting the notion that higher turnout always implies a higher level of democracy.

Because the use of constitutional mechanisms to appoint ideologically compatible judges is a standard practice in many democracies, we do not treat as a partial violation the appointment of party members in the judiciary, the electoral courts, or other sources of horizontal accountability when such appointments follow the normal constitutional procedures and the normal schedule. We treat cases of "court packing" (e.g., Argentina in 1990) as borderline cases and judge them in the context of the other coding rules. If a

government effects constitutional or administrative judicial reforms following normal procedures and respecting the rights of current judges, we do not treat the episode as a violation of democratic norms. If the government uses extralegal mechanisms or displaces incumbent judges in order to carry out reforms that greatly reduce the power and autonomy of the judiciary or other institutions of intrastate accountability, we treat the reforms as a partial violation of democratic principles. Additionally, if the government seeks to reform one institution, we do not treat the episode as a violation of democratic norms, but a systematic attempt to impose partisan control over most of those bodies (e.g., the courts, the electoral tribunal, and the *contraloría*) is treated as a partial violation.

In recent decades, the main challenge to control by democratically elected officials has been the country's own military. In the early decades of the 20th century, the United States militarily intervened in many Central American and Caribbean countries and often dictated very important policy outcomes (Schoultz 1998; Smith 2000). We do not treat routine foreign pressures and influences, IMF conditionality, etc. as constituting violations of democratic procedures because all governments face external constraints.

For us to code a regime as democratic, we look for minimum—not perfect—realization of the four dimensions of democracy. Every regime engages in some minor practices that constitute blemishes for democracy. Thus, a "partial" violation of a principle of democracy as understood here as a serious violation, but a less profound one than a major violation.

Continuous scales of democracy have advantages. We could have constructed a more continuous scale through an additive aggregation principle by adding up points (from zero to two for each dimension) on the four dimensions—thus producing a nine-point scale from zero to eight. We have conceptual and practical reasons for preferring a trichotomy to a more differentiated scale constructed in this fashion. Conceptually, adding points along the four dimensions could produce distortions because it assumes that the four dimensions 1) can be measured at the interval level; 2) can be measured in the same units; and 3) have the same conceptual weight, such that a strong score on some dimensions can offset a weak score on others.

Our aggregation rule and hence our regime classification do not rest on such assumptions. Our four dimensions are coded along ordinal scales (major violation, partial violation, no violation). Mathematical aggregation might be misleading because the distances between ordinal categories are not necessarily uniform. More important, an additive measure assumes that major violations along one dimension can be compensated by high scores on others. In our understanding, all four dimensions are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for democracy. Egregious violations along one dimension cannot be compensated by adherence to democratic principles on the others. For example, if elections are fraudulent and the government engages in widespread intimidation that makes it impossible for opposition parties to compete, broadening the franchise will not make the regime more democratic.

Our method of aggregation also offers a small practical advantage. An additive aggregation process would require careful evaluation of each dimension of democracy for every regime in every year. In contrast, our aggregation procedure allows us to limit data

collection to cases in which there is no major violation at the electoral level. The electoral criterion filters governments that are overtly authoritarian, restricting the gathering of more costly and detailed information to democracies, semi-democracies, or disguised forms of authoritarian rule. If a regime does not have reasonably free and fair elections, then we do not need to collect additional data. Because information for the first criterion is easier to obtain, this aggregation rule reduces information costs.

For the Central American countries, we almost always followed the codings of Bowman et al. (2005). Bowman et al. used a classification very similar to ours, including using all four of our criteria of democracy and an aggregation rule similar to ours. Their classification can therefore be adapted exactly to ours.

Categorical vs. Continuous Scales

Our reason for choosing a categorical measure is twofold. First, notwithstanding the virtues of continuous measures of democracy for some research purposes,[17] it remains useful to label political regimes. Both continuous and ordinal measures of regimes serve important research goals (Collier and Adcock 1999). Regime labels are essential for analyzing comparative historical processes and for describing regimes, and they are useful for studying regime breakdowns and transitions.

Second, given cost and time constraints, it would have been difficult to construct a more fine-grained measure for each country and each year since 1900. We may not

[17] See Dahl (1971), Bollen (1980), Bollen and Jackman (1989: 612), Coppedge and Reinicke (1990), Vanhanen (1990), Hadenius (1992: 36–71), Diamond (1999), and Elkins (2000).

know whether a country should be scored as a 6 or a 7 on Freedom House's interval scale, but we can be confident it is a semi-democracy. By constructing a trichotomous scale with modest information demands, we can significantly reduce the number of coding errors and thus achieve greater reliability than would be possible under a more demanding classification scheme. Our scheme has enough categories to avoid forcing cases into classes that violate common sense understanding, yet has few enough that we do not need to draw unreasonably fine distinctions among regimes.

Because this coding is qualitative and historical, it involves some degree of subjective judgment. But with explicit coding rules, the four dimensions that are being judged are uniform and the general parameters for making those judgments clear. The fact that the secondary data generated by country experts are available to many, in combination with explicit and relatively simple coding standards, makes it easier for other scholars to access our coding of cases. Of course, even with explicit coding rules, some cases present difficult borderline judgments.

In sum, our ordinal trichotomous classification summarizes a lot of information, is descriptively and conceptually richer than quantitative codings, and permits us to map actual regimes onto the continuous scale of political practices in a way that matches an intuitive understanding of the nature of regimes and regime change. Our categories are readily comprehensible in ordinary social science parlance. This trichotomy allows for a meaningful range of variance without losing parsimony in the construction of regime types. Finally, our ordinal, trichotomous approach is consistent with the continuous

nature of democratic practice. It imposes theoretically driven cut-points on a more continuous range of practices.[19]

Trichotomous vs. Dichotomous Measures of Democracy

Our trichotomy has advantages over the simple democratic-nondemocratic distinction advocated by Sartori (1987: 182-85, 1991) and Przeworski et al. (2000: 57-59). They argued that a regime is either democratic or it is not and hence that democracy should be conceived as a dichotomous phenomenon.

Przeworski et al. coded as democracies countries in which the president and the legislature are elected, more than one party exists, and alternation in power proves (in retrospect) to be possible. There is no middle ground; all other countries are dictatorships. Less authoritarian may be a good thing but it is not, in this conception, more democratic. Sartori (1987) also argues that regimes must first be classified as democracies before it makes sense to explore the degree to which they are democratic.

Part of this argument is compelling: it is sometimes useful to go beyond a continuous measure of regimes and assign them a qualitative label. Many regimes are unabashedly non-democratic, and it makes sense to label them as such. Moreover, regime labels are useful for analyzing abrupt changes in regimes. Interval measures can capture such events, but it is useful to establish cut-points that indicate that a regime change has taken place. Also, a regime that is clearly democratic should be labeled as such. Przeworski et al. and Sartori thus keep intact a necessary distinction between democracy and non-democracy; we should not abandon all efforts to categorize regimes

[19] Our assumption that these ordered categories map intervals of a continuous, latent

and simply give them a quantitative score. But Przeworski et al. and Sartori are excessively parsimonious in dichotomizing between non-democracy and democracy. In the contemporary world, especially outside the Western industrialized countries, a dichotomy loses too much information about regimes. Even if one recognizes the value of labeling regimes in a qualitative manner, given the diversity of experiences in the world today, a trichotomous classification that distinguishes among democracy, semi-democracy, and non-democracy, is more useful.

