DEMOCRATIC SURVIVABILITY IN LATIN AMERICA

Scott Mainwaring

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Scott Mainwaring, Eugene Conley Professor and former chair of the Department of Government and International Studies, is Director of the Kellogg Institute. His most recent book is *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave: The Case of Brazil* (Stanford University Press, 1999).

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In this paper I document a sharp increase in the number of democracies and a demise of authoritarianism in Latin America in the period since 1978. This has been an unprecedented period of democracy in Latin America. At the beginning of this period Latin America had only three democracies: Colombia, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. By 1990 virtually every government in the region was democratic or semidemocratic. Moreover, in contrast to what occurred in earlier waves of democratization in Latin America, this wave has lasted much longer and has been broader in scope.

This is not to present a roseate view of the quality of democracy in Latin America or to suggest that most of these democracies are consolidated. Many of the democratic and semidemocratic governments in the region have serious shortcomings. However, these shortcomings should not obscure the sea change that has occurred in Latin American politics. A region that throughout its history was overwhelmingly authoritarian has become mostly democratic and semidemocratic.

I then attempt to account for these changes. The question of why this shift has occurred is linked to the time-old issue of the social conditions favorable to democracy, around which a robust literature has revolved. Although there have been many fine analyses of the erosion of authoritarian regimes in Latin America (e.g., Stepan 1988), of transitions to democracy in the region (e.g., O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986), and of democracy in individual countries or sets of countries, little has been written about why democracy has proven to be more enduring since 1978 than ever before in the region. In addition to being intrinsically important, the question of why democratic survivability has increased in Latin America can help shed light on the broader issue of what conditions favor democracy.

I claim that three factors help explain the vicissitudes of democracy in Latin America, including why the region has become mostly democratic since 1978. The first explanation revolves around the structural transformations unleashed by modernization: urbanization, growing literacy, greater wealth, a larger working class, and the gradual reduction of the political power of the landed elite. These structural changes were

favorable to democratization even though they do not fully explain it. In previous decades, lower rates of education, wealth, and urbanization provided less fertile breeding ground for democracy.

Second, from the left to the right of the spectrum, political attitudes changed in Latin America in the 1980s, toward a growing valorization of democracy. This development permitted a change away from the polarized atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, international support for democracy, especially from the United States, increased in the second half of the 1980s. In an era of growing internationalization in Latin America, new institutional mechanisms have formed to help protect democracy. Here, too, the contrast to earlier decades is significant.

Democracy and Authoritarianism in Latin America, 1940–97

My first purpose is to trace the historical record of democratic survivability in Latin America in the period since 1940. A tremendous amount has been written on political regimes in different Latin American countries, but relatively little has been written on democracy in the region as a whole. The main exceptions are Diamond and Linz (1989), who discuss the region as a whole but not individual countries; Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens (1992), who systematically categorize regime types for South America but not for Central America; Hartlyn and Valenzuela (1994), who mostly confine their analysis to eight major countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela); and Collier and Collier (1991), who analyze the relationship between the labor movement and political regimes in eight countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela). Remmer (1996) compares the sustainability of democratic and authoritarian regimes in South America but does not analyze in depth the conditions favorable to democracy.

Because these are important contributions, it is worth briefly noting some of the differences in my work vis-à-vis theirs. I pay more attention to international factors than these previous works. The international dissemination of ideas and changing orientations

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of international actors toward democracy have been a key part of the demise of authoritarianism and heightened democratic survivability in Latin America. Except for Whitehead (1986, 1991, 1996), none of the main overviews of Latin American democracy has highlighted these considerations.

I emphasize structural underpinnings of democracy, especially the level of development, more than Hartlyn and Valenzuela (1994) or Diamond and Linz (1989) but less than Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens (1992). For Latin America, the level of development increases or diminishes the odds that democracy will be implemented and survive, but it far from determines regime types. Like Hartlyn and Valenzuela (1994), I focus more on the attitudes of political elites than Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens (1992). Political attitudes are relatively autonomous of the level of development, and they are crucial in understanding prospects for democracy.

Dealing with 19 countries implies an intermediate research strategy between studies that deal with one country or a few countries and larger *n* studies that examine democracy or political regimes for the Third World (e.g., Hadenius 1992; Power and Gasiorowski 1997) or the entire world (e.g., Bollen 1980; Bollen and Jackman 1985; Dahl 1971; Przeworski and Limongi 1997; Vanhanen 1990). This intermediate strategy has some compelling advantages. The much larger *n* than single-country case studies enables us to examine some relationships (e.g., between level of development and regime type) in a more systematic manner than a single case would allow. At the same time, the *n* is sufficiently small that an analyst can make somewhat informed judgments about all nineteen cases. Moreover, the number of official languages is small enough (Spanish and Portuguese except for Haiti) for an analyst to be informed by the academic debates in the countries in question. Holding constant some of the major factors that affect prospects for democracy because these cases share some common features reduces the normal disadvantages of a medium-sized *n* (too many variables and too few cases) compared to a larger one.

One final advantage of the intermediate *n* strategy has to do with the fact that this particular set of countries is a region of the world with distinctive regional dynamics and

strong influences from one country to the next. Latin America has had waves of democracy, and these waves have both been influenced by and significantly shaped the global waves that Huntington (1991) analyzed. However, the interesting contrasts between democratic survivability in Latin America and at a global level suggest that regions are an important unit of analysis.

Thematically, the closest studies to this one are Przeworski et al. (1996) and Przeworski and Limongi (1997). These works deal with a much larger set of countries—the great majority of countries in the contemporary world. While following some of the methodologies used by Przeworski and his collaborators, this paper delves more into the specifics of one region. It also focuses more on changing values and changes in the international system in explaining democratic survivability. Finally, many of the substantive results for Latin America diverge from the findings that Przeworski et al. report for their broader set of countries.

Regime Classification

I classified governments as democratic, semidemocratic, or authoritarian for the period from 1940 until 1997. To be classified as democratic, a government must meet four criteria: 1) the president and legislature are chosen in open and fair competitive elections;[1] 2) these elected authorities have the real governing power, as opposed to a situation in which elected officials are overshadowed by the military or by a nonelected shadow figure; 3) civil liberties are respected; and 4) the franchise includes the sizable majority of the adult population.[2] For the 1940s less stringent criteria for the inclusiveness of the franchise are warranted. During this period a government could be democratic even if women or the illiterate were not yet enfranchised. I included Chile as

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1 This definition is tailor-made for the Latin American cases, where presidentialism has reigned supreme. In a parliamentary system only the parliament needs to be chosen in free and fair elections.

2 For similar definitions of democracy, see Diamond, Linz, and Lipset (1989: xvi–xvii); Gasiorowski (1993); Linz and Stepan (1996: 3–15). For purposes of this paper, I do not distinguish between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. There have been few if any totalitarian regimes in Latin America.

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democratic despite the exclusion of the illiterate until 1970 because this exclusion probably did not appreciably alter electoral outcomes. The notion and practice of democracy are somewhat historically contingent, and imposing the participatory standards of today on the 1940s would not be fully appropriate. This is not, of course, to condone the exclusion of women or those not fortunate enough to read or write.

A semidemocratic government or restricted democracy refers to a civilian government elected under reasonably fair conditions, but with significant restrictions in participation, competition, and/or the observance of civil liberties. An authoritarian regime has little effective political competition. Most authoritarian regimes also impose restrictions on political participation and civil liberties.

This analysis focuses on 19 Latin American countries. I excluded the British-speaking Caribbean, Surinam, and Belize in order to focus on countries that have been independent for a longer time than these countries. In addition, several scholars have argued that British colonization has a positive independent effect on the likelihood that a country will be democratic (Domínguez 1993; Weiner 1987; Bollen and Jackman 1985). Restricting the analysis to countries of Latin heritage eliminated the need to control for differences in colonial background. I excluded Cuba because of difficulties in obtaining GNP per capita data comparable with that for the other countries.[3]

Table 1 indicates the coding of the nineteen countries from 1940–97. A wide array of sources was useful in making decisions about how to categorize regimes. Many cases are consensual, but others involve complex borderline judgments, reflecting the hybrid (mixed authoritarian and democratic) nature of several Latin American political regimes.

Figure 1 shows the number of democratic, semidemocratic, and authoritarian governments in Latin America for every year between 1940 and 1996. To avoid having to get exact months or dates of regime changes, I treated the year of a regime transition as belonging to the new regime. Thus, 1973 (the year of the military coups) counts as part

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[3] All economic data in this paper come from various sources of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which has not provided GDP data for Cuba in recent decades.

of the authoritarian period for Chile and Uruguay. In a few cases, there were two regime transitions in the same year. For example, in the Dominican Republic a short-lived democratic government took office in early 1963 but fell prey to a coup later that year. I have coded such cases as belonging half to one category and half to the other.

Table 1

Classification of Latin American Governments, 1940–97

D = democratic S = semidemocratic A = authoritarian

Country	Period	Classification
Argentina	1930–46	A
	1946–51	S
	1951–58	A
	1958–61	S
	1962–63	A
	1963–66	S
	1966–73	A
	1973–76	D
	1976–83	A
	1983–97	D
Bolivia	1825–1952	A
	1952–64	S
	1964–82	A
	1983–97	D
Brazil	1822–1945	A
	1946–64	S
	1964–85	A
	1985–97	D
Chile	1932–73	D
	1973–90	A
	1990–97	D
Colombia	1936–49	S
	1949–57	A
	1958–74	S
	1974–90	D
	1990–97	S
Costa Rica	1918–49	S
	1949–97	D
Dominican Rep.	1930–62	A
	1963	D
	1963–78	A
	1978–94	D
	1994–97	S
Ecuador	1940–44	S
	1944–48	A
	1948–61	S
	1961–68	A
	1968–70	A
	1970–79	A
	1979–97	D
El Salvador	1931–84	A
	1984–92	S
	1992–97	D
Guatemala	1839–1944	A
	1944–54	D
	1954–85	A
	1986–97	S
Haiti	1815–1991	A
	1991	S
	1991–97	A
Honduras	1838–1957	A
	1957–63	S
	1963–81	A
	1982–97	S
Mexico	1821–88	A
	1988–97	S
Nicaragua	1838–84	A
	1984–97	S
Panama	1903–56	A
	1956–68	S
	1968–89	A
	1990–94	S
	1994–97	D
Paraguay	1918–89	A
	1989–97	S
Peru	1939–48	S
	1948–56	A
	1956–62	S
	1962–63	A
	1963–68	D
	1968–80	A
	1980–90	D
	1990–92	S
	1992–94	A
	1995–97	S
Uruguay	1933–42	A
	1942–73	D
	1973–84	A
	1985–97	D
Venezuela	1830–1945	A
	1945–48	D
	1948–58	A
	1958–97	D

Sources: Among others, Diamond, Linz, and Lipset (1989), Gasiorowski (1993), Mainwaring and Scully (1995), Rueschemeyer et al. (1992), Hartlyn and Valenzuela (1994), and some individual country studies. For the post-1972 period, I also consulted the annual publications of Freedom House.

Figure 1

Democratic Governments in Latin America, 1940–97
Number of Governments in Each Category

Year

- - - - - - authoritarian ——— semidemocratic ━━ democratic

Sources: Table 1 and Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*, various years.

The increase in the number of democracies since 1978 is dramatic, and the demise of authoritarianism even more so. The magnitude of this change is striking even to those who are familiar with the evolution of political regimes in Latin America. In 1940 only one of these 19 countries (Chile) was a democracy, and only four others (Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Peru) were semidemocratic. This situation improved slightly as the latter phases of World War II gave rise to a brief period of political liberalization and

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democratization in several countries. In 1942 Uruguay reestablished democracy, followed by democratic experiments in Guatemala (1944–54), Venezuela (1945–8), and Costa Rica (1949–present). Argentina and Brazil shifted from the authoritarian to the semidemocratic camp in 1946.

But the progress of democratization proved ephemeral. As the Cold War set in, the US government and militaries, oligarchies, and conservatives in Latin America proved intolerant of progressive-leaning reformist regimes. For the US during the Cold War national security interests usually took precedence over democracy (Packenham 1973); much the same was true for conservatives in Latin America. Democracy broke down in Venezuela in 1948 and in Guatemala in 1954. It quickly eroded in Argentina as Juan Perón (1946–55) became the first democratically elected leader of an authoritarian regime in the twentieth century. The number of authoritarian regimes, which had decreased from 14 in 1940–1 to 10 by 1946–7, increased back to 13 by 1951. After the 1954 coup in Guatemala, only Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay remained in the democratic camp, and only three others (Bolivia, Brazil, and Ecuador) were semidemocratic.

In 1958 a new wave of democratization began as Venezuela switched back to democracy. That same year Colombia established a semidemocratic regime (political competition was restricted until 1974). Argentina also instituted a semidemocratic government in 1958: the Frondizi government was elected in competitive elections with broad participation and civil liberties were respected, but the Peronist party—Argentina's largest—was proscribed.

As had occurred with the brief wave of democratization in 1942–8, this one proved fragile. In the aftermath of the Cuban revolution, politics became deeply polarized in much of the region. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a succession of democratic breakdowns. Military coups toppled elected governments in Peru in 1962, Bolivia and Brazil in 1964, Argentina in 1966, and Peru again in 1968. The two oldest democracies in the region, Chile and Uruguay, succumbed to breakdowns in 1973, leading to highly repressive military regimes. Another coup occurred in Argentina in

1976, spawning an even more brutal military dictatorship.[4] By 1977 only Colombia, Costa Rica, and Venezuela were democratic. The other 16 countries were ruled by patently authoritarian governments. In the post-1940 period this was the zenith of authoritarianism in Latin America. Paradoxically, it was also toward the beginning of what Huntington (1991) has called "democracy's third wave."[5]

As the world's attention was focused on the atrocities committed by the generals in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay and on the revolutionary upheaval in Nicaragua, the third wave of democratization began in 1978 in the Dominican Republic, a small, comparatively poor country with deeply entrenched authoritarian traditions. In 1979 the generals relinquished power in Ecuador, and one year later Peru's generals did likewise. By 1980 the region already had more democratic governments (six) than ever before, and the number continued to increase throughout the rest of the decade. In 1981 Honduras inaugurated a civilian government chosen in fair and free elections. Thus, whereas the third wave of democratization at a global level began in some of the wealthiest nondemocracies (Spain in particular), in Latin America it was spearheaded by poor countries.