Przeworski et al. (2000: 57-58) explicitly reject the idea that there are borderline regimes between democracy and dictatorship, but we disagree for two reasons. First, holding free and fair elections is no guarantee of the other three defining criteria of democracy, yet the fact that leaders must submit to some degree of competition to accede to (and remain in) power renders the authoritarian label misleading. This problem is acute with respect to many post-1978 regimes in Latin America. As Valenzuela (1992), Karl (1995), Diamond (1996, 1999), Hartlyn (1998), O'Donnell (1999a: Ch. 8, 2001), and Levitsky and Way (2002) have argued, many contemporary regimes satisfy the requirements of fair competitive elections but on other important dimensions fall short of being democratic. The discomfort with labeling competitive regimes "authoritarian" has led to the proliferation of qualifiers and adjectives described by Collier and Levitsky (1997).

Secondly, attributes of both authoritarianism and democracy coexist in many regimes that fall between the two poles. Competitive elections occur in countries in which certain groups are severely repressed – at different times, labor leaders in El

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variable is an accepted assumption in logistic regression analysis (Long 1997: 116-22).

Salvador, indigenous groups in Guatemala, socialist organizations in a variety of countries – without ultimately distorting the results of political processes to the point where we label the regime authoritarian. Election results might reflect broad popular preferences in spite of the best efforts of incumbents to skew the outcome – Noriega's failed attempt to steal the 1989 presidential election from Guillermo Endara in Panama might be one example, although the electoral process was ultimately aborted. Elections might be meaningful despite important restrictions on press freedoms. These regimes are in a "gray area," an intermediate category in the space of properties between democracy and authoritarianism. They constitute what Collier and Levitsky (1997) call "diminished subtypes" of democracy. A dichotomy requires very sharp distinctions among regimes when the reality may not justify them. Dichotomous classifications force the large number of intermediate cases into one of two categories, both of which may be misfits.

We prefer a trichotomous coding because of these problems with dichotomies; the concept of semi-democracy allows us to identify the many regimes in which imperfections in democratic practice impair but do not completely destroy the effectiveness of electoral institutions. By incorporating the category of semi-democracies, our scale gains in discrimination (presumably reducing measurement error), but still allows us to think of regimes in conceptually rich, categorical terms.

A Comparison of Measures of Democracy in Latin America

In this section we compare the four existing measures of democracy that provide annual democracy scores over a wide time with ours and assess their validity and reliability for Latin America: Freedom House (Gastil 1991, Piano and Puddington 2005),

Polity (Gurr, Jaggers, and Moore 1991; Jaggers and Gurr 1995, 1996; Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr 2005), Przeworski et al. (2000: 13-77), and Smith (2005, Appendix 1).[20] We focus mainly on these three datasets because coding every country for every year enables scholars to track when regime transitions occur and hence ultimately to explain such transitions. Yearly coding also facilitates tracking region wide trends; we know when waves of democracy and reverse waves began. Finally, this type of coding allows us to examine the causes and consequences of different kinds of regimes, as Przeworski et al. (2000) illustrated in their path breaking study.

Table 2.2. Correlation among Measures of Democracy in Latin America

Item	MBP	Polity	Smith	ACLP	FH
MBP (Mainwaring et al.), 1900-2007		0.75	0.81	0.82	0.85
Polity IV, 1900-2004	0.75		0.74	0.76	0.86
Smith, 1900-2000	0.81	0.74		0.80	0.79
ACLP (Przeworski et al.), 1946-2002	0.82	0.76	0.80		0.75
Freedom House, 1972-2007	0.85	0.86	0.79	0.75	

Note: Entries indicate values for Spearman's *rho*. All correlations are significant at the .01 level. N varies between 551 and 2072, depending on the historical coverage of the items.

As Table 2.2 shows, the four measures of democracy are highly correlated.[21] The different measures produce different substantive conclusions about key issues—for

[20] The Przeworski et al. measure is sometimes referred to as the ACLP dataset, as a result of its initial presentation in an article by Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, Fernando Limongi and Adam Przeworski (1996). The dataset employed in Przeworski et al. (2000) covered the period 1950-2000. Cheibub and Ghandi (2004) revised and extended the coding for 1946-2002. We use this updated dataset for the comparison.

[21] In this section, for the sake of simplicity in presenting results, we assume interval properties for our trichotomous measure (e.g., when we run Pearson correlations with other measures, estimate means, and so on). For ease of comparison with other measures,

example, about the levels of democratization achieved in the early twentieth century, about how dramatic a change the post-1977 wave of democratization represents relative to the past, and whether the 1990s marked a slight democratic erosion, as Diamond (1996, 1999) asserts on the basis of Freedom House scores. In what follows, we provide information on the extent of disagreements between our dataset and these three datasets, and show how differences in the codings offered by our dataset and the ACLP, Freedom House and Polity datasets are linked to differences in conceptualization and methodology.

Przeworski et al.

The Spearman's rho between the Przeworski et al. (2000) classification and ours is quite high (.82), but the association is considerably weaker for the set of democracies than for the authoritarian regimes. While 91 percent of the cases (492/542) coded as dictatorships in the Przeworski et al.'s database (as extended by Cheibub and Ghandi 2004) are authoritarian according to our classification, only 64 percent of the cases (385/598) coded as democratic are also democracies in our classification. Their subminimal definition leads them to include numerous cases as democratic that we regard as semi-democratic. Of 205 years we code as semi-democracies, Przeworski et al. classify 158 as democratic regimes; and of 547 cases we code as authoritarian, they classify 55 as democratic. This divergence underscores that their operational definition of democracy is more lenient than ours.

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we combined the two Freedom House scores and inverted the measure by subtracting it from 15 so that it runs from 1 (least democratic) to 13 (most democratic).

Some examples illustrate the differences in coding cases. Przeworski et al. consider Brazil during the waning years of military rule (1979-84) a democracy. Yet the president from 1979 to March 1985 was chosen by the military and ratified by an electoral college designed to ensure subservience to the military's choice, governors were not democratically elected until 1982, and the leftist opposition and rural social movements were still subjected to frequent repression. They regard even the late stage of the first Peronist government in Argentina (1946–55) as democratic though by then Perón had suppressed opposing viewpoints and was silencing dissent and persecuting the opposition. They label Guatemala in 1958-62 and from 1966 to 1981 a democracy, even though gross violations of civil and political liberties and the proscription of the left made these elections unfree at best, if not a total sham. During this time, the army and paramilitary carried out widespread killings of possible leftists, labor leaders, and Indians suspected of harboring or sympathizing with leftists. Most elections were attended by waves of state-sponsored terrorism and tainted by massive fraud. With the sole exception of civilian Julio César Méndez Montenegro (1966-70), who ruled in the shadow of the military, the long period from 1954 to 1985 witnessed a succession of military presidents, none of whom were elected in free and fair elections. None of these cases are called democracies in our coding, but the presence of elections and the prior or eventual alternation in office lead Przeworski et al. to classify them as such.

Freedom House

Beginning in 1972, every year Freedom House has ranked all independent countries from 1 (the best score) to 7 on both civil liberties and political rights (Gastil 1991).[22] Freedom House evaluations have been used as measures of political regimes by combining the two scores to provide an assessment of how democratic a regime is (Diamond 1996, 1999: 24-34).[23] Its scores provide a reasonably differentiated measure of democracy and offer comprehensive scope for more than 35 years. They incorporate at least three of our four dimensions of democracy: free and fair competition, broad participation, and civil liberties and human rights.

Freedom House's earlier evaluations had two shortcomings for measuring democracy. First, until recent years, Freedom House did not provide publicly available coding rules. This made it impossible to know what criteria were used in assessing regimes, leading to potentially serious problems of reliability and validity.

Second, its earlier measurements contained two systematic biases: in the 1970s and 1980s, scores for leftist governments were tainted by political considerations, and changes in scores are sometimes driven by changes in their criteria rather than changes in real conditions. The first of these shortcomings is manifest in the harsh treatment of Nicaragua under Sandinista rule (1979-90) as compared to El Salvador for the same period. Freedom House scores suggest a more democratic government in El Salvador (a combined inverted

[22] Freedom House scores are labeled with two consecutive years—1972-73, 1973-74, and so on. We use a single year as the label; we identified the Freedom House scores with the first year of the pair, which most closely reflects the year for which the conditions are reported. (As an exception, scores for 1982 were computed as the average of scores in the reports covering January 1981-August 1982, and August 1982-November 1983).

[23] Following the standard procedure, we computed the overall Freedom House score using a linear combination of the two indices, 14–(CL+PR), where CL is the score for civil liberties and PR the score for political rights. This variable ranges from 0 (authoritarian) to 12 (democratic).

score of 6 in the 0-12 scale) than in Nicaragua (a combined inverted score of 4) in 1984. Yet in 1984, the military in El Salvador was carrying out widespread political and labor repression and was violently suppressing the leftist opposition. In Nicaragua, three parties to the right and three to the left of the ruling Sandinista regime participated in elections in the same year, and these elections were certified by most European observers as fair and free of outright fraud and manipulation. Political violence outside the area of Sandinista-Contra conflict was limited. Despite occasional harassment of political opponents, the Sandinista regime did not murder, imprison, or torture large numbers of opposition leaders. Most observers agree that these elections and their surrounding circumstances were more democratic than those in El Salvador. This misclassification is not an isolated incident. Bollen and Paxton (2000: 77) showed that Freedom House had a systematic bias against leftist governments.

In addition, many scores of the 1970s and early 1980s are too lenient compared to scores in the 1990s. For example, Mexico's scores ranged from 6 to 7 throughout the authoritarian 1970s and 1980s. During this time, political competition was very restricted. The PRI won every single gubernatorial and senate seat from the 1930s until the late 1980s; there was absolutely no chance of an alternation in power at the national or even the state level; and the opposition was harassed. Colombia also received a 10 in the early seventies when competition was still quite restricted (1972–74). The National Front agreement of 1958 established that regardless of election results, congressional seats would be equally divided between Liberals and Conservatives, and the traditional parties colluded to alternate in power with every presidential election. The Dominican Republic (1972–73) and El Salvador (1972–75) were coded 9 during semi-democratic and authoritarian periods,

respectively. And the aggregate scores for Guatemala were 9 in 1972 and 10 in 1973 during an authoritarian regime.

Freedom House scoring became more stringent in the 1990s and does not reflect the improvements that took place since the 1980s. For example, Mexico's political system was more democratic after 1988 than it had been previously. The 1988 presidential election, though vitiated by fraud, was easily the most competitive Mexico had experienced since the foundation of the PRI/state regime in the 1929. By 1990, the opposition had become a serious political contender in many states. Yet Freedom House's 1980 (inverted) combined score (7) is slightly more democratic than the 1990 score (6). Likewise, political rights improved substantially in Brazil between 1984, when the military was still in power, and the early 1990s, but Freedom House scores indicate the opposite. In 1984 (with a score of 8), the last of the military presidents was still in office; citizens in state capitals and scores of other cities were not able to elect their own mayor; one-third of the federal senate had been elected indirectly in rules designed to guarantee majorities for the military government; communist parties were outlawed; and the left still faced sporadic repression. By 1993 (with a score of 7), these vestiges of authoritarian rule had been eliminated.

In El Salvador, the human rights situation improved substantially between the grizzly mid–1980s and the mid–1990s, but Freedom House scores reflect little change (both 1985 and 1995 display a score of 8). A large UN-sponsored mission monitored a peace process and guaranteed human rights, the military scaled back its repressive activity, and the paramilitaries were brought more or less under control. The left began to speak out without violent reprisals, and new political parties started to come out into the open. By 1994, the formerly insurrectional FMLN, the object of brutal repression throughout the 1980s, felt

secure enough to participate in the electoral process, and it became the country's second largest party. None of this would have been possible ten years earlier, and a scoring of democratic practice should reflect this improvement.

These biases in Freedom House scores are systematic rather than random. If the flaws were simply the result of random disagreements on particular cases, the differences would have less substantive impact. Freedom House might fare better in some of its judgments than we do; this would offset cases where our judgments are better. Random errors might create some noise in the analysis without necessarily skewing the conclusions. But a systematic bias in measurement can lead to mistaken conclusions that are immune from correction through statistical means. Consequently, one must exercise caution in using Freedom House scores, especially to compare over time. Some conclusions based on Freedom House scores are misleading because of its systematic biases, and the reliability and validity of its scores are subject to question because of the lack of explicit coding rules.

As a result of these methodological differences and of some very questionable Freedom House codings in the 1970s, there are some significant differences between our measure and the Freedom House scores, especially until around 1990. Using the original scores ranging from 1 (most democratic) to 7 (least democratic), Freedom House classifies countries in three categories: Free (an average rating of 1 to 2.5), Partly free (3 to 5) and Not free (5.5 to 7).[24] We cross-tabulated this trichotomous classification with ours. For the

[24] In principle, this means that in our aggregate Freedom House scale ranging between 0 and 12, free corresponds to 9-12; partly free to 4-8 and not free to 0-3. However, a few times Freedom House made exceptions to this classification rule. For instance, Guatemala was classified as "partially free" in 1980, although the country had scores of 6 in both dimensions (i.e., 2 in our aggregate Freedom House scale) and Haiti was classified as "partly free" in 1987 although its average score was 5.5 (3 in our aggregate scale). In total, we found 24 internal inconsistencies between Freedom House's scores

1972-2007 period, all country-years classified by Freedom House as Not free (n=96) were also coded by us as authoritarian. Of the 327 cases classified by Freedom House as Partly free, 44 percent were coded by us as authoritarian and only 38 percent as semi-democratic (the remaining 18 percent as democratic). Of the 277 cases classified by Freedom House as Free, we coded 8 (3%) as authoritarian, 16 (6%) as semi-democratic, and the rest (91%) as democratic.