Then the cycle of military regimes in the southern cone began to exhaust itself, starting with the Argentine generals' bellicose misadventure in the Falklands/Malvinas in 1982, which paved the way to a transition to democracy the following year. The military regime in Bolivia eroded, giving way to democratic elections in 1982. Democratic governments took office in Uruguay in 1984 and Brazil in 1985, replacing military regimes in both countries.

Several countries experienced their first ever taste of democracy in the mid and late 1980s. Even the poor Central American countries savaged by civil wars in the early

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[4] This series of democratic breakdowns generated a rich literature (Collier 1979, Linz and Stepan 1978, O'Donnell 1973, Santos 1986, Stepan 1971).

[5] The third wave started with the coup that deposed the old authoritarian regime in Portugal in 1974, quickly leading to the establishment of democracy. Greece (1974) and Spain (1975) followed shortly thereafter. The first wave occurred between 1828 and the 1920s, and the second between the 1940s and 1962.

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1980s enjoyed more open elections than before. Civilian presidents elected in reasonably fair circumstances took office in Guatemala in 1986 and El Salvador in 1985. They did not end the atrocities of the civil wars until the 1990s, but they gradually curbed the scale of human rights violations. In view of the relentless history of authoritarianism in both countries and the brutal repression and bloody civil wars of the 1980s, this accomplishment is significant. The US invasion of Panama in 1989 deposed dictator Manuel Noriega and initiated a long process of establishing democracy. A 1989 coup ousted long-time dictator Alfredo Stroessner in Paraguay and began a process of liberalization and democratization. The 1990 election in Nicaragua, resulting in the Sandinistas' defeat, paved the way to peace negotiations in El Salvador and Guatemala. By 1990 the only patently authoritarian government in the region was the Haitian. By 1994 no authoritarian governments except Cuba and Haiti remained. The shift away from authoritarianism has been dramatic.

When the unexpected comes to pass, analysts easily forget how unlikely such an outcome seemed. So it is with democratization in Latin America. Today we take it for granted that competitive political regimes have survived, but when these transitions to democracy or semidemocracy took place many analysts saw little chance that democracy would endure. Enumerating factors that worked against democracy in Latin America, Wiarda (1986: 341) argued that "[T]he prospects for democracy are hardly encouraging… None of these economic conditions is encouraging to the cause of democracy in Latin America, nor do they help established democracies in the region to survive… Given rising expectations, competition for control of the fewer resources that do exist becomes intense, polarized, and violent.… Liberal-pluralist democracy is difficult to sustain under such conditions." Many analysts from diverse political and theoretical orientations concurred.

It is no great surprise that democracy has survived in Uruguay since 1984 or in Chile since 1990. Both countries had fairly strong democratic traditions prior to the 1973 breakdowns, and Chile's economy was in good condition when General Pinochet relinquished the presidential sash. However, these two countries are the exception rather

than the norm. Elsewhere democracy (or even restricted democracy) faced daunting challenges: weak democratic traditions and institutions, egregious social disparities, and parlous economic conditions.

Bolivia's democratic stability of the post-1982 period epitomizes the surprises. Prior to 1982 Bolivia had been plagued by a long history of chronic instability and frequent coups. The country had precarious democratic traditions, having never experienced democracy prior to 1982 and a semidemocratic regime only for a twelve year interregnum (1952–64) and for several months during the chaotic 1978–82 period. Hernán Siles Suazo, the new democratic president (1982–5), inherited disastrous economic conditions and proceeded to make them worse through mismanagement. Inflation hit 8,171% in 1985, and per capita income slid downward throughout most of the first decade of democracy. This economic decline exacerbated poverty in one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Per capita income in 1982 stood at 759 dollars (in 1980 dollars), less than one-fourth the level of the region's wealthiest countries (Argentina and Venezuela). Bolivia has one of the most ethnically divided societies in Latin America, with an indigenous majority that for centuries has been exploited by a ladino (of white origin) minority. All of these conditions augured poorly for democracy.

The democratic regime tottered during its first years. By the mid-1990s, however, democracy appeared to be remarkably stable. Free and fair elections occurred in 1982, 1985, 1989, 1993, and 1997, resulting in alternations in power in 1985 and 1993. The Bolivian Congress became accustomed to institutionalizing power-sharing arrangements. The Bolivian case is a remarkable example of democracy surviving despite formidable structural and economic circumstances (Mayorga 1997). It is, however, not the only case of a democracy surviving in the face of daunting challenges.

Most Latin American countries have experienced their longest period ever of democracy in the 1980s and 1990s. Table 2 shows the longest period of full democracy that Latin American countries have enjoyed. Only three countries—Chile (1932–73), Guatemala (1944–54), and Uruguay (1942–73)—previously enjoyed longer periods of continuous democracy than they have in the post-1978 period.

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That democracy has survived despite poor social and economic results makes this achievement all the more noteworthy. Democratization in Latin America roughly coincided with the debt crisis and later with a transition from state-led development to market-oriented policies. Both factors led to short-term disruptions and imposed high costs on national economies. For the region as a whole, per capita income was flat in the long period between 1980 and 1995. In 1983 few analysts would have predicted that democracy in Bolivia, Argentina, and Brazil would be able to withstand annual inflation rates that reached 8,171%, 4,923%, and 2,489%, respectively, or that Bolivia and Ecuador, with their long histories of political instability, would witness a succession of democratically elected presidents. Similarly, the gruesome repression associated with El Salvador's "reactionary despotism" (Baloyra 1983) in the early 1980s gradually gave rise to a succession of semidemocratic governments by the 1990s.

Table 2

Longest Period of Uninterrupted Democracy by Country

Country	Years
Argentina	1983–98
Bolivia	1982–98
Brazil	1985–98
Chile	1932–73
Colombia	1974–90
Costa Rica	1949–98
Dominican Republic	1978–94
Ecuador	1979–98
El Salvador	1992–98
Guatemala	1944–54
Haiti	*
Honduras	*
Mexico	*
Nicaragua	*
Panama	1994–98
Paraguay	*

Peru	1980–90
Uruguay	1942–73
Venezuela	1958–98

* No period of full democracy has taken place.

Democracy as a Continuous Variable

So far I have treated democracy as a trichotomous variable, but it can usefully be thought of as a continuous variable (Bollen 1980; Coppedge and Reineke 1990; Dahl 1971; Hadenius 1992; Vanhanen 1990). There are two advantages to analyzing democracy as a continuous variable. Conceptually, this option is sensible because countries can be more or less democratic within a wide range that cannot be fully captured by a trichotomous classification. In addition, continuous measures allow for more satisfactory treatment of some quantitative relationships.

The question is how to operationalize a continuous measure of democracy. So far there have been three main approaches to this problem: 1) scholars who have developed scores based on data that are readily available, such that it is relatively simple to give each country a score for a longer time period; 2) scholars who have constructed more sophisticated measures but based on data that are not readily available for longer time; and 3) Freedom House scores.

Vanhanen (1990) is an example of the first approach. Following Dahl (1971), he argued that democracy has two dimensions: competition and participation. 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. This measure has serious drawbacks, however. The measure of competition is flawed: it is too highly correlated with party system fragmentation. A system in which the largest party wins 50% is not necessarily less democratic than one in which the largest wins 35%. The measure of participation depends too much on the age structure of the society; it discriminates against countries with youthful populations in which a large share of the population have not yet reached voting age. Moreover, for democracy the crucial point is

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that legal barriers and human rights conditions be such that the adult population *can* participate, not that they actually do so. Higher rates of electoral participation may reflect compulsory voting laws rather than a more participatory environment. Most important, Vanhanen's measure fails to incorporate any assessment of civil liberties and political rights.

Coppedge and Reineke (1990) and Hadenius (1992: 36–71) constructed multidimensional, sophisticated measures of democracy,[6] but both measures require substantial qualitative information that is not readily available for a longer time span. Not coincidentally, both restricted their measure to a single year (1985 for Coppedge and Reineke, 1988 for Hadenius).

Given these shortcomings of the easily operationalized measures of democracy and the difficulties of obtaining data to reproduce Coppedge and Reineke or Hadenius for long periods, I used Freedom House scores for 1972–96. Beginning 1972, every year Freedom House has ranked all independent countries from 1 (the best score) to 7 on civil liberties and on political rights. These scores implicitly incorporate the three dimensions of democracy: free and fair competition, broad participation, and civil liberties and human rights. For 1985 Freedom House scores correlated very highly (.934 to .938) with Coppedge and Reineke's polyarchy scale (Coppedge 1997: 180). Given this high correlation with a sophisticated measure of democracy, plus their ready availability, Freedom House scores represent a reasonable measure. The advantages of a measure that can be readily obtained and used for a substantial period of time are compelling. This explains the growing use of Freedom House scores as a measure of democracy (e.g., Diamond 1996).

The combined scores for political rights and civil liberties create a scale ranging from 2 to 14. The Freedom House combined scores correlate strongly with my evaluations of which governments are democratic. Scores from 2 through 5 generally

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6 Coppedge and Reineke focus on four criteria: fairness of elections, freedom of organization, freedom of expression, and alternatives to official sources of power. Hadenius bases his measure on whether suffrage restrictions exist; whether elections were open and fair and whether

correspond to my classification of democracies. A score of 7 usually falls in my category of semidemocratic governments, and scores from 9 through 14 usually correspond to what I classified as authoritarian governments. Scores of 6 (democratic or semidemocratic) and 8 (semidemocratic or authoritarian) are borderline, such that they easily correspond to either category. For the 1972–96 period, of 475 cases (19 countries times 25 years), 68 Freedom House scores (14.3%) diverged from my assessment.[7] Most of the divergences resulted from cases I coded as authoritarian but that had Freedom House scores of 7 or better (e.g., Brazil 1979–84, Dominican Republic 1972–7, El Salvador 1972–7, Guatemala 1972–6, Honduras 1980–1, Mexico 1973–84).

Freedom House scores have two shortcomings as a measure of democracy. First, they seem harsher on leftist governments than others. For example, in 1984 El Salvador was more repressive than Nicaragua and it is not clear that the Salvadoran elections were fairer than those held in Nicaragua. Yet Freedom House scores indicate a markedly more democratic government in El Salvador (a combined score of 6) than in Nicaragua (a combined score of 10). Second, some scores of the 1970s and early 1980s are too lenient compared to scores in the 1990s. For example, Mexico received a score of 6 to 8 throughout the authoritarian 1970s and 1980s. Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Guatemala received lower scores than they should have in the 1970s, dipping as low as 4 for Colombia (1972–4) when competition was quite restricted, 5 for the Dominican Republic (1972–3) during an authoritarian regime, 5 for El Salvador (1972–5) during an authoritarian regime, and 4 for Guatemala (1973) during an authoritarian period. Freedom House scoring became more stringent in the 1990s; thus, the same score in the 1990s often reflects more democratic conditions than it would have in the 1970s or early 1980s. For example, Mexico's political system was clearly more democratic in 1990 than it had been a decade earlier, but Freedom House's 1980

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elected officials really held power; and whether citizens and political organizations enjoyed organizational freedoms, freedom of opinion, and freedom from political violence and oppression.

[7] A divergence occurred if a regime I coded as a democracy had a combined Freedom House score of 7 or more; if a regime I coded as a semidemocracy had a combined Freedom House of less than 6 or greater than 8; or if a regime I coded as authoritarian had a Freedom House score of 8 or less.

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combined score (7) is slightly better than the 1990 (8) score. Political rights improved in Brazil between 1984, when the military was still in power, and the early 1990s, but Freedom House scores indicate the opposite. The human rights situation improved substantially in El Salvador between the grisly mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, but Freedom House scores reflect no change. By 1994 the insurrectional FMLN, the object of brutal repression throughout the 1980s, felt secure enough to participate in the electoral process.

For present purposes neither of these shortcomings constitutes an overwhelming problem. Nicaragua (1979–90) and Chile (but just for 1972) are the only leftist governments in the sample, so discrepancies in how they were evaluated do not affect the overall conclusions. The main use here of Freedom House scores is not comparison over time (though I briefly undertake this comparison) but rather comparison across countries: are more economically developed countries more democratic? For this purpose, as long as Freedom House judgments have remained consistent across countries, if standards have become more stringent over time, it matters less.

Freedom House scores indicate a marked improvement in political rights and civil liberties in the region, from 8.7 in 1977 to an all time best of 5.7 in 1989. These means understate the actual improvement because the scores have been more stringent in recent years than was the case in the 1970s through the mid-1980s.

Limits to Democratization

Although the transformation in Latin American politics is profound, the process of democratization has had some serious shortcomings. These shortcomings have been analyzed in detail elsewhere, so a brief discussion will suffice here.

The powerful tide against authoritarianism has not ushered in an equally powerful trend in favor of unrestricted democracy. Many of the elected governments in the region are better described as semidemocratic rather than democracies. The 1990s have witnessed some erosions from democracy to semidemocracy: Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Peru (before Fujimori's palace coup in 1992).

As Schmitter and Karl (1993) have argued, democracy revolves around the notion of citizenship, that is, on the right and ability of the people to participate effectively in politics. People must be able to make somewhat informed choices when they go to the ballot box, and other forms of participation must not be formally blocked or restricted because of widespread fear. For some marginalized groups, effective citizenship is still an elusive goal in Latin America.

This problem of uneven citizenship varies across countries and regions (Diamond 1996; Karl 1995; O'Donnell 1993, forthcoming). In the countries with histories of virtually uninterrupted authoritarianism until the 1980s, large sectors of the population do not enjoy full citizenship. The indigenous, Black, and rural populations now enjoy the formal rights of citizenship throughout Latin America, but in practice these groups are frequently marginalized.

Related to this uneven fulfillment of the promise of citizenship is one of weak democratic institutions and limited rule of law in many countries (O'Donnell forthcoming). Weak judiciaries and personalistic control prevail in the backward regions of virtually every country in the region (Hagopian 1996b). Party systems are weak in much of the region, and as a result accountability is limited and personalism sometimes unchecked (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). Democracy has endured with weak institutions and fettered citizenship, but it has had serious shortcomings.

In several countries fear remains an important ingredient in politics. In most of the countries ravaged by civil wars—Peru in the second half of the 1980s, Guatemala, El Salvador until the signing of the peace agreement in 1992, Colombia in the 1990s—those suspected of leftist sympathies have been subjected to harassment, torture, and death. In these countries the revolutionary left also used fear as a tool, sometimes forcefully impressing citizens onto their side of the fray. Under these conditions political expression and participation were severely hampered. Even when elections were held and votes were counted fairly, the left could not participate, and the circumstances surrounding the elections diminished their democratic credentials. The signing of peace accords in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua has not fully resolved this problem.

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The military is not entirely under civilian control in many countries, including Chile which has some of the strongest democratic traditions and institutions.

These limitations to democratic practice are so significant that one can properly question whether the glass is half full or half empty. Both ways of looking at the problem have merit. Latin America is more democratic than ever before, but there are serious problems of democratic practice in most countries in the region. However, even if the glass is half empty, the biggest surprise is not that democracy has had serious shortcomings but that elected governments have survived. Democracy has not fully triumphed, but dictatorship is much less pervasive than ever before. In fact, full-fledged dictatorship has virtually disappeared for the time being.

Modernization and Democracy

The second major purpose of this paper is to account for the increase in democracy and the demise of authoritarianism in Latin America. The Latin American experience is not only interesting and important in and of itself, it can illuminate the broad issue of why democracy exists in some countries but not others.

Many factors including religion (Huntington 1991: 72–85), British colonial experience (Weiner 1987; Domínguez 1993), and degree of ethnic fragmentation (Horowitz 1985; Lijphart 1977) affect democratic survivability. One advantage of focusing on Latin America is that it holds constant several such factors. All of the countries in Latin America are predominantly Catholic and have been so for centuries, so differences in the dominant religious preference do not account for why democracy has flourished in some countries more than others. With rare exceptions, Latin American democracies have had presidential systems, so presidentialism does not explain regime differences (i.e., democratic or not) across countries or across time. All but Haiti have Iberian colonial experience, so colonial background understood in this very broad sense

does not account for differences in regime.[8] With the exception of Panama, which gained independence in 1903, the countries under consideration here became independent in the first half of the 19th century, so they all have been independent for roughly similar lengths of time. These commonalties reduce the number of independent variables and thus facilitate the explanatory process.

In explaining the growth of democracy in the period since 1978 idiosyncratic factors come into play in every country, but there nevertheless has been a region-wide trend toward democracy. Therefore, rather than accounting for the region-wide trend on the basis of developments in individual countries, I seek a more general explanation. I examine variance across countries but within the framework of arguing that there has been a region-wide trend with some common factors driving it.

One possible explanation for the greater prevalence of democracy since 1978 is that the brisk pace of modernization in the decades preceding, roughly, 1980 helped promote democratization. Between 1950 and 1980 the pace of modernization in Latin America was spectacular. Table 3 shows that economic growth in most of the 19 Latin American countries was vigorous from 1950 until 1979. Per capita income more than tripled in the region's largest and most populous country, Brazil. Partially because of Brazil's phenomenal growth, per capita income for the region as a whole increased 116%. Per capita income more than doubled in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela. Only in a few small countries did per capita growth increase less than 50% in these three decades.

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8 It is entirely plausible, however, that more specific differences in colonial background help account for contemporary regime differences.

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Table 3

Per Capita Income, Latin America, 1950–79

Constant 1970 Dollars

	1950	**1960**	**1970**	**1979**	**% Change 1950–79**
Argentina	817	912	1,208	1,405	72.0
Bolivia	231	192	296	362	56.7
Brazil	233	332	450	773	231.8
Chile	576	679	850	937	62.7
Colombia	370	425	508	728	96.8
Costa Rica	347	474	656	895	157.9
Dominican Republic	230	294	351	483	110.0
Ecuador	247	296	355	532	115.4
El Salvador	265	319	397	436	64.5
Guatemala	293	322	417	525	79.2
Haiti	119	117	99	126	5.9
Honduras	232	250	289	294	26.7
Mexico	486	627	893	1,066	119.3
Nicaragua	215	271	394	300	39.5
Panama	459	549	868	932	103.1
Paraguay	305	293	353	532	74.4
Peru	313	415	525	561	79.2
Uruguay	851	875	905	1,142	34.2
Venezuela	653	914	1,180	1,380	113.3
Latin America	396	490	648	857	116.4

Source: *Statistical Abstract of Latin America 1983* 22, 282–3.

The Literature

Many analysts (Bollen 1980; Bollen and Jackman 1985; Coppedge 1997; Coulter 1975; Dahl 1971: 62–80; Diamond 1992; Lipset 1960; Lipset et al. 1993; Przeworski et al. 1996; Przeworski and Limongi 1997; Rueschemeyer et al. 1992) have shown a strong correlation between per capita income and the existence of democracy at a global level. However, Coulter (1975: 69–84) and Collier (1975) observed little correlation between

democracy and per capita income in Latin America, even while acknowledging the strong correlation at the global level.[9] Moreover, as Dahl (1971), May (1973), Przeworski et al. (1996), and others have reported, even at the global level the association between level of development and democracy is not linear. Some scholars (Arat 1988) have even questioned the fundamental premise of the modernization school, suggesting that the relationship between modernization and democracy is weak or spurious. Therefore, it is not obvious *exante* whether a higher level of development contributed to democratization in Latin America. Before we reach that conclusion we need more evidence than the global correlations and the strong growth performance of the 1950–80 period. We can examine the relationship between modernization and democracy both by cross-sectional analysis (i.e., by looking at whether the wealthier countries have been more likely to be democracies) and by longitudinal analysis (i.e. by verifying whether modernization over time fostered a larger number of democracies).

Per capita income is a reasonable proxy for modernization. Literacy may be a better univariate surrogate for modernization than GDP per capita, but for Latin America literacy figures are not available on an annual basis. In any case, GDP per capita correlates fairly highly with literacy in Latin America. In 1950 the correlation between literacy and per capita income for the 19 countries was .605; in 1980 it was .552.

Cross-Sectional Analysis

If a higher level of development fostered democratization, then one would expect that the countries with higher per capita incomes would be more likely to be democracies. Table 4 presents data to verify whether or not this is the case. Following Przeworski et al. (1996) and Przeworski and Limongi (1997), each country is coded for every year; thus, there are 988 cases (= 52 years x 19 countries).

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[9] Moreover, using data for 132 Third World countries in 1988, Hadenius (1992) argued that a high level of development had less impact on the level of democracy than he expected on the basis of other studies. Although his dependent variable (level of democracy) differs from mine (democratic survivability), his result suggests a need for some caution.

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Table 4

Likelihood of Democracy by Income Category, 19 Latin American Countries, 1945–96				
GDP/capita (1980 US dollars)	**Regime-Years (N)**	**% Regime-Years Democratic**	**% Regime-Years Semidemocratic**	**% Regime-Years Authoritarian**
0 to 399	58	0.0	0.0	100.0
400 to 799	340	10.9	30.6	58.5
800 to 1,199	196	23.0	21.4	55.6
1,200 to 1,799	176	58.0	13.1	29.0
1,800 to 2,399	91	40.7	6.6	52.7
2,400 to 3,199	53	22.6	30.2	47.2
3,200 or more	74	77.0	0.0	23.0
Total (%)	988	290 (29.4)	191 (19.3)	507 (51.3)

In the low- and high-income categories the data are consistent with the argument that wealthier countries are more likely and poor countries are less likely to be democracies. The likelihood that a very poor country would be democratic is zero; the poorest countries are overwhelmingly authoritarian. And the other low-income categories ($400 to $799 and $800 to $1,199) are also unlikely to be democracies. The significance of the lowest income category is questionable because, of the 58 cases, Haiti alone counts for 52 and thus could skew results. But the data for both the $400 to $799 and $800 to $1,199 categories come from 13 different countries and no single country accounts for a dominant share of the cases.

In the highest income category the likelihood of democracy peaks at 77.0%. But the relationship between income category and democracy is far from linear. The likelihood of democracy increases to 58.0% in the $1,200–$1,799 per capita range but then plummets to 40.7% in the $1,800–2,399 category and to 22.6% in the $2,400–3,199 category. Five different countries were not democratic in the fairly high $2,400–3,199 income level: Argentina (1946–51, 1953–7, 1958–61, 1962, 1963–5, and 1966), Chile

(1981 and 1989), Mexico (1980–6, 1992–4, 1996), Uruguay (1980–1), and Venezuela (1948–53). Similarly, the high share of nondemocratic regimes in the $1800–2399 category is a result of six different countries: Argentina (1945 and 1952), Brazil (1978–83), Chile (1973–80, 1982–8), Mexico (1970–9), Panama (1982–3, 1985–7, 1993), and Uruguay (1974–9, 1982–4). Thus, the high proportion of nondemocratic cases in these income categories cannot be attributed to a single or even a few outliers, as could conceivably occur with time-series cross-section data.

Nor is the seeming anomaly of a high proportion of democracies in the $1,200–1,799 per capita category a result of one or two outliers. Chile (1945–62), Colombia (1978–81, 1983–90), Costa Rica (1970–96), the Dominican Republic (1981, 1993–4), Ecuador (1979–96), Panama (1995), Paraguay (1993–6), Peru (1981), and Uruguay (1945–53, 1958–72) all qualified. The Latin American pattern diverges from what Przeworski and Limongi (1997) found at a global level; they showed an almost linear relationship between per capita income and likelihood of democracy. In Latin America this pattern is far from linear.

Another way of examining the relationship between per capita income and democracy is that the democracies should be more likely to have higher per capita incomes if modernization analysis is correct. To verify whether this has been the case Figure 2 indicates the mean country-level per capita income of the democracies, semidemocracies, and authoritarian governments for every year from 1940 to 1996. To illustrate how the figure should be read, consider the data for 1980. The six democracies (Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela) had per capita incomes in 1980 dollars of $1,207, 1,552, 1,130, 1,415, 1,190, and 3,377, respectively. The mean of these six figures is $1,645. Since this mean is not weighted by population size, it does not constitute a mean income for the individuals living in those countries.

A change in any category from one year to the next can result from changes in the countries that are in that category and/or from changes in the per capita income of the countries. A sharp increase from one year to the next (say, from $715 in 1987 to $986 in 1988 for the semidemocratic regimes) does not primarily reflect high growth rates in certain countries, but rather Mexico's shift from the authoritarian to the semidemocratic category.

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Figure 2

Mean Country Per Capita GDP by Regime Type by Year (1980 Dollars)

Sources:	1940–79:	*Statistical Abstract of Latin America*, Vol. 22, 1983
	1980–2, 84:	*Statistical Yearbook for Latin America* 1991
	1983:	*Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1987
	1985–1992:	*Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1993
	1993–1995:	*Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1996
	1996:	*Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1997

All figures are 1980 dollars. Figures for 1940–79 were originally in 1970 dollars and have been corrected by an inflator figure for each country, equal to that country's 1970 per capita GNP in 1980 dollars divided by that country's 1970 per capita GNP in 1970 dollars. An analogous procedure was applied to 1993–6 figures originally expressed in 1990 dollars.

As expected, the mean per capita income for the democratic countries is almost always higher than the mean for the authoritarian and semidemocratic countries. This result is consistent with the widespread finding that countries with higher per capita

incomes are more likely to be democracies. Only in one of 57 years (1982) did the mean for the countries ruled by authoritarian regimes exceed that of the democracies, and the mean for the semidemocratic countries was always lower. However, the mean per capita income of the democracies has not always been significantly higher than that of the authoritarian governments. In fact, the gap has been narrow during some periods.

In the mid-1970s, when democracy was the exception, higher per capita income was favorable to democracy, but this was partially because Venezuela, with the region's highest per capita income, was one of only three democracies. In the late 1970s and early 1980s some comparatively poor countries (Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Peru) initiated the series of transitions to democracy. From 1976 to 1983 most of the region's wealthiest countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Uruguay) remained bogged down in authoritarian rule. At the same time, after 1979 several countries with per capita incomes below the regional average were democratic. Honduras, Bolivia, Peru, and the Dominican Republic were democratic or semidemocratic; in 1985 they had the second, third, seventh, and eighth lowest per capita GDPs in the region. As a result, from 1979 to 1986, per capita income in the democracies was never more than 24% higher than in the authoritarian regimes. If one eliminated Haiti, the region's poorest country and a persistently authoritarian one until 1991, in the early and mid-1980s the authoritarian countries usually had a higher per capita income than the democracies.

Argentina in 1983, Uruguay in 1985, and Brazil in 1985 underwent transitions to democracy. Because these three countries had per capita incomes among the six highest in the region in 1983–5, these transitions substantially increased the mean income of the democracies and reduced that of the authoritarian regimes. By the end of the 1980s a large gap opened between the democratic and authoritarian groups. By then all of the region's more developed countries were democratic or semidemocratic. Some poor countries (Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, and Peru until 1990) remained in the democratic category, but all of the authoritarian countries except Mexico were poor.

To see whether using a continuous measure of democracy rather than the simple democratic/semidemocratic/authoritarian distinction would change these results, the

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correlations between Freedom House scores and per capita income for 1972–96 are relevant. If modernization theory applied to Latin America, one would expect a significant negative correlation between Freedom House Scores and per capita income since a high Freedom House score indicates less democracy. Table 5 shows the results.