The main source of inconsistencies between the two taxonomies lies in the cases that we consider authoritarian but Freedom House has treated as partly free. Those cases (n=143) include some critical years during the governments of General Hugo Banzer in Bolivia (for 1972-73 and 1976-77), Generals Medici, Geisel, and Figueiredo in Brazil (for 1972-84), General Augusto Pinochet in Chile (for 1979-89), and Joaquín Balaguer in the Dominican Republic (for 1974-77). The list also includes El Salvador between 1976 and 1983; Guatemala between 1974 and 1985, Honduras between 1972 and 1981; Mexico in 1972-87; Nicaragua under Anastasio Somoza Jr. (1972-78) as well as the Sandinistas (1979-83); Panama between 1978 and 1987; Peru under Francisco Morales Bermudez (1975-79) and Alberto Fujimori (1992-94); Paraguay under Alfredo Stroessner (for 1972-87), and Uruguay under Juan María Bordaberry (1973-75) and his successors (1980-84). This list of inconsistencies tends to confirm the tendency of Freedom House to be more lenient in the 1970s and particularly towards right-wing regimes.

Over time, Freedom House became more systematic and professional in its evaluations. In the early years, it appears that one individual, Raymond Gastil, did all of the coding for all countries in the world, and he did so without any explicit coding rules.

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and its trichotomous classification (about 3.4% of the cases). We did not correct those

Freedom House began using country and regional experts to code cases in 1989/90, and its ratings became more reliable after that point.[25] Over time, the number of specialists who write and assess the country reports increased greatly, from around five in 1989/90 to several dozen today. Freedom House began publishing its methodology on-line in recent years, responding to earlier criticisms about the opacity of its method. The methodology has become more nuanced over time. In 1989/90, Freedom House initiated a series of regional meetings to discuss the coding, though these meetings were much less sophisticated than they are now. Since 2006, it has published its ratings for the subcategories that now underpin the final score for each country for civil liberties and political rights.

The annual publication, *Freedom in the World*, is now a valuable source of qualitative information that helps explain the annual scores, even though Freedom House does not directly use the qualitative information to explain the scores. Because of these improvements over time, in later chapters, we use Freedom House measures to achieve a more nuanced assessment of the level of democracy than our tripartite classification affords. We believe that its assessments are generally good since around 1990 and especially since around 2000.

Polity IV

The Polity IV dataset provides a second continuous measure of democracy (Gurr, Jaggers, and Moore 1990; Jaggers and Gurr 1995). The 2006 release covered 187 countries for the period 1800–2004 (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr 2005). Polity IV provides explicit

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apparent inconsistencies in the cross-tabulation with our measure of democracy.

[25] The information in the next sentences about the improvements in Freedom House coding comes from Freedom House employee Katrina Neubauer, email, January 22, 2008.

coding and aggregation rules, although they are abstruse and difficult to follow (Marshall and Jaggers 2002).

Following a procedural conception, Jaggers and Gurr argue that democracy has three defining features: 1) "the presence of institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative political policies and leaders. This is accomplished through the establishment of regular and meaningful competition among individuals and organized groups, an inclusive degree of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, and a level of political liberties sufficient to ensure the integrity of democratic participation, procedures and institutions… 2) the existence of institutionalized constraints on the exercise of executive power… 3) … the guarantee of civil liberties to all citizens" (1995: 471). The first of these dimensions in fact aggregates three issues that are better treated as discrete (elections to determine who governs, inclusiveness, and the protection of political liberties). The third aspect (political liberties) of this first dimension overlaps substantially with their third dimension (civil liberties).

Gurr and his collaborators created eight ordinal scales with 35 categories in order to typify patterns of participation, constraints on executive power, the recruitment of the chief executive, and the complexity of power structures in different societies (Gurr et al. 1990; Jaggers and Gurr 1996). Noting that some categories reflected traits of a democratic polity while others reflected autocracy, they selected 21 categories that correspond to five dimensions, weighed them, and integrated them in two scales (*institutionalized democracy* and *institutionalized autocracy*) ranging from 0 to 10.

The democracy scale assumes a “zero point” (it is a ratio scale) and is continuous. It reflects the degree of competitiveness in political participation and in the selection of the

chief executive, the openness of the executive recruitment process, and the political and constitutional constraints on the executive. The autocracy index reflects the extent to which participation is suppressed or regulated, the degree of competitiveness or restrictions in the executive recruitment process, and the absence of checks and balances to executive powers. Following Jaggers and Gurr (1996), we subtracted the autocracy score from the democracy score, building an interval scale of democracy that ranges between -10 and 10.

Despite its merits, the Polity scale has some disadvantages. First, the relationship between their definition of democracy and their operationalization is muddled. Jaggers and Gurr (1995: 471) initially discuss the three components or dimensions of democracy noted earlier, but when they construct their indicators (p. 472), they have five broad categories that do not correspond to the three dimensions: competitiveness of political participation, regulation of political participation, competitiveness of executive recruitment, openness of executive recruitment, and constraints on the chief executive. They do not present a detailed justification for selecting these five categories, which omit some of the dimensions included in their discussion of democracy. In particular, their operationalization omits the protection of civil and political liberties and the inclusiveness of political participation, both of which are fundamental to most definitions of democracy, including their own. Because they fail to include the inclusiveness of citizenship in their measure of democracy, they neglect one of the most important features of democratization over a wide historical sweep—the huge expansion of citizenship (Doorenspleet 2000).

Second, compared with several measures of democracy, especially to Przeworski et al. (2000), their coding and operationalization rules are cumbersome and are not sufficiently clear. Some of their dimensions operate at a high level of abstraction. It is hard to infer

violations of human rights or the presence of reserved domains from broader concepts such as "regulation of participation" or "constraints on the chief executive." Third, some categories shaping the Polity coding are of little relevance for studying modern politics. For example, one dimension reflects whether the chief executive is "determined by hereditary succession" (Gurr et al. 1990: 81-2). Fourth, although the initial coding is based on rich, ordinal categories, the final measure is a continuous index for which values have no substantive meaning.

Fifth, the authors do not provide a rationale for their aggregation rules, which weight some of their dimensions inordinately while neglecting others completely. Gleditsch and Ward (1997) noted that just two dimensions (constraints on the chief executive and, to a lesser extent, competitiveness of executive recruitment) account for most of the variance in the democracy and the autocracy scales. The dimensions related to participation have little leverage on the Polity measure: "The extent and character of popular participation in selection of leaders is either totally absent or relatively unimportant in determining the degree of democracy" (Gleditsch and Ward 1997: 376). This creates a problem of validity since democracy includes some elements (protection of human rights and civil liberties and the breadth of enfranchisement) that Polity does not measure.