The information in Table 5 reinforces the analysis associated with Table 4 and Figure 2. During the late 1970s and early 1980s the correlations between Freedom House scores and per capita income were weak, dipping as low as -.08 in 1982. The correlation remained constantly low, at or below -.30, until 1984. By 1989 the correlation had become more robust (-.51). The

correlation remained moderately strong through 1996. Even the highest correlation (-.52 in 1991), however, is lower than what Coulter (1975: 22) reported for 85 countries; he obtained a powerful correlation of .67 between per capita income and his measure of liberal democracy. The correlations between per capita income and Freedom House scores in Latin America between 1972 and 1996 are usually much lower.

Table 5

Correlation between Freedom House Scores and Per Capita Income

Year	Correlation	Year	Correlation
1972	-.25	1985	-.32*
1973	-.25	1986	-.32*
1974	-.25	1987	-.35*
1975	-.27	1988	-.39*
1976	-.15	1989	-.44**
1977	-.14	1990	-.47**
1978	-.17	1991	-.52**
1979	-.10	1992	-.47**
1980	-.17	1993	-.40**
1981	-.22	1994	-.51**
1982	-.08	1995	-.50**
1983	-.30	1996	-.51**
1984	-.35*		

* Significant at .10
** Significant at .05

The Freedom House scores reinforce two conclusions. First, the democracies have generally been wealthier than the nondemocracies.[10] Second, compared to the robust correlations between democracy and higher per capita income reported by other scholars for the global level, for Latin America between 1972 and 1996 this correlation

[10] The association between a higher per capita income and democracy does not resolve the causal direction. It is conceivable that democracies promoted higher growth rates, hence ended up with higher per capita incomes. In this case, higher per capita income in the democracies would be a result of democracy rather than vice versa. This theoretical possibility is very unlikely in Latin America because the countries that fit the democratic, semidemocratic, and authoritarian regime types have shifted so much over time. Based on the entire set of countries in the world, Przeworski and Limongi (1993) found that authoritarian and democratic regimes have similar

ranged from weak to moderate. If there were a linear relationship between modernization and democracy, one would expect the democratic countries to be among the most economically developed. For some periods this holds true, but for others the pattern is mixed.

Comparativists working on the relationship between per capita income and democracy at a global level have avoided treating economic development as a force that would automatically produce democracy. The need for such caution is pellucid for Latin America. Along with Eastern Europe, it is one of two regions in the world where the correlation between higher living standards and democracy has been most tenuous (Collier 1975; Coulter 1975; Diamond 1992). Economic development did not act as a demiurge that automatically led to democracy.

If one expected a linear relationship between higher per capita income and democracy, Latin America would present three anomalies. First, several comparatively wealthy countries have had long periods of authoritarian rule. For much of the post-1950 period Argentina stands out as a democratic underachiever in light of its high per capita income and quality of life. Throughout the entire 1940–83 period Argentina had the highest or second highest per capita income in the region. Yet until 1983 the country oscillated between semidemocratic (1946–51, 1958–62, 1963–6) and patently authoritarian (1940–6, 1955–8, 1962–3, 1966–73, 1976–83) periods. Argentina's per capita income in 1950 was already double the 1979 income of several poor countries that underwent democratic transitions and remained mostly democratic in the 1980s. Mexico is also an outlier: authoritarian until 1988 (when it became semidemocratic) despite having one of the higher per capita incomes in the region. Similarly, Chile and Uruguay, with their comparatively high standards of living, should not have experienced democratic breakdowns in 1973.

The second anomaly is the fact that some poor countries have sustained democracy for a considerable time in the 1980s and 1990s. Based on the low level of

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growth rates. Further research is needed to definitively establish this result specifically for Latin America.

development, one would not expect democracy or semidemocracy to survive in Bolivia, El Salvador, Honduras, or Nicaragua. Yet these countries have not experienced regime breakdowns. Nor would one expect poor countries such as the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Peru to be at the forefront of the wave of democratization that began in 1978.

If there were just a few anomalies in an overall discernible pattern, one could dismiss them as exceptions to the rule. In Latin America, however, there have been periods when the correlation between democracy and per capita income broke down. And even when the democracies had higher per capita incomes, the correlation is not overwhelming.

The final anomaly is that the country mean per capita income of the authoritarian regimes is frequently higher than that of the semidemocracies. For 29 years this was the case compared to 21 years when the semidemocratic countries had a higher per capita income. (In seven years, there were no semidemocratic regimes.) If the relationship between per capita income and democracy were linear, one would expect the semidemocratic countries in Latin America to usually be wealthier than the authoritarian ones.

Longitudinal Analysis

The discussion so far has compared across countries at a given moment in time. In addition, if the modernization argument applied in linear fashion, the number of democracies would increase as countries attained a higher level of development. Periods of economic growth would be followed by a burgeoning of democracy, and periods of substantial economic decline might lead to authoritarian regressions. The actual record is checkered. Declining standards of living in the 1980s prompted fewer authoritarian involutions than any of Latin America's previous waves of democratization. Conversely, the authoritarian involutions of the 1960s and 1970s occurred on the heels of the rapid growth of the 1950s and 1960s. If economic growth had a linear impact on democracy, then one would have expected more democracies in 1976 than in 1960. In fact, the

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opposite was the case: there were more democracies between 1958 and 1967 than in 1973–4 and 1976–7. Moreover, the incidence of patently authoritarian regimes was greater in the mid-1970s than in the period between 1958 and 1963. Yet the region as a whole had a substantially higher standard of living in the mid-1970s than it did in 1960.

To be sure, democratic breakdowns in Brazil in 1964, Argentina in 1976, and Chile and Uruguay in 1973 occurred at moments of economic problems (O'Donnell 1973). However, these problems should not obscure the overall growth performance of the 1950s and 1960s. The dominant viewpoint today is that economic problems were not the principal factor behind most of those earlier coups (Collier 1979; Santos 1986; Stepan 1971). Rather, political radicalization, the intransigence of some actors, and poor leadership were the key problems. Much worse economic performances in the 1980s than those of the 1960s and 1970s did not lead to regime breakdown.[11] Moreover, some breakdowns of democratic or semidemocratic regimes occurred during periods of economic expansion, such as was the case in Argentina in 1966.

In sum, although economic development was a contributing factor, it does not fully account for Latin America's turn to democracy. The fact that the correlation between per capita income and democracy has been weak during lengthy periods suggests that modernization does not tell the whole story. Although economic growth in the decades prior to the third wave contributed to the likelihood of democratic longevity, polyarchy has survived in Latin America's poor and intermediate income countries alike, suggesting that modernization alone does explain the democratic stability of the post-1978 period.[12] These observations do not constitute a

wholesale dismissal of the modernization hypothesis. Until the 1980s the region's poorest countries were extremely unlikely to be democratic. Yet for Latin America changes in attitudes have been more important than structuralists have recognized.

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11 Linz and Stepan (1989, 1996) properly argue that democratic legitimacy is not highly contingent on socioeconomic performance.

12 On the nonlinearity of the relationship between per capita income and democracy, see Dahl (1971: 62–80); Domínguez (1993); Hadenius (1992).

STABILITY AND BREAKDOWN RATES OF DIFFERENT REGIMES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT

In a recent path-breaking work Przeworski and Limongi (1997) argued that developed countries are more likely to be democracies because, once established, democracy in the these countries is less vulnerable to breakdown. They show that the process of modernization per se does not explain this correlation. Does this argument apply to Latin America?

The simple answer is no (Table 6). The Latin American experience runs counter to what one finds at a broader comparative level. Within the per capita income categories used in this paper, democracy in Latin America has not been less vulnerable to breakdown and erosion at higher levels of development until one reaches the $3,200 per capita level.

The data initially appear to be consistent with O'Donnell's (1973) bureaucratic-authoritarian argument. O'Donnell argued that at a certain level of development in the 1960s and 1970s modernization produced pressures *against* democracy, so one should expect, exactly as occurs, a dip in the likelihood of democracy as per capita income increases. Interestingly in view of the fact that the data are consistent with O'Donnell's argument, most of the subsequent literature has disagreed with him.

A closer examination supports only part of O'Donnell's argument but not its entirety. Democracy broke down virtually everywhere in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. The more developed countries were not particularly vulnerable to breakdown, so it is not clear whether modernization generated distinctive pressures that led to breakdown. That may have been the case in some countries, but it does not tell the story for the region as a whole. Moreover, several analysts (D. Collier 1979) have cast doubt on the causal linkage O'Donnell postulated between a certain phase of industrialization and democratic breakdown. Radicalization and polarization in the context of the Cold War were the primary factors behind these breakdowns (Linz and Stepan 1978; Santos 1986; A. Valenzuela 1978). Nevertheless, consistent with O'Donnell's argument, a higher level of modernization did not enhance democracy's immunity to breakdown in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. In broader comparative perspective, this finding is interesting and distinctive.

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There were only six classic democratic breakdowns (as opposed to erosions from democracy to semidemocracy) during this 52-year period: Argentina 1976, Chile 1973, Guatemala 1954, Peru 1968, Uruguay 1973, and Venezuela 1948. This paucity of breakdowns is

a testimony to how difficult it has been to build democracy in Latin America; with no democracy, there can be no breakdown. But it is encouraging to note that once they exist, democracies have not readily broken down.

In addition to the breakdowns, three regimes eroded to the point where they could no longer be considered democracies: Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. The distinction between democratic breakdown and democratic erosion in Table 6 operationally depends on whether a democracy collapses to authoritarianism or to semidemocracy. Empirically, all of the breakdowns involved successful military coups that installed dictatorships. None of the democratic erosions involved coups, although the erosion in Peru was followed by Fujimori's 1992 coup.

Table 4 above showed that the likelihood of democracy was lower in the $1,800–2,399 and $2,400–3,199 categories than from $1,200–1,799. But Table 6 shows that this is not because democracies were markedly more likely to break down at these higher income levels. The main reason for the high incidence of nondemocratic regimes in the 2,400–3,199 income category in Table 4 is rather that nondemocracies experienced economic growth that pushed them into this category. This is true for Argentina, which remained nondemocratic from 1930 to 1973 and reached the $2,400 level in 1946; Chile, which was authoritarian from 1973 to 1990 and reached $2,400 in 1981; Mexico, which reached this mark in 1980; and Uruguay, which was authoritarian from 1973 to 1985 and surpassed $2,400 per capita in 1980. Venezuela in 1948 was the only democracy that broke down when its per capita income was between $2,400 and $3,199.

In contrast to the regime survival pattern for democracies, which oscillates randomly as per capita income increases, authoritarian regimes are more vulnerable to regime transitions as income increases. The transition rate of authoritarian regimes, i.e., the likelihood that they would switch to democratic or semidemocratic in a given year, increases in a nearly unilinear fashion as per capita income increases. Higher income semidemocracies are also substantially more likely to undergo regime transitions, though the increase is not as linear as it is for authoritarian regimes.

The reason why democracy is more common at a higher income level in Latin America runs counter to the broader comparative pattern signaled by Przeworski and

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Limongi (1997). In Latin America democracy is more prevalent at a higher income level not because it is less vulnerable—this is true only above $3,200 per capita in 1980 US dollars—but rather principally because there is a greater likelihood of destabilizing nondemocracies, some of which are transformed into democracies. The greater stability of Latin American democracies above the $3,200 per capita threshold reinforces the correlation between higher per capita income and democracy, but this correlation exists mostly because nondemocracies are more likely to be

transformed at higher income levels. The correlation between democracy and higher per capita income is weaker than it is globally because medium-income democracies break down at a high rate until they reach the $3,200 threshold.

Why Modernization Favored Democratization Somewhat

Two questions come to the fore on the basis of the previous discussion. The first is why countries with a higher per capita income have been somewhat more likely to be democracies. The second is why the correlation between democracy and per capita income has been modest in Latin America compared to the rest of the world.

As we have just seen, for Latin America the answer to the first question hinges primarily on why nondemocratic regimes have higher transition rates at higher levels of development. Three factors, all discussed elsewhere in greater detail, help explain this conundrum (Diamond 1992; Lipset 1960; Rueschemeyer et al. 1992; Santos 1985). First, a higher level of development is associated with a more democratic political culture. More citizens have more information than in poorer countries. Education levels are higher, and more educated citizens make for more active citizens, capable of pushing for democracy. Table 7 shows a decreasing share of the illiterate for every country in Latin America between roughly 1950 and 1980. In most countries the decreases are dramatic—for example, from 50.5% to 15.3% in Venezuela. It is not only rudimentary reading and writing skills that improved over the decades. A greater share of citizens have attained high school and university degrees than ever before. This is not to claim

that education levels became high in absolute terms in recent decades, only that they rose considerably.

Of course, some people have participated effectively in politics with little formal education, and many educated people do not participate. In general, however, formal education paves the way for more effective participation. Survey data from Latin America have consistently shown that, as is true elsewhere, more educated citizens are more likely to be interested in politics, more likely to participate, and more likely to express attitudes regarded as democratic.

Second, economic growth transformed the class structure in ways generally propitious to challenging authoritarianism. It led to the creation of a larger middle class. Although the middle sectors in Latin America have not uniformly supported democracy, in most countries they were important actors in transitions to democracy and have remained supporters of democracy. This argument is consistent with Lipset's (1960) view that an expanding middle class favors democracy.

Despite the capital-intensive character of industrialization in Latin America, economic growth favored the expansion of organized labor (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). Organized labor supported most transitions to democracy and fought military dictatorships. Labor usually supported democratic regimes, though it did not do so consistently (R. Collier forthcoming).

Table 7

Illiteracy Rates in Latin American Democracies
(Percentage of the population aged 15 and over)

Country	Year	Illiteracy	Year	Illiteracy
Argentina	1947	13.6[a]	1980	6.1
Bolivia	1950	67.9	1988	18.9
Brazil	1950	50.5	1980	25.5

Chile	1952	19.8	1980	8.9
Colombia	1951	37.7	1980	12.2[b]
Costa Rica	1950	20.6	1980	7.4
Dominican Rep.	1950	57.1	1980	31.4[c]
Ecuador	1950	44.3	1980	16.5
El Salvador	1950	60.6	1980	32.7[d]
Guatemala	1950	70.7	1980	44.2
Haiti	1950	89.5	1980	62.5
Honduras	1950	64.8	1985	40.5
Mexico	1950	43.2	1980	16.5
Nicaragua	1950	61.6	1980	13.0
Panama	1950	30.0	1980	12.9
Paraguay	1950	34.2	1980	12.3
Peru	1950	48.8[e]	1980	18.1
Uruguay	1960	9.5[f]	1980	5.0
Venezuela	1950	50.5	1980	15.3

[a] Figure for those aged 14 and over

[b] Figure for those 10 and over.

[c] Figure for those aged 5 and over; excludes the indigenous population living in the jungle.

[d] UNESCO estimate.

[e] Estimate (extrapolation from 1940 and 1961 figures)

[f] No census held in Uruguay between 1908 and 1963.

Sources: ECLAC, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America 1981*, 97 for circa 1950; ECLAC, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America 1990* 54 for circa 1980; *Statistical Abstract of Latin America* 26 (1988) 156, for Nicaragua 1980; *Statistical Abstract of Latin America* 29 (1992), 213, for Honduras 1985; *Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Perú: Compendio Estadístico, 1988* (1989), 99, for Peru circa 1950.

Growth was also associated with urbanization, which proceeded rapidly in every Latin American country between 1950 and 1980. For the region as a whole the share of the population living in urban areas with at least 20,000 inhabitants virtually doubled during these three decades, from 25.7% to 47.3%. In some countries, the pace of urbanization was dramatic: for example, from 22% to 54% urban in Colombia, and from 11% to 41% in the Dominican Republic. In urban areas the poor had more opportunities to participate in politics than in rural areas (Santos 1985). Poor people in cities joined

neighborhood associations, social movements, and civic organizations. A larger share of the population living in urban areas also reduced the political impact of the countryside, where poor people had more often than not been subjected to personalistic and clientelistic domination.

Economic growth led to diversification. Manufacturing production expanded in virtually every Latin American country between 1950 and 1980, and the service sector grew everywhere as the share of agriculture in national economies declined. Modernization thereby weakened the grip of landlords over the political system, and landlords have frequently been authoritarian when they are the dominant actor in politics. Agriculture's comparative decline was especially discernible in its eroding share of exports. Between 1960 and 1980 agriculture's share in total exports fell from 50.7% to 29.3% for the region as a whole. In Mexico agriculture's share of exports fell from 56.2% in 1965 to 11.1% fifteen years later; in Peru, during this same fifteen year period, agriculture's share fell from 54.8% to 9.7% (ECLAC 1984: 159). In Ecuador agriculture's share declined from 96.5% in 1960 to 25.2% in 1980; in Brazil from 88.4% to 46.8%.

These multifaceted economic and social transformations reduced the political clout of landowners. Over the long haul, economic growth promoted diversification of interests, creating new groups that counterbalanced the power of landowners. Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens (1992) have convincingly argued that in transitional societies landowners are the most antidemocratic sector of the propertied classes.

Economic development helped fortify civil society, creating counterweights to the state and to the traditional elites and armed forces that dominated the state in so many Latin American countries. As Diamond (1992), Putnam (1993), Rueschemeyer et al. (1992), and Tocqueville (1969) have argued, a robust civil society is favorable to democracy because it creates organized groups that actively participate in civic life. This is not to suggest that all groups in civil society have fostered democracy, but many have.

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Finally, economic growth integrated Latin America into a world system more tightly. It was strongly associated with growing imports and exports, which mean exposure to products, technology, and companies from other countries. It was also associated with expanding international communication and transportation and with expanding incomes that make it possible for people, interest groups, businesses, and governments to take advantage of those growing linkages.

Why then has the correlation between per capita income and democracy been weaker in Latin America than on a global basis? A definitive answer to this question awaits further research, but part of the answer is that on a global level the countries with highest per capita incomes have been very likely to be democratic, while countries with very low per capita incomes have usually been authoritarian (Dahl 1971: 62–80; Przeworski 1996 et al.). Most Latin American countries are in an intermediate category, precisely where one would expect greatest uncertainty as to regime type. Notwithstanding important crossnational differences within Latin America, the range in per capita income is lower than it is for the entire universe of countries.

Political Attitudes and Democratic Survival

If economic transformations do not fully explain why Latin America became (and remained) mostly democratic, then we need to seek elsewhere to help explain this transformation. The second factor that has contributed to the greater survivability of Latin America's democracies revolves around changes in political attitudes, toward a greater valorization of democracy. This transformation was significant among several important actors and for most of the political spectrum.

Political attitudes do not inherently derive from a given level of development or cultural/historical background. For this reason the approach here is to succinctly analyze changes in attitudes toward democracy and politics over time and across countries rather than positing an enduring set of values throughout Latin America as a whole. These attitudes can change significantly in a relatively short time. This approach differs from those that emphasize the long-established Catholic Iberian tradition, seen as inherently antidemocratic. The latter

approach is too static and too homogeneous for the region as a whole, and it ignores important transformations within the Catholic Church (Levine 1992; Mainwaring 1986). If the Iberian Catholic tradition were intrinsically inimical to democracy, it would be hard to explain the persistence of democratic regimes in several countries for long periods. It would also be difficult to explain the demise of authoritarianism in the 1980s.

Attitudinal factors are related to but somewhat independent of structural factors. Democratic attitudes are more likely among urban than rural actors, among more educated than less educated populations, with a strong civil society than a weak one. However, attitudes do not become more democratic in linear fashion as incomes increase, as societies become more urban, or as civil societies are stronger.

Changing attitudes toward politics and democracy have been studied in detail for individual actors in Latin America (e.g., specific political parties, intellectuals). Nevertheless, the profound consequences of these changes have not always been integrated in an understanding of the sea change away from authoritarianism (for exceptions, see Diamond 1996; Weffort 1985).

The greatest change in attitudes toward democracy in Latin America has come on the left. Never a numerically large force, the revolutionary left nonetheless had a major impact in many Latin American countries in the 1960s and 1970s. It was authoritarian in its practices and in its preferred political system, and it resorted to violence to accomplish its objectives (Gillespie 1982; Ollier 1998). It regarded liberal democracy as a bourgeois formalism, believed that violence was needed to "liberate" the working class, and advocated a revolutionary socialism incompatible with democracy.

The left was never a serious contender for power in most countries, but it was seen as a threat by privileged elites, the militaries, and the US. In most Latin American countries the right was authoritarian even before the youthful revolutionaries burst on the scene, but the far left spurred the right toward more violent positions. In the 1960s conservative actors feared, not without foundation, that revolutionary change would lead to their destruction. They reacted intransigently, supporting authoritarian governments. In turn, right-wing authoritarianism led

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dissenting forces to believe that effecting political change through conventional channels was impossible.

By the mid-1980s the revolutionary left had become a nonactor in most countries (Castañeda 1993), though Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua were still exceptions. In most countries it was physically annihilated. It became obvious that its biggest effect was not to free the people, but to spur the armed forces toward ruthless repression. In Brazil and the Southern Cone most of the revolutionary left reassessed and rejected its earlier political convictions and practices (Ollier 1998). Having experienced life under brutal dictatorships, most survivors concluded that democracy was necessary and desirable. The Soviet Union and China increasingly appeared to the Latin American left as authoritarian models. The crisis of actually existing socialism, culminating in the collapse of the Soviet Union, further diminished the appeal of authoritarian leftist ideologies.

By 1990 the left in most of South America had substantially changed its political views, but the Central American left (particularly in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala) had not. The withering of the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and its eventual defeat at the polls in 1990 initiated a process of critical reflection among Central American revolutionaries. The crushing defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Peru and the decimation of the FMLN in El Salvador further moved the tide away from revolution. By the mid-1990s the revolutionary fervor was even weaker than it had been a decade before, and the civil wars in Central America came to a gradual halt. Most survivors of the FMLN in El Salvador joined the democratic process with the signing of the peace accord in 1992. The M-19 in Colombia became integrated into electoral politics. Most Sandinistas, previously ambivalent about or hostile to liberal democracy, gradually came to believe that there was no other way to go.

Intellectuals have historically had more political influence in Latin America than in the US, and this remains the case to this day. In the 1960s and 1970s most politically influential Latin American intellectuals were on the left and were hostile to capitalism and were ambivalent (or worse) about liberal democracy. Dependency theory was in its heyday. Most intellectuals considered radical social change a more urgent priority than

liberal democracy. Many doubted that 'bourgeois' democracy was possible under conditions of dependent development.

In the post-1978 period progressive intellectuals became more convinced of the importance of democracy (Lamounier 1979; Packenham 1986; Weffort 1985). By the late 1980s dependency theory had lost its credibility (Packenham 1992); liberation theology was under attack; and the fascination with revolution had subsided. These changes occurred as part of an international trend; intellectuals in Europe, too, increasingly questioned the authoritarian left, renounced Marxism, and embraced liberal democracy. Nobody so epitomizes the dramatic transformation of Latin American intellectuals as Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–), who shifted from being one of the most prominent dependency theorists in the late 1960s and early 1970s to focusing principally on democracy and its intrinsic value in the late 1970s and 1980s, and finally to implementing market-oriented policies and state shrinking as president in the 1990s.

Change on the left was not limited to insurrectional groups and intellectuals; it extended to electorally significant parties. Committed to Leninist ideals and rhetorically favorable to a revolutionary uprising in the 1960s and 1970s, the Chilean Socialist Party became a stalwart of liberal democracy in the 1980s (Walker 1990). In 1972 the Central Committee of the Socialist Party criticized Salvador Allende's socialist government for respecting "bourgeois mechanisms that are precisely what impede us from accomplishing the changes that we need" and called for a dictatorship of the proletariat (Walker 1990: 159). By 1982, a mere decade later, the wing of the party that had most vigorously denounced bourgeois institutionality explicitly rejected actually existing socialism, affirming that it had failed to "create mechanisms of democratic governance capable of resolving the conflicts that emerge in a modern society. For this reason, it does not constitute an inspiring model for Chilean socialism" (Walker 1990: 188). Having previously been ambivalent about liberal democracy, the Bolivian MNR (National Revolutionary Movement) embraced it in the 1980s. Notorious for its authoritarian past, the Peronist party in Argentina, of a predominantly center-left orientation until the 1980s,

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also largely accepted democracy by the 1980s. Before the 1973 breakdown the Frente Amplio in Uruguay was dominated by semiloyal and disloyal elements in Linz's (1978) terms. By the early 1990s most party leaders fully accepted democracy.

Change on the right was equally important though not as profound. Historically the right was the greatest obstacle to democracy in Latin America. The oligarchy maintained unfettered power until some time (varying by country) in the twentieth century, and it refused to accept democracy when doing so could threaten its core interests. As the revolutionary left became more significant in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution, the right became more disposed to undermine democracy, where it existed, to protect its interests and less willing to contemplate democracy where it did not. Conservative political elites frequently conspired against democracy in Brazil between 1946 and 1964 (Benevides 1981) and in Argentina between 1930 and 1966 (Gibson 1996).

As the specter of communism faded, much of the right became willing to abide by democratic rules of the game, and the other sectors became less prone to support coups. The left's transformation in a more democratic direction fostered a similar trajectory on the right. One of the most dramatic transformations occurred with the right-wing party in El Salvador, Arena. Known for its close linkages to death squads and the oligarchy in the early 1980s, by the mid-1990s Arena had helped engineer the peace treaty that ended El Salvador's civil war and incorporated the former guerrillas into the political process (Wood forthcoming). The past history of a violent, reactionary "despotic regime" (Baloyra 1983) would not have augured well for such a development. Business groups have not been at the forefront of democratization, but they have lived peacefully with it in most countries (see Payne 1994 on Brazil). It is questionable whether the right fully subscribes to democracy in most countries, but the mere fact that it accepts democracy marks a historic change.

Less can be said about the military's shifting attitudes because little research has been done on this subject. Past research has suggested that few coups are successful without the support of powerful civilian allies (Stepan 1971). Therefore, even if the

armed forces have not undergone a significant change in values, the changing attitudes of other actors have prompted different military behavior in the political arena. It is likely that political values have changed in a more democratic direction at the mass level as well, but there are no reliable region-wide surveys from the earlier democratic period that would enable us to verify this proposition.

The changing attitudes toward democracy in Latin America were interactive, i.e., changes in one actor fostered change in others. The conversion of leftist groups to democratic politics, for example, reduced the fears of rightist actors that democracy could lead to their destruction. Similarly, the growing willingness of rightist groups and governments to abide by electoral politics signaled to the left that some positive change—minimally, the end to massive human rights violations—could occur through democracy.

The diffusion of democratic ideals was not uniform across or within countries. In the 1980s the changing attitudes toward democracy advanced considerably in South America, with the sole exception of Peru. Central America, more specifically Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, remained outliers; the commitment to democracy lagged behind. But by the 1990s most actors in these countries, with their histories of relentless, often brutal authoritarianism, had recognized the desirability of peace, and peace could only be accomplished with competitive elections. The transformation of political attitudes has also varied by region within countries. Democratic practice in less developed regions is often vitiated by traditional elites whose practice and rhetoric remain less than fully democratic (Hagopian 1996b; O'Donnell 1993).

Despite these limits, the changes in political attitudes in Latin America had profound implications. By the 1990s politics was less polemical and less threatening. Gone is the sense that politics is an all important zero sum game, a low intensity warfare. Under these conditions, sustaining democracy is easier. Actors are willing to accept minor losses under democracy; earlier they were not willing to play a game that might entail catastrophic losses. These changing attitudes about democracy and politics have offset some negatives that might well have conspired against democracy, especially poor

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economic and social performance. None of this is to suggest that attitudinal changes have made democracy in Latin America impregnable; the problems confronting democracy remain significant.