Finally, Polity scores have serious empirical shortcomings for a reasonable number of cases over extended periods of time. Bowman et al. (2005) note major discrepancies between their coding, which is based on careful knowledge of five Central American cases, and Polity's. Polity codes Costa Rica's score for the entire period since 1890 as 10, the most democratic score possible for any country in any time period. Bowman et al. argue persuasively that Costa Rica should be coded very differently. Using a tripartite

classification that closely resembles ours, they code Costa Rica (to put it in our terminology rather than theirs) as authoritarian in 1900-01, 1905-06, and 1917-19, and as semi-democratic for all other years between 1902 and 1944. These are profound discrepancies. All three authors have written very extensively about Costa Rica and have much more knowledge about the country than the Polity coders. Our reading of the evidence supports their coding much more than Polity's. For example, President Federico Tinoco (1917-19) seized power in a coup in 1917 and established a military dictatorship. He fled into exile in August 1919 after his brother was assassinated. Coding Costa Rica as a 10, the most democratic score during a period of military dictatorship indicates gaps in knowlege.

Polity codes Honduras as on average the second most democratic country in Latin America between 1900 and 1944. In contrast, Lehoucq et al. code Honduras as authoritarian steadily from 1900 until 1957 except for a six year period from 1929 to 1934, when it was semi-democratic. The examples of Costa Rica and Honduras suggest that Polity scores may contain many serious measurement errors.

As is the case with Freedom House scores, disagreements between our trichotomous classification and the Polity measure emerge mainly from intermediate cases that present greater historical ambiguity. Following Epstein et al. (2006: 555) we used the Polity index to classify countries as Autocracies (Polity scores between −10 and 0), Partial democracies (between 1 and 7), and Democracies (8 to 10). Of the 1144 cases classified as autocracies in this way, we coded 88 percent as authoritarian in our trichotomous measure, 11 percent as semi-democratic, and 1 percent as democratic. Of the 586 cases placed by Polity in the range of Partial democracies, we coded 31 percent as authoritarian, 38 percent as semi-democratic, and 31 percent as democratic. And of 342 cases classified by Polity as full democracies, we

coded 4 percent as authoritarian, 13 percent as semi-democratic, and 83 percent as democratic. The visible divergence in the middle category underscores the fact that high correlations among measures of democracy are driven by extreme cases; however, regime classifications present a considerable number of disagreements when dealing with complex regimes that require subtler historical interpretation.

The Polity index is particularly lenient with political regimes in the early twentieth century, and thus a considerable number of country–years treated as Partial democracies by Polity are authoritarian in our classification. Among those are Argentina in 1900-11 (with a Polity score of 1) and 1937-42 (with a score of 5); Bolivia in 1900-35 (2); Cuba in 1902-39 (with a score of 3 for most years); Guatemala in 1921-25 (2) and in 1966-73 (3 for 1966-69, and 1 afterwards); Haiti in 1918-34 (2); Honduras in 1900-28 (5); and Peru in 1900-11 and 1933-38 (2). Of the 181 cases with scores between 1 and 7 in the Polity scale but treated as authoritarian in our classification, 83 percent presented major violations to the principle of free and fair elections. The use of different criteria for the early twentieth century is visible in Figure 1.1, in which the Polity index does not align with our classification of political regimes until the mid-1940s.

An equal number of political regimes treated as partial democracies by Polity are coded as fully democratic in our classification. These typically correspond to early democratic experiments that sometimes present a certain level of ambiguity: the first Radical governments in Argentina (1916-29); Brazil in 1946-63; Chile in 1935-72; Ecuador in 1948-60; Venezuela during the first decade of the Punto Fijo regime (1958-68), and Uruguay in 1915-30. Some of those cases also correspond to rather problematic moments in the third wave of democratization: the Menem administration in Argentina (1989-1998), the

transitions in the Dominican Republic (1978-93) and Peru (1980-87); and the most recent years in El Salvador (1994-2004), and Honduras (1999-2004). In sum, though Polity does not provide a subminimal definition, as Przeworski et al. do, and appears to have fewer systematic problems than Freedom House in coding the Latin American cases, their methodology is still open to question, and their data are weakened by problems of validity.

Smith's Classification

Peter Smith (2005: 347-53) presents a measure of "electoral democracy" that has much in common with the one produced by Przeworski et al. (2000) in its focus on elections, but it is more akin to ours in establishing more qualitative gradations than the authoritarian/democratic dichotomy Przeworkski et al. employ. It covers all Latin American countries (except Cuba) between 1900 and 2000, and places countries into one of four categories: democratic "when national leaders acquired or held office as a result of free and fair elections;" "semi-democratic, under leaders who came to power through elections that were free but not fair;" "oligarchic, when electoral competition was essentially fair but not free;" and non-democratic, which includes all other regimes, including military coups (Smith 2005: 23). Smith's categories focus on elections and do not include any consideration of civil liberties except insofar as they produce unfair elections.

Of the 893 cases classified by Smith as Non-democratic, we coded 95 percent as authoritarian. Of those classified by Smith as Oligarchic (n=340), we coded 53 percent as authoritarian, 38 percent as semi-democratic, and 9 percent as democratic. Semi-democratic regimes in Smith's classification (n=189) were treated by us as authoritarian

(41%) or semi-democratic (55%), and only occasionally as democratic (5%). Finally, of the 493 cases of democracy identified by Smith, we coded 3 percent as authoritarian, 20 percent as semi-democratic, and 77 percent as democratic.

In order to compute Spearman's rank-order correlation between the two measures of democracy, we treated Smith's nominal classification as an ordinal scale, assuming that oligarchic regimes lie somewhere between non-democratic and semi-democratic governments (but without assuming any cardinal distance between the categories). Spearman's rho for the two measures is .81 ($p < .01$), similar to the one between Przeworski et al's and ours (.82).

Oligarchic regimes are heavily concentrated in the early twentieth century (no oligarchic regime appears in Smith's classification after 1967) and thus tend to be authoritarian cases in our sample. Of 340 regime-years classified as oligarchic, 168 (49%) presented in our view major violations to the principle of free and fair elections. Of the remaining 340 country-years, only 7 cases presented major violations to the principle of inclusive voting rights (as the term "oligarchic" would suggest) and 4 presented major violations to civil liberties. That is, the main reason why we coded more than half of the oligarchic regimes as simply authoritarian was not because voting rights were particularly exclusive, but because elections were not competitive.

We also treated 41 percent of the 189 cases coded by Smith as semi-democracies as authoritarian regimes. In about 30 percent of the cases, we identified major violations to the electoral process, and in another 11 percent we found major violations to civil liberties. Among the regimes in the first group are the ones corresponding to the "infamous decade" in Argentina (1932-42) and the Carranza and Calles administrations

in Mexico (1917-28). Among the regimes in the second group are the second Perón administration in Argentina (1951-54) and some of the years preceding the Bolivian revolution (1947-50).

Despite the similarities in the two approaches (based on the coding of an intermediate number of countries using several historical sources), there is some discrepancy between the two classifications. The differences derive principally from Smith's focus on elections: it appears that any election earns a country at least a semi-democratic classification, whereas we find major violations of the electoral requirement in several countries that held elections. Smith (2005: 347) seems conscious of this distinction, saying his is a classification of *electoral* regimes, and speaking usually of *electoral* democracy.

Alternative Views of the Evolution of Democracy

The substantive implications of methodological differences can further be seen by the way in which each dataset portrays the evolution of democracy in Latin America. Figure 1.1 in the introduction showed important convergences in the four measures of democracy we have discussed in this chapter. Despite this convergence, the four measures produce somewhat different perceptions about the process of democratization in Latin America, with Freedom House being the outlier.