Paradoxically, these changing attitudes toward democracy, while salutary from the perspective of democratic survivability, have not been without their down side. Latin America has long been the region of the world with most pronounced inequalities, and these inequalities were exacerbated during the 1980s. With the weakening and transformation of the left in so many countries, fewer voices have called attention to the urgency of addressing inequalities and improving living standards. The price of democracy may have been, as Przeworski (1986) has suggested is generally the case, the inviolability of property relations.

International Factors

Until the 1990s most work on democratization focused almost exclusively on domestic actors. Upon first reflection this seems sensible; democracy is built within particular countries, and its construction usually rests primarily on domestic actors. Yet the international context and international actors are important influences in democratization. In the post-1978 period they have helped sustain democracy in Latin America.

More generally, international influences and actors have significantly affected prospects for democracy around the world (Farer 1996; Pridham 1991; Whitehead 1986, 1991, 1996). In their careful study Przeworski et al. (1996) found that an international diffusion effect outweighed all other factors in assessing the prospects that a democracy will survive. The international context holds weight partly because the international ideological context encourages or discourages democracy and partly because external actors such as governments, multilateral organizations, churches, and other nongovernmental organizations can foster or debilitate democracies. In the extreme, democracy can initially be imposed by a foreign power, as occurred in Germany, Italy,

and Japan after World War II (Stepan 1986). In a more proximate case, the European Community was a major influence in the regime consolidations in southern Europe after 1974 (Pridham 1991; Whitehead 1991).

The distinction between domestic and international actors and factors is not hard and fast. Domestic actors are often part of international networks, and international actors establish linkages to and often financially support domestic actors (Keck and Sikkink 1998). As Whitehead (1991) has observed, the international context shapes the calculations and behavior of domestic political actors. In Latin America the impact of the international situation on the strategy of domestic actors was clear when coup mongers in Paraguay (1996), Venezuela (1992), and Guatemala (1993) backed off when confronted with hostile international reactions and the likelihood of sanctions. In Guatemala President Jorge Serrano suspended the constitution, dissolved Congress, and dismissed the judiciary in May 1993, following the example of Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori's palace coup of April 1992. International reaction against Serrano, coupled with domestic mobilization, forced the president to resign within two weeks (Villagrán de León 1993). The OAS indicated that sanctions would be forthcoming, and the US promptly suspended aid to Guatemala. In an earlier age, when the reactions would have been less adverse and the mechanisms for implementing sanctions less developed, the coup probably would have succeeded. Business leaders would have had less incentive to come to the support of democracy because they would not have faced crippling economic sanctions.

The International Ideological Context

The impact of the international ideological context is methodologically difficult to pinpoint, but it is nevertheless important. Domestic political actors do not operate in a vacuum sealed in by national borders. They act in a world of permeable borders and widely flowing information. Books and journals, televisions and radio, electronic communication, international conferences, and scholarly and political visits to other countries act as means of disseminating information.

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Rather than constituting independent developments in Latin American countries, changing attitudes had powerful demonstration effects across borders—what Starr (1991) calls diffusion effects. Leftist groups in one country witnessed the futility of trying to win power through revolutionary means in neighboring countries. Intellectuals met at international conferences and exchanged ideas. Parties that were members of the Socialist International observed parallel transformations in Western Europe and Latin America.

These channels of communication are particularly significant for actors of proximate ideological persuasion. For example, on the left of the political spectrum growing acceptance and valuing of democracy in Latin America was fueled by developments in Western Europe in the 1970s and by the withering of socialism in the 1980s. Many Latin American intellectuals and politicians who spearheaded the left's reevaluation of democracy had lived in Western or Eastern Europe in exile. In Western Europe, they were influenced by growing criticisms of extant socialist regimes.[13] Some Latin Americans living in Western Europe were influenced by progressive challenges to the old authoritarian left that came from new social movements (especially the women's, peace, and environmental movements) and green parties. Those on the left who did not go into exile were also influenced by the changing international climate.

The power of the international ideological context is suggested by different waves of regime transformation in the twentieth century. For example, Fascism was broadly popular at a specific moment (the 1920s and 1930s), with dire consequences for democracy. In the third wave of democratization, with the partial exception of President Reagan's first couple years in office, the international ideological context has been relatively favorable to democracy in Latin America. This favorable ideological context

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[13] Among the Western European left, disenchantment with real socialism and Marxism became pervasive in the 1970s. Renowned scholars sympathetic to the left such as Claude Leffort, Felix Guattari, and Norberto Bobbio criticized the authoritarian nature of real socialism. Leaving behind the Leninist tradition and seeking inspiration in Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Communist Party adopted Eurocommunism and criticized authoritarian socialism. After the elections of François Mitterand in France (1981) and Felipe González (1981) in Spain, the Socialist parties of those countries governed in centrist fashion.

does not guarantee that specific countries will be democratic, but it enhances the likelihood of democracy. International factors only exceptionally *determine* regime transitions and processes, but they significantly alter the odds for or against democracy.

International Actors: The Catholic Church

The changing attitudes toward democracy in Latin America represent a paradigmatic case of the permeability between domestic and international influences. This is clear in the role of the Catholic Church, which is at once an international and a domestic actor.[14]

The Catholic Church has traditionally been an actor of some political import in most Latin American countries, and until the 1960s it sided more frequently with authoritarians than with democrats. The Church was a central protagonist in many coups against democratic or semidemocratic governments throughout the region. The revolutions in Mexico and Cuba were trenchantly anticlerical, and the Church consistently opposed leftist movements and governments. The Church applauded coups in Venezuela in 1948 (Levine 1973), Colombia in 1948, Brazil in 1964, and Argentina in 1976.

Since the 1970s the Catholic Church has usually supported democratization (Huntington 1991: 74–85). Under the sway of the Second Vatican Council, the Church came to accept and promote democracy in most of the region, though again with some exceptions. In Brazil the Church spearheaded the opposition to military rule in the 1970s and strongly advocated a return to democracy (Mainwaring 1986). Elsewhere the Church reached a peaceful *modus vivendi* with democratic governments (Levine 1981), notwithstanding conflict over issues such as abortion. In a few cases such as Argentina and Guatemala the Church supported authoritarian rule in the 1970s and early 1980s, but even those churches have not attempted to undermine democracy since its inception. In

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14 The literature on the Church's transformation is ample, but it has not always been integrated into the analysis of democratic survivability in the region.

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Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Peru the Church criticized authoritarian regimes and promoted transitions to democracy.

The US Government and Governmental Agencies

Changes in international norms and practices, bolstered by United States diplomacy, created new pressures for democracy. This represents a change from most of the post-1945 period. Historically, the US often supported coups against democratic governments (Brazil in 1964, Chile in 1973), occasionally (Guatemala in 1954) was a leading protagonist in coups, and rarely strongly promoted democracy in Latin America. During the Cold War the US generally subordinated support of democracy to national security concerns (Packenham 1973). Given the ubiquitous nature of the Soviet/US confrontation, the notion of national security interests became so expansive that the US lent support for coups against reformist governments of different stripes. Franklin Delano Roosevelt purportedly said of Somoza, "He's a son of a bitch, but he's our son of a bitch." From the early twentieth century until Jimmy Carter's administration, this cozying up to friendly dictators was commonplace.

This practice started to change under President Carter, who publicly criticized human rights violations committed by authoritarian governments (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay) friendly to the US. Carter also supported democratic transitions in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Peru. In the Dominican Republic in 1978 his initiatives blocked electoral fraud that would have extended authoritarian rule. By promoting an honest vote count Carter helped pave the road for the first democratic transition of Latin America's third wave. His policy also helped save lives and limit the use of torture in Latin America, and it started to change the public discourse in the United States regarding foreign policy.

During the 1980 presidential campaign Ronald Reagan lambasted Carter's human rights policy. Early indications after Reagan's inauguration were that the new president would abandon a concern with democracy and human rights. He coddled the Southern

Cone dictators until Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in 1982, and he propped up sagging repressive regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Surprisingly, and notwithstanding its visceral opposition to leftist governments, the Reagan administration's foreign policy efforts began to emphasize democracy during the president's second term (Carothers 1991). The 1982 war in the south Atlantic between Britain and Argentina contributed to the administration's reorientation by unveiling the potential bellicosity and erratic behavior of authoritarian regimes. The administration supported Britain in the conflagration and thereafter never again favored Argentina's generals.

In order to bolster the credibility of its much criticized military offensive against the Sandinistas, the administration used prodemocracy rhetoric and ultimately criticized authoritarianism of the right (Arnson 1993; Whitehead 1991). Without a minimal effort to promote democracy elsewhere in Latin America, the crusade against the Sandinistas and support for the regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala would have encountered more congressional and public resistance than it already did.

Reagan's policies remained marked by gnawing tensions such as the effort to encourage democracy while simultaneously promoting a massive buildup of patently authoritarian militaries in Central America. In the isthmus, in order to combat communism, the administration sometimes allied with traditional authoritarian forces. The rhetorical commitment to democracy always outpaced the reality. In its Central American policy the administration flouted mechanisms of democratic accountability by lying to and circumventing Congress. It supported blatantly authoritarian regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala and also helped arm the contras, many of whom were notorious for their authoritarian past. Anticommunism prevailed over democracy in Central America. Yet even in the isthmus the administration did not wholly abandon the cause of democracy. As it pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into arming the Salvadoran military, the US government also applied pressure to hold elections and attempted to prop up the centrist Christian Democrats over the right wing. In a context of massive human rights violations, the Salvadoran elections of the 1980s were very flawed, but outright

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fraud was kept to a minimum. Similar US pressures pushed the Guatemalan military to hold elections in 1985, leading to the inauguration of civilian president Vinicio Cerezo in 1986. Although these governments were not democratic, they won office in competitive elections.

Elsewhere, free of the potential tradeoff between anticommunism and democracy, the administration really attempted to promote democracy. Public and congressional pressures induced the administration to keep alive the rhetorical commitment to democracy. Surprisingly in light of its unflinching criticisms of Carter's human rights policy, the Reagan administration declared its opposition to military uprisings in Argentina in 1987 and 1988, and it pressured for democratic change in Chile, Paraguay, Panama, and Haiti. The policy toward Chile changed in 1983 as the administration began to criticize human rights violations and call for a return to democracy. In Chile Ambassador Harry Barnes, who was appointed in 1985, criticized authoritarian rule and human rights violations, supported opposition groups, and encouraged democratic elections. The administration also conditioned support for some multilateral loans to Chile on improvement in human rights and progress in democratization. All told, the administration did not contribute much to democratic change in Latin America, notwithstanding its fulsome rhetoric to the contrary,[15] but during Reagan's second term it no longer coddled 'friendly' rightist dictatorships. Reagan apologists claim credit for the fact that the Sandinistas held free and fair elections in 1990; in fact, it is not clear whether the war against the Sandinistas helped or hindered the cause of democracy.

Under President Bush the US generally supported democratic initiatives in Latin America. Supporting democratic governments was made easier by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Sandinistas' setback at the polls in 1990. Anticommunism receded, as the US no longer had the communist threat to contend with.

The Bush and Clinton administrations promoted democratization in Haiti, criticized authoritarian involutions in Peru (1992) and Guatemala (1993), and applied

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[15] Huntington (1991: 91–98) emphasizes the role of the US government in encouraging democracy in Latin America. Lowenthal (1991) and Whitehead (1986) are more skeptical.

pressure against coup mongers in Argentina (1987 and 1988), Peru (1989), Venezuela (1992), and Paraguay (1996). The 1989 invasion of Panama—although dubious from other perspectives—ousted dictator Manuel Noriega and led to the installation of a government that had been denied office through electoral fraud. The US has used diplomatic pressure, public pronouncements, and economic sanctions to bolster democracy and hinder authoritarian regimes (Pastor 1989).

US governmental agencies have also attempted to foster democracy in Latin America. In December 1980 the Agency for International Development began a "Human Rights and Democratic Initiatives" program under President Carter. This program funded human rights groups in Latin America, and it also helped fund the IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems), which in turn has helped promote fair elections. AID's Latin American and Caribbean Bureau began a Democracy Program for Latin America in 1984, funding a variety of initiatives intended to strengthen democracy. Although AID has worked in Latin America since the 1960s, its efforts at building democracy are more recent. The first time it provided ample technical assistance for an election was in 1982 in El Salvador. Subsequently AID began programs designed to strengthen legislatures, judiciaries, local governments, and political parties. Even if these efforts are not always successful, they signal the US's desire to foster democracy.

In 1984 the US government created the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), whose mission is to foster democracy around the world. NED is funded by Congress, but it is run by an independent bipartisan board. NED provides grants to groups in other countries that seek
to promote democracy: civic organizations, human rights groups, etc. It supported the opposition to regimes as diverse as the Sandinistas and Pinochet. In some cases NED provided funding for election monitoring and voter education. NED has supported democratic civic groups, judicial and legislative reforms, human rights groups, and legislatures in Latin America. Although some of NED's activities are of debatable merit, its existence signals the US's greater willingness to promote democracy.

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This is not to subscribe to an apologetic view of US policy toward Latin America; the US could have done more to bolster democracy in the hemisphere. But the contrast to the pre-1977 pattern of supporting coups and dictators is significant and helps account for greater democratic survivability in the third wave.

NGOs

Nongovernmental actors have also supported democracy in recent years. Human rights organizations such as Americas Watch, Amnesty International, the Washington Office on Latin America, and the Inter-American Dialogue monitor the situation of democracy and human rights in the region. The Socialist International and the German party foundations have poured resources into supporting Latin American democracies for years (Whitehead 1986: 25–31).

Multilateral organizations

Multilateral organizations have also defended democracy more vigorously than ever before. In recent years the OAS and UN have become more vigorous agents on behalf of democracy. In 1990 the UN and OAS had a major presence in the Nicaraguan elections in an effort to promote a fair process. This was the first time that the UN had monitored the election of a member nation. After that success both organizations also monitored elections and promoted peace talks in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Haiti (McCoy, Garber, and Pastor 1991). In 1991 the OAS passed Resolution 1080, which created a new mechanisms for the multilateral defense of democracy.