Our measure registers a lower level of democracy than the others for the pre-1978 period, and it suggests a sharper contrast between the more democratic 1990s and the authoritarian past than the other measures. Both our measure and Freedom House scores show the region's worst years to be 1976-77. From then until 1990, both measures show

a marked improvement in levels of democracy. But Freedom House begins with a higher estimation of the level of democracy in the region than the other measures and ends with a lower one, so the slope of the line is flatter. As a result of tightened coding standards over time, the Freedom House line gradually approaches our evaluation (and the other two), crossing our line in 1989 and ending below all the other estimates by the mid-nineties. In short, Freedom House scores suggest a less dramatic improvement in democracy than the others.

The different datasets suggest different conclusions about the evolution of democracy. Our measure shows levels of democracy improving in the 1990s. In contrast, according to Freedom House, levels of democracy peaked in 1990. By Freedom House's measure, region-wide levels of democracy were slightly worse in 1991-96 than in 1985-90.

In the second half of the 1980s, Central America was still extricating itself from civil wars. Guatemala in 1985 was not a democracy by any measure, though things improved in 1986. El Salvador was still bogged down in a horrific civil war with massive human rights violations, and Panama was ruled by Noriega. South America also showed pockets of authoritarianism in the 1980s that were gone after 1990. Chile was governed by Pinochet, Brazil was under military rule until 1985, and Paraguay had a dictatorship until 1989. Finally, Mexico was more firmly in the grip of one-party rule in the 1980s than in the 1990s. The only countries where the outlook for democracy was worse in the 1990s were Peru after Fujimori's 1992 *autogolpe*; Colombia, where paramilitary and guerrilla violence increasingly constrained democratic practice beginning in the 1980s; and Venezuela.

Our data, along with Przeworski et al.'s, strongly register a brief period of democratization in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In contrast, the Polity index presents an overly optimistic view of democracy in the early twentieth century and thus downplays this earlier wave of democratization. In short, despite the high correlations among the four measures of democracy, the choices of regime classification have important implications for the substantive understanding of politics.

Other Continuous Measures

The Polity and Freedom House indicators are not the only interval measures of democracy available, but they have advantages in terms of historical coverage. Some thoughtful continuous measures of democracy exist, but they are available for only a few years. Bollen (1980), Bollen and Paxton (2000), Coppedge and Reinicke (1990; Coppedge 2005), and Hadenius (1992: 36–71) constructed valuable multidimensional indicators of democracy. But their indicators require substantial qualitative information that is costly to collect on an annual basis for a long time span and large number of countries. Not coincidentally, they restricted their measure to a single year (1988 for Hadenius), two time-points (1985 and 2000 for Coppedge and Reineke) or three time-points (1960, 1965 and 1980 for Bollen). In theory, these interval measures could be extended to cover longer time periods, but the cost of doing so would be enormous, especially for earlier decades.

Some continuous measures that use less burdensome information present insurmountable problems of validity. Vanhanen (1990, 2000) measured democracy using two dimensions of elections: competition and electoral turnout. His measures involve

objective quantitative information that is available for a long historical period, but they are conceptually flawed. He measured competition by subtracting the largest parties' share of the vote from 100 and participation by taking the percentage of the total population that voted. He then multiplied these two indicators to derive an index of democracy.

Although this index correlates moderately well with other measures (Spearman's *rho* is .73 for our index, .65 for Polity, .71 for Smith's classification, .73 for ACLP, and .80 for Freedom House), the measure of competition is flawed because it essentially measures party system fragmentation. The key issue for democracy is that elections are free and fair; it is not what share of the vote the largest party wins. Contrary to what the index suggests, a system in which the largest party wins 50 percent is not necessarily less democratic than one in which the largest wins 35 percent, and a system in which the largest party wins 25 percent is not necessarily twice as democratic as one in which it wins 50 percent. The measure of participation—voter turnout—is also flawed. Voter turnout depends on the age structure of the society; it discriminates against countries with youthful populations in which a large share of the population has not yet reached voting age. Higher rates of electoral participation may reflect compulsory voting laws rather than a more participatory environment. For democracy, the crucial point is that legal barriers, civil rights, and political conditions *allow* the adult population to participate; a lower turnout does not necessarily imply less democracy. Extreme values in those indicators (e.g., when the ruling party "wins" the election with 90 percent of the vote, or when—as discussed in previous sections—electoral participation is unusually low for a given historical period) normally indicate failures in the democratic process, but variance

in those items does not map with strict monotonicity into latent concepts of free and fair elections or inclusive franchise. Equally important, Vanhanen's measure fails to incorporate any assessment of civil liberties and political rights.

Recent Measures of Democracy in Latin America

Perhaps as a result of growing dissatisfaction with the Polity and Freedom House measures of democracy, in the past few years two works have provided new regime codings for Latin America. Both are somewhat similar to ours.

Originally in the context of a United Nations Development Programme (2005) project to evaluate democracy in Latin America, Gerardo Munck (2008) has produced a coding of electoral democracy that is conceptually narrower than ours, as is suggested by his concept "electoral democracy." It aggregates measures of voting rights, clean elections, free elections, and whether elections determine the occupancy of the national legislature and executive. Munck's measure focuses on the first two dimensions that we include and largely excludes our third and fourth dimensions. For example, his measure does not consider state use of torture (Chapter 4)—a major difference from our definition of democracy (and from many others, including Dahl 1971 and Sartori 1987). He also does not take into consideration our fourth component, whether the elected officials actually are the de facto rulers.

To derive a score for democracy in a given country-year, Munck multiplies a score that ranges from 0 to 1 for each of the four components. The product of the scores for these four elements is normalized, producing a continuous Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) that ranges from 0 (no democracy) to 1 (full democracy). Intermediate values

denote greater or lesser degrees of democracy. The series includes values for 1960, 1977, 1985, and 1990-2002. The inclusion of more continuous values for the underlying components allows for some fine-grained differentiations that our measure obscures.

This index tracks ours closely. If we convert ours to run from 0 (authoritarian) to .5 (semi-democracy) to 1 (democracy), only 17% of the codings (49 country-years) differ by more than .25.[26] Many of these differences reflect the use of different cut-off points. We used a snapshot of the country as of the end of the year regardless of what else happened that year, while Munck used different rules depending on whether an event occurred early or late in the year, or whether more than one regime change took place in a single country-year. Most of the differences are attributable to our assignment of a greater weight to civil rights as an independent element. About 37 percent of the differences correspond to cases that present partial violations of civil rights, and 25 percent correspond to cases with partial violations to the principle of civilian power. Munck's index allows for a more fine-grained measure than ours, but it covers a much shorter time period.