Signed by five Central American presidents in 1987, the Esquipulas Accord was an early step toward the effective multilateral promotion of democracy and peace making. This accord was aimed at ending the Central American civil wars and promoting democracy. The presidents collectively pledged to ensure that democracy and peace would prevail.

Democratic governments in Latin America have supported efforts to encourage democracy and to impose sanctions against authoritarian regimes. Collectively, NGOs,

multilateral agencies, and the governments of Latin America, Western Europe, and North America have created a norm of disapproval of authoritarianism and support—ideological, if not material—for democracy.

Groups that monitor elections have enhanced the integrity of the electoral process. Such monitoring was important in Chile in the 1988 plebiscite and in Nicaragua in 1990. In both cases massive foreign intervention promoted citizen expectations of fair elections and encouraged the incumbents to respect unfavorable results at the polls.

But it is not only that norms have changed; new institutional mechanisms to enforce these norms have emerged. In July 1996 the presidents of the Mercosur countries—Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Chile—signed an agreement stating that any member nation would be expelled if democracy broke down. Pressure from neighboring Mercosur nations helped avert a coup in Paraguay in April 1996. In an age of growing international economic integration, authoritarian governments now faced the significant possibility of economic sanctions such as those that crippled the economies of Panama under Noriega and Haiti after the military deposed Aristide. The US, UN, and OAS have applied sanctions against patently authoritarian governments.

Never before in the Americas has there existed anything like the near universal ideological support for democracy that has been present since Reagan's second term. Even in this context democratic breakdowns can occur, as occurred in Peru in 1992. But they are less likely.

Explaining Democratic Survivability: Quantitative Analysis

Structural, ideological, and international factors have contributed to greater democratic survivability in the post-1978 period. Although the bulk of the explanation has rested on the comparative historical method, some statistical tests can help verify the arguments.

With a dichotomous categorical dependent variable, logistic regression provides a tool to assess whether the structural changes or an international contagion effect holds

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greater weight in explaining the vicissitudes of democratic survivability in Latin America. Because my measurement of the dependent variable (democracy) until 1972 is categorical with only three possible values (authoritarian, semidemocratic, and democratic), I dichotomized the dependent variable and used logistic regression. I first ran the regression comparing the democratic cases with the semidemocratic and authoritarian ones and then comparing the democratic and semidemocratic with the authoritarian. Because there were no data for GDP per capita for some countries for 1940–4, the regression is restricted to 1945–96.

Table 8 shows the results of six models, three for each of the dependent variables. Models 1 and 4 specifically assess the relationship between per capita GDP and democratic survivability and confirm that the countries with a higher per capita income are more likely to be democratic. The only independent variable is per capita GDP. In this model the probability of democracy increases from 11.5% at $133 per capita (the lowest of any country over the 52 years) to 27.7% at $1,309 per capita (the mean for the 19 countries over 52 years) to 95.2% at $5,597 per capita (the highest of any country during the 52 years).

Table 8

Logistic Regression Models (1945–1996)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable					
	Democracy			Democracy and Semidemocracy		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Per capita GDPa	.921**	.893**	.607**	.555**	.510**	.089
	(.084)	(.083)	(.110)	(.076)	(.076)	(.101)
Diffusion		.094 *	.223**		.236**	.347**
		(030)	(.040)		(.029)	(.034)
Commitment dummy[b]			4.279**			10.058
			(.292)			(6.499)
Constant	2.163**	-2.639**	-3.967**	-.760**	-1.941**	-2.610**
	(.141)	(.213)	(.322)	(.115)	(.188)	(.231)

Predicted correct (%)						
Democracies	23.7	26.8	67.0	44.6	55.4	70.5
Nondemocracies	91.5	91.1	97.4	76.1	76.5	89.3
All regimes	71.6	72.2	88.5	60.7	66.2	80.1
Nagelkerke R^2	.205	.217	.601	.081	.169	511
N	988	988	988	988	988	988

Logistic regression coefficients (standard errors)

[a] In thousand US dollars (1980)

[b] Countries coded=1 were Argentina (1983–96), Brazil (1985–96), Chile (1945–70 and 1990–96), Colombia (1958–90), Costa Rica (1949–96), Uruguay (1945–71 and 1985–1996), and Venezuela (1963–92).

* Significant at .005 level

** Significant at .0001 level

Models 2 and 5 used two independent variables, a country's GDP per capita in a given year and the number of countries that were democratic that year excluding the country in question. The latter variable served as a proxy for an international democratic contagion effect. The variable could range from zero (none of the country's Latin American counterparts were democratic) to eighteen (all of the other countries were democratic). In both models both independent variables are statistically significant at a very high level. Adding the second independent variable improved both the percentage of cases predicted correctly and the Nagelkerke R^2. At the mean per capita income of \$1,309 for the 988 cases the probability of democracy in Model 2 increases from 21.7% if two other countries are democratic (the lowest figure during this time) to 27.4% with 5.28 other democracies (the mean), to 37.1% with ten other democracies (the high).

Models 3 and 6 include a dummy variable for democratic commitment. An objective and continuous measure of democratic commitment would be preferable, but at this point in the development of the social sciences such a task would be very difficult and enormously time consuming. As a result I coded countries on the basis of assessments found in the secondary literature. The criterion for coding was that the government and main opposition actors needed to be clearly committed to democracy in a given year. When in doubt, I did not include the country. The literature is relatively

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consistent in indicating that with these criteria, Argentina (1983–98), Brazil (1985–98), Chile (1932–70, 1990–8), Colombia (1958–90), Costa Rica (1949–98), Uruguay (1942–71, 1985–98), and Venezuela (1963–92) stand out for strong commitments to democracy; hence they are coded as 1.

It is not certain whether this variable can be assessed independently of the dependent variable. By definition, only a democratic regime can be scored as having the commitment to democracy. Given the potential problems with this variable, I ran all the regressions both with and without it. Adding this variable further improves the percentage of cases predicted correctly and the Nagelkerke R^2. Table 9 shows how the democratic commitment variable affects the likelihood of democracy, holding constant the number of other democracies and varying the income level and then holding constant the income level and varying the number of other democracies.

Table 9

Probability of Democracy by GDP per Capita
(Number of Democracies set at 5)

	GDP per capita	Probability of Democracy without Democratic Commitment (%)	Probability of Democracy with Democratic Commitment (%)
Lowest	133	5.9	82.1
Mean	1309	11.3	90.4
Highest	5597	63.3	99.2

Probability of Democracy by Number of Other Democracies
(GOP per capita fixed at $1,309)

	Number of other Democracies	Probability of Democracy without Democratic Commitment (%)	Probability of Democracy with Democratic Commitment (%)
Lowest	2.00	6.1	82.8
Mean	5.28	12.0	90.9
Highest	10.00	28.0	96.6

Using the same independent variables Table 10 shows the results of a linear regression with Freedom House scores as the dependent variable for 1972–96. Model 1 uses only GDP per capita as an independent variable. Each increase of $1,000 in GDP per capita leads to an expected decline of **.**835 in Freedom House scores. Model 2 adds the number of other democracies as an independent variable. Both independent variables were statistically significant at the .001 level, strongly supporting the assertion that they

have a significant impact on democratic survivability in Latin America. Both variables are also substantively quite significant, though neither had an overwhelming effect on Freedom House scores. Each increase of 1 in the number of other Latin American democracies produced a decline of –.243 in expected Freedom House scores (Freedom House scores decline as conditions are more democratic). Thus an increase of 4.12 more democracies would lower the expected Freedom House score by 1.00.

Table 10

OLS models for Freedom House Scores
Standardized and Unstandardized regression coefficients
(1972–1996)

Independent Variables	**Dependent Variable Freedom House Score[a]**		
	I	**II**	**III**
Per capita GDPb	-.835*	-.879*	-.004
	(.129)	(.126)	(.120)
	-.286*	-.301*	-.014
Diffusion		-.243*	-.191*
		(.049)	(.041)
		-.214*	-.168*
Commitment dummy			-4.211*
			(.295)
			-.589*
Constant	8.390*	10.127*	9.435*
	(.241)	(.422)	(.356)
Adjusted R2	.080	.123	.387
N	475	475	475

OLS coefficients (standard errors) Bold font is for standardized coefficients (betas).
[a] Measured as the sum of Freedom House scores on civil liberties and political rights (2=most democratic; 14=less democratic)
[b] In thousand US dollars (1980)
* Significant at .001 level

Each increase of $1,000 in GDP per capita accounted for a decrease of –.879 in expected Freedom House scores; thus, an increase of $1,138 per capita would generate a decrease

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of 1.00 in expected Freedom House scores. The model accounts for 12.3% of the variance in Freedom House scores. But this modest R^2 is to be expected given the indeterminate nature of politics. The two factors analyzed here significantly shape prospects for democracy, but political leadership, the specific nature of political conflicts in a country, and other factors related to political agency are also important. The very high statistical significance of both independent variables corroborates the argument that they help account for the increase in democratic survivability.

When a dummy variable for democratic commitment is added for 1972–96, GDP per capita lost its statistical significance, but the democratic contagion effect and commitment to democracy were highly significant. The democratic commitment variable has a powerful substantive impact. When a country is coded '1,' meaning that the government leaders and main opposition actors were committed to democracy, expected Freedom House scores drop considerably, by 4.21. Given the measurement problems with the democratic commitment variable, the results of Model 3 are not conclusive, but they suggest the surprising possibility that in Latin America, GDP per capita is significant because it masks differences in democratic commitment. As one would expect, commitment to democracy is more likely in wealthier countries.

If the argument is correct that changing political values and changes in the international system have bolstered democracy in the third wave, then we should also be able to detect a period effect. After roughly 1985 democracy should be more likely at most income categories than it was before 1978. Between 1978 and 1985 many authoritarian regimes installed during previous years were still intact, so the third wave period effect would not necessarily be discernible. Table 11 shows the results, clearly confirming the hypothesis.

Table 11

Likelihood of Democracy by Period, 1945–77 Versus 1985–96

GDP/capita	1945–77		1985–96	

(1980 U.S. dollars)	Regime-years	Percent Democratic	Regime-years	Percent Democratic
0 to 399	39	0.0	12	0.0
400 to 799	271	6.6	47	34.0
800 to 1,199	133	15.0	35	40.0
1,200 to 1,799	87	57.5	56	55.4
1,800 to 2,399	35	45.7	35	60.0
2,400 to 3,199	27	3.7	18	61.1
3,200 or more	35	65.7	25	100.0
Total	627	20.4	228	51.8

Democratic breakdown rates also show a period effect. The breakdown rate of democracies declined from 4.7% in 1945–77 (6 breakdowns of 128 cases) to 0.0% in 1985–96 (0 breakdowns of 118 cases). The lower incidence of breakdown cannot easily be attributed to a higher per capita income, because at most income levels the number of democratic cases is similar for 1985–96 and 1945–77. If the lower breakdown rate of 1985–96 were primarily a result of modernization, one would expect a greater proportion of the democratic cases to be in higher income categories for this later period. However, as noted earlier, a new pernicious phenomenon has also emerged in the third wave: the erosion of democracies into semidemocracies.

The transition rate of nondemocratic regimes increased substantially in the third wave. From 1945 to 1977 the transition rate of nondemocracies was 5.8% (29 transitions out of 499 cases). From 1985 to 1996 this rate increased to 10.0% (11 transitions out of 110 cases). This combination of fewer democratic breakdowns and more transitions of nondemocratic regimes (many to democracy) accounts for the greater prevalence of democracy in the 1990s.

Conclusions

In Latin America during most of the last half century democracy was more likely to prosper in the more economically developed countries. In this sense, the conventional

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wisdom suggested by modernization theory is right—but with the many caveats discussed above.

The period since 1978 has shown that democracy can endure under adverse economic and social conditions if the main actors are committed to democratic rules of the game. Structural factors are important, but political actors develop values and behaviors that are far from reducible to the structural situation. In this sense, the analysis here is consistent with actor-oriented approaches to democratization (e.g., Levine 1973; Linz 1978; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). Still, the quality of democracy has generally been much better in the medium or wealthier countries of Latin America. This fact—and indeed the entire analysis here—suggests the importance of combining structural and actor-oriented approaches.

In the post-1978 period Latin America democracies have survived despite dismal economic and social results. Given the previous record in Latin America, the resilience of democracy in this latest period is surprising. Although Latin America has achieved its most democratic period ever during a lengthy time of poor economic results, this is not to say that poor economic performance has not affected democracy. Presumably, growth would be propitious for democratic governments because it would foster higher legitimacy. The limited legitimacy of many new democratic governments in Latin America stems in part from lackluster economic results. Moreover, stronger economic growth would promote social transformations favorable to democracy.

Political science has not dealt particularly effectively with the role of ideas and attitudes in shaping political outcomes (for exceptions, see Goldstein and Keohane 1993; Hall 1989). Because the impact of ideas is difficult to measure, political scientists tend to prefer explanations that focus on structures. The Latin American evidence, however, suggests that changes in political attitudes have been important in sustaining democracy in the post-1980 period. Structural changes have been consequential, but they have been overshadowed by a new valuing of political democracy.

Until the 1990s most works on democracy paid relatively little attention to international factors (for an exception, see Whitehead 1986). The dominant focus on

domestic factors is easily comprehensible with macro quantitative studies designed to see what factors make some countries more likely to be democracies than others. Such approaches have not readily incorporated a dimension that can at best differentiate regions of the world (but not countries); the dissemination of international ideas argument does not explain why one country in a region is democratic while another is not. However, the international dimension is crucial for understanding why some periods have been much less favorable to democracy than others.

International factors have been important in sustaining democracy in Latin America since 1978. Three kinds of international factors have helped shape prospects for democracy: the dissemination of ideas (a diffusion effect), the actions of governments, and the actions of multilateral agencies and nongovernmental actors.