Finally, Bowman, Lehoucq, and Mahoney (2005) provide a careful coding of Central America for the 20th century. Conceptually, their measure is very similar to ours. They used the same four disaggregated dimensions of democracy and a fifth one (national sovereignty) to produce the same trichotomous classification. (We include national sovereignty in our fourth dimension, whether elected officials serve as the de facto rulers, rather than treating it as a separate dimension.) Empirically, they set a high standard for regime classifications. More than previous work on regime classification,

they emphasize the need to use historical sources carefully and to document historiographic decisions as part of the replication procedure. Their work also shows that regime classifications are potentially dynamic; as debates about regime classification unfold, our assessment of political regimes may need to be adjusted.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we present an alternative categorization of political regimes in Latin America since 1900. Our attempt to construct a new classification pushed us to rethink five broader issues regarding regime classification. First, regime classification should rest on sound concepts and definitions. A classification of the extent to which regimes are democratic should be based on a procedural, minimalist but not subminimal definition of democracy. Our definition falls squarely within the contemporary debate, yet it is more stringent than many, leading to different perceptions about how democratic Latin America was before 1978. In addition, the measurement of democracy should rest on the same dimensions as those included in the definition, contrary to what Jaggers and Gurr (1995) do. Among the three previous measures of democracy that we discussed at length, only Przeworski et al. (2000) hinge their measure on their definition.

Second, regime classification should be based on explicit and sensible coding and aggregation rules (Munck and Verkuilen 2002). Explicit rules enable other scholars to more easily evaluate classifications and also promote evenness of judgments. Przeworski et al. (2000) do a particularly good job of laying out their coding rules; conversely, Freedom House fails to indicate how it assesses cases.

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[26] We use .25 as the cutoff point because that is the point at which Munck's scoring

Third, although social science should when possible rely on objective and clearly measurable concepts, a hard and fast distinction between "observables" and subjective judgments is not useful for classifying political regimes. Regime classification must rest on empirically observable phenomena, but judgments about whether a violation of a particular dimension of democracy warrants classifying a certain regime as less than democratic are inevitably partly subjective. All four dimensions of our measure of regimes and democracy require an evaluation of observable phenomena, though the civil rights component, for example, is often harder to assess than the presence of competitive elections. Subjective judgments are unavoidable if we are to retain a conceptually valid definition of democracy. We rely on informed judgment and knowledge of the cases to make the coding decisions reliable while retaining essential aspects of the definition of democracy to make them valid.

Fourth, although continuous measures of democracy offer advantages, we agree with Przeworski et al. (2000) and Sartori (1987, 1991) that categorical classifications also serve useful purposes. The traditional discourse on political regimes is categorical. Our trichotomous measure efficiently captures conceptual distinctions that are important to comparative social scientists. In addition, continuous measures usually fail to convey the rich theoretical implications that more conceptually grounded categories do. They also demand a level of information that may not be available or may be very costly to develop.

Fifth, we advocate a trichotomy rather than a dichotomy for classifying regimes. Dichotomous measures fail to capture intermediate regime types, obscuring variation that

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comes closer to another of our categories than to the one we assigned.

is essential for studying many political regimes in what Samuel Huntington (1991) called the "third wave of democratization." Our trichotomous ordinal scale acknowledges the trade-off between using meaningful regime labels and fine measurement. The idea of semi-democracy allows us to conceptualize historical regimes that do not fit neatly in a dichotomous classification, such the first Perón administration in Argentina (1946-51), the MNR (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement) government in Bolivia after the 1952 revolution (in particular for 1956-64), the *Frente Nacional* period in Colombia (1958-74), and the Arévalo and Arbenz administrations in Guatemala (1945-54). It also describes the many incomplete processes of democratization during the third wave—e.g., Mexico until the July 2000 presidential election, Nicaragua, and Paraguay—and cases of democratic erosion in the 1990s (e.g., Colombia).

Our trichotomous measure is based on a more stringent definition of democracy than Schumpeter's and Przeworski et al.'s, and yet is designed to minimize information costs and ensure reliability. It attempts to strike a balance between the inadequate differentiation of dichotomous measures and the huge information demands of continuous measures. It is based on enough knowledge of the twenty countries we cover to make reasoned judgments about the less easily observable dimensions of the regimes in question. Its combination of a thick conceptual grounding and a parsimonious coding demand is well suited for a medium-sized N study in which a research team can make informed judgments about cases.

We hope that our regime classification contributes to comparative scholarship on democracy and on Latin America. Much of the comparative research into the causes and consequences of democracy rests on regime classifications. If, as we argue, the main

existing classifications are flawed due to political biases, subminimal definitions, invalid measures, or other sources of systematic bias, conclusions about political regimes are likely to be affected.

Despite the attractiveness of continuous measures of democracy, the available continuous measures for Latin America pose validity and reliability problems. In fact, it was dissatisfaction with the existing measures that provide annual ratings, a recognition of the large advantages of annual classifications, and the enormous difficulty of reproducing the good interval measures (Bollen 1980, 1993; Coppedge and Reinicke 1990; Hadenius 1992) for every year from 1900 to 2007 that prompted our decision to build our own classification. Although our trichotomous classification should not supersede efforts to construct more fine-grained measures, we believe that it has fewer serious coding errors than the two widely used interval scales (Freedom House and Polity) that are available for a long historical period.

Appendix 2.1: Classification of Latin American Political Regimes, 1900-2007. Aggregate and Component Scores [09-08 / w Ecuador, Peru, & Panama revised]

Country	*From*	*To*	***Regime***	*Elections*	*Franchise*	*Civil Liberties*	*Civilian Power*
Argentina	1900	1911	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Argentina	1912	1915	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Argentina	1916	1929	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Argentina	1930	1945	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Argentina	1946	1950	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Argentina	1951	1954	**A**	PV	NV	MV	NV
Argentina	1955	1957	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Argentina	1958	1961	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Argentina	1962	1962	**A**	PV	NV	MV	MV
Argentina	1963	1965	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Argentina	1966	1972	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Argentina	1973	1974	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Argentina	1975	1975	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Argentina	1976	1982	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Argentina	1983	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Bolivia	1900	1908	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Bolivia	1909	1912	**A**	PV	MV	PV	NV
Bolivia	1913	1925	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Bolivia	1926	1929	**A**	PV	MV	MV	NV
Bolivia	1930	1930	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Bolivia	1931	1933	**A**	PV	MV	MV	NV
Bolivia	1934	1939	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Bolivia	1940	1942	**A**	PV	MV	MV	PV
Bolivia	1943	1946	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Bolivia	1947	1950	**A**	PV	PV	MV	NV
Bolivia	1951	1955	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Bolivia	1956	1963	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Bolivia	1964	1965	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Bolivia	1966	1968	**A**	PV	PV	MV	NV
Bolivia	1969	1978	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Bolivia	1979	1979	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Bolivia	1980	1981	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Bolivia	1982	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Brazil	1900	1945	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Brazil	1946	1953	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Brazil	1954	1955	**SD**	NV	NV	NV	PV
Brazil	1956	1963	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Brazil	1964	1984	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Brazil	1985	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Chile	1900	1923	**SD**	PV	PV	PV	NV
Chile	1924	1924	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Chile	1925	1926	**SD**	NV	PV	PV	PV
Chile	1927	1931	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Chile	1932	1972	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Chile	1973	1989	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Chile	1990	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV

Country	*From*	*To*	***Regime***	*Elections*	*Franchise*	*Civil Liberties*	*Civilian Power*
Colombia	1900	1909	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Colombia	1910	1935	**SD**	PV	PV	PV	NV
Colombia	1936	1944	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Colombia	1945	1945	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Colombia	1946	1948	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Colombia	1949	1957	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Colombia	1958	1962	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Colombia	1963	1973	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Colombia	1974	1989	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Colombia	1990	2007	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Costa Rica	1900	1901	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Costa Rica	1902	1905	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Costa Rica	1906	1909	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Costa Rica	1910	1916	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Costa Rica	1917	1919	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Costa Rica	1920	1927	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Costa Rica	1928	1947	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Costa Rica	1948	1948	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Costa Rica	1949	1950	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	PV
Costa Rica	1951	1952	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Costa Rica	1953	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Cuba	1900	1908	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Cuba	1909	1912	**A**	PV	PV	MV	MV
Cuba	1913	1915	**A**	PV	PV	MV	PV
Cuba	1916	1939	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Cuba	1940	1943	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Cuba	1944	1950	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Cuba	1951	1951	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Cuba	1952	2007	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Dominican Republic	1900	1901	**A**	PV	MV	PV	PV
Dominican Republic	1902	1913	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Dominican Republic	1914	1915	**A**	PV	MV	NV	PV
Dominican Republic	1916	1923	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Dominican Republic	1924	1927	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Dominican Republic	1928	1961	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Dominican Republic	1962	1962	**A**	NV	NV	PV	MV
Dominican Republic	1963	1965	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Dominican Republic	1966	1969	**A**	PV	NV	MV	NV
Dominican Republic	1970	1977	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Dominican Republic	1978	1993	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Dominican Republic	1994	1995	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Dominican Republic	1996	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Ecuador	1900	1910	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Ecuador	1911	1911	**A**	PV	NV	NV	MV
Ecuador	1912	1933	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Ecuador	1934	1934	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Ecuador	1935	1943	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Ecuador	1944	1945	**SD**	PV	PV	PV	NV
Ecuador	1946	1947	**A**	MV	--	--	--

Country	*From*	*To*	***Regime***	*Elections*	*Franchise*	*Civil Liberties*	*Civilian Power*
Ecuador	1948	1960	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Ecuador	1961	1962	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	PV
Ecuador	1963	1967	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Ecuador	1968	1969	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Ecuador	1970	1978	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Ecuador	1979	1999	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Ecuador	2000	2000	**SD**	NV	NV	NV	PV
Ecuador	2001	2003	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Ecuador	2004	2007	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
El Salvador	1900	1966	**A**	MV	--	--	--
El Salvador	1967	1971	**A**	PV	NV	MV	PV
El Salvador	1972	1981	**A**	MV	--	--	--
El Salvador	1982	1983	**A**	PV	NV	MV	PV
El Salvador	1984	1993	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
El Salvador	1994	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Guatemala	1900	1925	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Guatemala	1926	1930	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Guatemala	1931	1944	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Guatemala	1945	1945	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Guatemala	1946	1949	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	PV
Guatemala	1950	1953	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Guatemala	1954	1965	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Guatemala	1966	1969	**A**	PV	NV	MV	MV
Guatemala	1970	1985	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Guatemala	1986	1992	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	PV
Guatemala	1993	1993	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Guatemala	1994	1997	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	PV
Guatemala	1998	1999	**SD**	NV	NV	NV	PV
Guatemala	2000	2001	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Guatemala	2002	2007	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Haiti	1900	1994	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Haiti	1995	1997	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Haiti	1998	1998	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	PV
Haiti	1999	2005	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Haiti	2006	2007	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Honduras	1900	1902	**A**	PV	NV	PV	MV
Honduras	1903	1928	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Honduras	1929	1932	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Honduras	1933	1934	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Honduras	1935	1956	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Honduras	1957	1962	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Honduras	1963	1970	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Honduras	1971	1971	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Honduras	1972	1981	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Honduras	1982	1985	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	PV
Honduras	1986	1989	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Honduras	1990	1990	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	PV
Honduras	1991	1998	**SD**	NV	NV	NV	PV
Honduras	1999	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV

Country	*From*	*To*	***Regime***	*Elections*	*Franchise*	*Civil Liberties*	*Civilian Power*
Mexico	1900	1910	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Mexico	1911	1912	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Mexico	1913	1987	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Mexico	1988	1993	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Mexico	1994	1999	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Mexico	2000	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Nicaragua	1900	1928	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Nicaragua	1929	1935	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Nicaragua	1936	1983	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Nicaragua	1984	1989	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Nicaragua	1990	1995	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Nicaragua	1996	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Panama	1904	1915	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Panama	1916	1917	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Panama	1918	1927	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Panama	1928	1931	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Panama	1932	1944	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Panama	1945	1947	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Panama	1948	1955	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Panama	1956	1963	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Panama	1964	1967	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Panama	1968	1989	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Panama	1990	1990	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Panama	1991	1993	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Panama	1994	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Paraguay	1900	1927	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Paraguay	1928	1931	**A**	PV	NV	MV	NV
Paraguay	1932	1988	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Paraguay	1989	1992	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Paraguay	1993	1995	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Paraguay	1996	1997	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Paraguay	1998	1999	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	PV
Paraguay	2000	2007	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Peru	1900	1911	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Peru	1912	1913	**SD**	PV	PV	PV	NV
Peru	1914	1914	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Peru	1915	1918	**SD**	NV	PV	PV	NV
Peru	1919	1932	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Peru	1933	1935	**A**	NV	PV	MV	MV
Peru	1936	1938	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Peru	1939	1947	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Peru	1948	1955	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Peru	1956	1961	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Peru	1962	1962	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Peru	1963	1967	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Peru	1968	1979	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Peru	1980	1982	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Peru	1983	1984	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Peru	1985	1987	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV

Country	*From*	*To*	***Regime***	*Elections*	*Franchise*	*Civil Liberties*	*Civilian Power*
Peru	1988	1991	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Peru	1992	1994	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Peru	1995	1999	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	NV
Peru	2000	2000	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Peru	2001	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Uruguay	1900	1903	**A**	PV	PV	MV	NV
Uruguay	1904	1914	**SD**	PV	PV	NV	NV
Uruguay	1915	1930	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Uruguay	1931	1932	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Uruguay	1933	1937	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Uruguay	1938	1941	**SD**	PV	NV	PV	NV
Uruguay	1942	1972	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Uruguay	1973	1984	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Uruguay	1985	2007	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Venezuela	1900	1945	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Venezuela	1946	1946	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Venezuela	1947	1947	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Venezuela	1948	1957	**A**	MV	--	--	--
Venezuela	1958	1998	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Venezuela	1999	1999	**SD**	PV	NV	NV	NV
Venezuela	2000	2001	**D**	NV	NV	NV	NV
Venezuela	2002	2007	**SD**	NV	NV	PV	PV

Note: D = Democracy, SD = Semi-Democracy, A = Authoritarian; NV= No violation, PV = Partial violation, MV = Major violation, -- = Not coded (used, in light of our aggregation rule, so as to reduce the costs of gathering information when elections were overtly non-democratic).