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Table 1

Classification of Latin American Governments, 1940–97

D = democratic S = semidemocratic A = authoritarian

Country	Period	Type	Country	Period	Type
Argentina	1930–46	A	Guatemala	1839–1944	A
	1946–51	S		1944–54	D
	1951–58	A		1954–85	A
	1958–61	S		1986–97	S
	1962–63	A	Haiti	1815–1991	A
	1963–66	S		1991	S
	1966–73	A		1991–97	A
	1973–76	D	Honduras	1838–1957	A
	1976–83	A		1957–63	S
	1983–97	D		1963–81	A
Bolivia	1825–1952	A		1982–97	S
	1952–64	S	Mexico	1821–88	A
	1964–82	A		1988–97	S
	1983–97	D	Nicaragua	1838–84	A
Brazil	1822–1945	A		1984–97	S
	1946–64	S	Panama	1903–56	A
	1964–85	A		1956–68	S
	1985–97	D		1968–89	A
Chile	1932–73	D		1990–94	S
	1973–90	A		1994–97	D
	1990–97	D	Paraguay	1918–89	A
Colombia	1936–49	S		1989–97	S
	1949–57	A	Peru	1939–48	S
	1958–74	S		1948–56	A
	1974–90	D		1956–62	S
	1990–97	S		1962–63	A
Costa Rica	1918–49	S		1963–68	D
	1949–97	D		1968–80	A
Dominican Rep.	1930–62	A		1980–90	D
	1963	D		1990–92	S
	1963–78	A		1992–94	A
	1978–94	D		1995–97	S
	1994–97	S	Uruguay	1933–42	A
Ecuador	1940–44	S		1942–73	D
	1944–48	A		1973–84	A
	1948–61	S		1985–97	D
	1961–68	A	Venezuela	1830–1945	A
	1968–70	A		1945–48	D
	1970–79	A		1948–58	A
	1979–97	D		1958–97	D
El Salvador	1931–84	A			
	1984–92	S			
	1992–97	D			

Sources: Among others, Diamond, Linz, and Lipset (1989), Gasiorowski (1993), Mainwaring and Scully (1995), Rueschemeyer et al. (1992), Hartlyn and Valenzuela (1994), and some individual country studies. For the post-1972 period, I also consulted the annual publications of Freedom House.

Figure 1

Democratic Governments in Latin America, 1940–97
Number of Governments in Each Category

Year

- - - - - - - authoritarian ——— semidemocratic ━━ democratic

Sources: Table 1 and Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*, various years.

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Table 2

Longest Period of Uninterrupted Democracy by Country

Country	Years
Argentina	1983–98
Bolivia	1982–98
Brazil	1985–98
Chile	1932–73
Colombia	1974–90
Costa Rica	1949–98
Dominican Republic	1978–94
Ecuador	1979–98
El Salvador	1992–98
Guatemala	1944–54
Haiti	*
Honduras	*
Mexico	*
Nicaragua	*
Panama	1994–98
Paraguay	*
Peru	1980–90
Uruguay	1942–73
Venezuela	1958–98

* No period of full democracy has taken place.

Table 3

Per Capita Income, Latin America, 1950–79

Constant 1970 Dollars

	1950	1960	1970	1979	% Change 1950–79
Argentina	817	912	1,208	1,405	72.0
Bolivia	231	192	296	362	56.7
Brazil	233	332	450	773	231.8
Chile	576	679	850	937	62.7
Colombia	370	425	508	728	96.8
Costa Rica	347	474	656	895	157.9
Dominican Republic	230	294	351	483	110.0
Ecuador	247	296	355	532	115.4
El Salvador	265	319	397	436	64.5
Guatemala	293	322	417	525	79.2
Haiti	119	117	99	126	5.9
Honduras	232	250	289	294	26.7
Mexico	486	627	893	1,066	119.3
Nicaragua	215	271	394	300	39.5
Panama	459	549	868	932	103.1
Paraguay	305	293	353	532	74.4
Peru	313	415	525	561	79.2
Uruguay	851	875	905	1,142	34.2
Venezuela	653	914	1,180	1,380	113.3
Latin America	396	490	648	857	116.4

Source: *Statistical Abstract of Latin America 1983* 22, 282–3.

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Table 4

Likelihood of Democracy by Income Category, 19 Latin American Countries, 1945–96

GDP/capita (1980 US dollars)	Regime-Years (N)	% Regime-Years Democratic	% Regime-Years Semidemocratic	% Regime-Years Authoritarian
0 to 399	58	0.0	0.0	100.0
400 to 799	340	10.9	30.6	58.5
800 to 1,199	196	23.0	21.4	55.6
1,200 to 1,799	176	58.0	13.1	29.0
1,800 to 2,399	91	40.7	6.6	52.7
2,400 to 3,199	53	22.6	30.2	47.2
3,200 or more	74	77.0	0.0	23.0
Total (%)	988	290 (29.4)	191 (19.3)	507 (51.3)

Figure 2

Mean Country Per Capita GDP by Regime Type by Year
(1980 Dollars)

Sources: 1940–79: *Statistical Abstract of Latin America*, Vol. 22, 1983
1980–2, 84: *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America* 1991
1983: *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1987
1985–1992: *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1993
1993–1995: *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1996
1996: *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America*, 1997

All figures are 1980 dollars. Figures for 1940–79 were originally in 1970 dollars and have been corrected by an inflator figure for each country, equal to that country's 1970 per capita GNP in

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1980 dollars divided by that country's 1970 per capita GNP in 1970 dollars. An analogous procedure was applied to 1993–6 figures originally expressed in 1990 dollars.

Table 5

Correlation between Freedom House Scores and Per Capita Income

Year	Correlation	Year	Correlation
1972	-.25	1985	-.32*
1973	-.25	1986	-.32*
1974	-.25	1987	-.35*
1975	-.27	1988	-.39*
1976	-.15	1989	-.44**
1977	-.14	1990	-.47**
1978	-.17	1991	-.52**
1979	-.10	1992	-.47**
1980	-.17	1993	-.40**
1981	-.22	1994	-.51**
1982	-.08	1995	-.50**
1983	-.30	1996	-.51**
1984	-.35*		

* Significant at .10
**Significant at .05

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Table 7

Illiteracy Rates in Latin American Democracies
(Percentage of the population aged 15 and over)

Country	Year	Illiteracy	Year	Illiteracy
Argentina	1947	13.6[a]	1980	6.1
Bolivia	1950	67.9	1988	18.9
Brazil	1950	50.5	1980	25.5
Chile	1952	19.8	1980	8.9
Colombia	1951	37.7	1980	12.2[b]
Costa Rica	1950	20.6	1980	7.4
Dominican Rep.	1950	57.1	1980	31.4[c]
Ecuador	1950	44.3	1980	16.5
El Salvador	1950	60.6	1980	32.7[d]
Guatemala	1950	70.7	1980	44.2
Haiti	1950	89.5	1980	62.5
Honduras	1950	64.8	1985	40.5
Mexico	1950	43.2	1980	16.5
Nicaragua	1950	61.6	1980	13.0
Panama	1950	30.0	1980	12.9
Paraguay	1950	34.2	1980	12.3
Peru	1950	48.8[e]	1980	18.1
Uruguay	1960	9.5[f]	1980	5.0
Venezuela	1950	50.5	1980	15.3

[a] Figure for those aged 14 and over
[b] Figure for those 10 and over.
[c] Figure for those aged 5 and over; excludes the indigenous population living in the jungle.
[d] UNESCO estimate.
[e] Estimate (extrapolation from 1940 and 1961 figures)
[f] No census held in Uruguay between 1908 and 1963.

Sources: ECLAC, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America 1981*, 97 for circa 1950; ECLAC, *Statistical Yearbook for Latin America 1990* 54 for circa 1980; *Statistical Abstract of Latin America* 26 (1988) 156, for Nicaragua 1980*; Statistical Abstract of Latin America* 29 (1992), 213, for Honduras 1985; *Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Perú: Compendio Estadístico, 1988* (1989), 99, for Peru circa 1950.

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Table 8

Logistic Regression Models

(1945–1996)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable					
	Democracy			Democracy and Semidemocracy		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Per capita GDPa	.921**	.893**	.607**	.555**	.510**	.089
	(.084)	(.083)	(.110)	(.076)	(.076)	(.101)
Diffusion		.094 *	.223**		.236**	.347**
		(030)	(.040)		(.029)	(.034)
Commitment dummy[b]			4.279**			10.058
			(.292)			(6.499)
Constant	2.163**	-2.639**	-3.967**	-.760**	-1.941**	-2.610**
	(.141)	(.213)	(.322)	(.115)	(.188)	(.231)
Predicted correct (%)						
Democracies	23.7	26.8	67.0	44.6	55.4	70.5
Nondemocracies	91.5	91.1	97.4	76.1	76.5	89.3
All regimes	71.6	72.2	88.5	60.7	66.2	80.1
Nagelkerke R^2	.205	.217	.601	.081	.169	511
N	988	988	988	988	988	988

Logistic regression coefficients (standard errors)

[a] In thousand US dollars (1980)

[b] Countries coded=1 were Argentina (1983–96), Brazil (1985–96), Chile (1945–70 and 1990–96), Colombia (1958–90), Costa Rica (1949–96), Uruguay (1945–71 and 1985–1996), and Venezuela (1963–92).

* Significant at .005 level

** Significant at .0001 level

Table 9

Probability of Democracy by GDP per Capita
(Number of Democracies set at 5)

	GDP per capita	Probability of Democracy without Democratic Commitment (%)	Probability of Democracy with Democratic Commitment (%)
Lowest	133	5.9	82.1
Mean	1309	11.3	90.4
Highest	5597	63.3	99.2

Probability of Democracy by Number of Other Democracies
(GOP per capita fixed at $1,309)

	Number of other Democracies	Probability of Democracy without Democratic Commitment (%)	Probability of Democracy with Democratic Commitment (%)
Lowest	2.00	6.1	82.8
Mean	5.28	12.0	90.9
Highest	10.00	28.0	96.6

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Table 10

OLS models for Freedom House Scores
Standardized and Unstandardized regression coefficients
(1972–1996)

Independent Variables	**Dependent Variable Freedom House Score[a]**		
	I	II	II
Per capita GDP[b]	-.835*	-.879*	-.004
	(.129)	(.126)	(.120)
	-.286*	**-.301***	**-.014**
Diffusion		-.243*	-.191*
		(.049)	(.041)
		-.214*	**-.168***
Commitment dummy			-4.211*
			(.295)
			-.589*
Constant	8.390*	10.127*	9.435*
	(.241)	(.422)	(.356)
Adjusted R2	.080	.123	.387
N	475	475	475

OLS coefficients (standard errors) Bold font is for standardized coefficients (betas).
[a]Measured as the sum of Freedom House scores on civil liberties and political rights (2=most democratic; 14=less democratic)
[b] In thousand US dollars (1980)
* Significant at .001 level

Table 11

Likelihood of Democracy by Period, 1945–77 Versus 1985–96

GDP/capita (1980 U.S. dollars)	1945–77		1985–96	
	Regime-years	Percent Democratic	Regime-years	Percent Democratic
0 to 399	39	0.0	12	0.0
400 to 799	271	6.6	47	34.0
800 to 1,199	133	15.0	35	40.0
1,200 to 1,799	87	57.5	56	55.4
1,800 to 2,399	35	45.7	35	60.0
2,400 to 3,199	27	3.7	18	61.1
3,200 or more	35	65.7	25	100.0
Total	627	20.4	228	51.8

Table 6

Likelihood of Regime Transitions by Regime Type and Income Category, 19 Latin American Countries, 1945–96

GDP/capita (1980 U.S. dollars)	**No. of Democratic Cases**	**Breakdown and Erosion Rate of Democracies**	**No. of Semi-democratic Cases**	**Transition Rate of Semi-democracies***	**No. of Authoritarian Cases**	**Transition Rate of Authoritarian Regimes**	**Transition Rate of All Regimes**
0 to 399	0	–	0	–	58	0.0	
400 to 799	37	2.7	104	6.7	199	5.5	5.6
800 to 1199	45	4.4	42	11.9	109	5.5	6.6
1200 to 1799	102	2.9	23	4.3	51	5.9	4.0
1800 to 2399	37	2.7	6	16.7	48	8.3	6.6
2400 to 3199	12	8.3	16	18.8	25	16.0	15.1
3200 or more	57	1.8	0	–	17	17.6	5.4
Total	290	3.1	191	8.9	507	6.1	5.8
# Transitions / # Regime Years		(9/290)		(17/191)		(31/507)	

* Includes transitions to democracies and reversals to authoritarian regimes.

Note: Every year counts as a separate case for every country. Regime transitions lasting less than one year were not coded into the data set.

FRAGMENTS

Table xx

Likelihood of Regime Transitions by Regime Type, Income Category, and Period Effect, 19 Latin American Countries, 1945-96

	Democracies						Non-Democracies			
GDP/capita (1980 U.S. dollars)	Breakdown Rate (%)		Erosion rate (%)		N		Transition Rate*			
	1945-77	1985-96	1945-77	1985-96	1945-77	1985-96	1945-1977		1985-1996	
							%	N	%	N
0 to 399	--	--	--	--	0	0	0.0	39	0.0	12
400 to 799	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	18	16	5.1	253	3.2	31
800 to 1199	5.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	20	14	5.3	113	14.3	21
1200 to 1799	2.0	0.0	0.0	6.5	50	31	2.7	37	8.0	25
1800 to 2399	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	16	21	5.3	19	28.6	14
2400 to 3199	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	11	23.1	26	14.3	7
3200 or more	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	23	25	16.7	12	--	0
Total	4.7	0.0	0.0	2.5	128	118	5.8	499	10.0	110
	(6/128)	(0/118)	(0/128)	(3/118)			(29/499)		(11/110	

* Includes transitions to democracies and reversals to authoritarian regimes.

Note: Every year counts as a separate case for every country. Regime transitions lasting less than one year were not coded into the data set.