Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America

Emergence, Survival, and Fall

SCOTT MAINWARING
University of Notre Dame

ANÍBAL PÉREZ-LIÑÁN
University of Pittsburgh

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Introduction

We began this book because we wanted to understand the evolution of political regimes in Latin America since 1900 and the reasons for the patterns of those political regimes. What explains why democracies have endured or broken down? What explains why dictatorships have survived or fallen? What explains waves of regime change? Even though the literature had many rich case studies, it was not entirely clear how to cumulate knowledge from these existing studies. Nobody had previously undertaken a project to explain the emergence, survival, and fall of democracies and dictatorships for the region as a whole over an extended period of time.

These empirical issues raised theoretical questions. What theories or theoretical approaches gave us the most leverage in understanding the emergence, survival, and fall of democracies and dictatorships in Latin America? From the outset, we were skeptical that some prominent existing theories would give us much leverage for explaining these issues for Latin America. Modernization theory, which posits that more economically developed countries are more likely to be democratic, did not seem promising as a way of understanding the vicissitudes of democracies and dictatorships in Latin America. A decade ago, we published an article that showed a weak and nonlinear relationship between the level of development and democracy in Latin America (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2003). Our work added to earlier evidence that modernization theory did not go far toward explaining political regimes in Latin America (Landman 1999; O'Donnell 1973).

As we worked on some related articles that paved the way to this book, class theories of democratization enjoyed renewed visibility with the publication of the works by Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) and Boix (2003). These works see democratization as a struggle between the poor, who always favor democracy when it is a viable outcome, and the rich, who prefer dictatorship when stable dictatorship is feasible. For Latin America (and beyond), these theories are problematic. In many cases, the poor and the working class strongly supported leftist

and populist authoritarians even when liberal democracy was an alternative outcome (R. Collier 1999; Germani 1974; Levitsky and Mainwaring 2006; Lipset 1959: 87–126). In other cases, elite actors helped spearhead transitions to democracy (Cardoso 1986; L. Payne 1994). Moreover, contra the assumption of the class-based theories, for Latin America from the 1980s until 2003, many democracies distributed income from the poor to the wealthy, and none did the opposite.

Nor did Inglehart's theories of democracy based on mass political culture (Inglehart 1990, 1997; Inglehart and Welzel 2005) hold much promise as a way of understanding the rise and fall of democracies and dictatorships in Latin America. Inglehart's theories have modernization underpinnings, and modernization theory, as already noted, does not explain regime survival and fall in Latin America. Moreover, in many Latin American democracies, large numbers of citizens express indifference about democracy in public opinion surveys. If large numbers of citizens are not committed to democracy, how can a democratic public opinion explain the durability of democracy?

Finally, all of the established major theoretical paradigms in comparative politics focused on within-country variables. Such a focus cannot easily explain *waves* of regime change, in which international influences and actors hold sway.

We found theoretical inspiration in the seminal works by Linz (1978b) on democratic breakdowns and by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) on transitions to democracy, as well as in many case studies about political regimes. We build on these works, but they did not attempt to develop a theory in the strict sense (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 3). Linz and O'Donnell and Schmitter focused on quite proximate questions of regime change and survival and on regime coalitions, without specifying why different actors join the pro- or anti-democracy coalitions. Ultimately, our dissatisfaction with existing theories of regimes and regime change and our desire to provide greater theoretical integration than Linz (1978b) and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) led us to set forth a new theory of regimes in this book.

We have two primary ambitions. First, we hope to contribute to broader theoretical and comparative debates about the survival or fall of authoritarian and competitive (democratic and semi-democratic) regimes. Second, we aspire to explain regime change and survival[1] of dictatorships and competitive regimes in Latin America from 1945 to 2010, with some glances back at the 1900–44 period.

Because of the inadequacy of existing theories and the advantages that a theory offers, we concluded that it would useful to elaborate an alternative theory based on more realistic microfoundations about what motivates political actors. Our theory looks at systems of actors, posits assumptions about their preferences and about why regimes fall or survive, and deduces hypotheses from these assumptions. In a theory, it is not only the individual hypotheses that can

[1] Throughout the book, we use the terms "regime survival," "regime continuity," "regime durability," and "regime stability" interchangeably. As used here, a stable regime is simply one that survives even if it faces other forms of upheaval.

advance social science; it is also the overarching set of integrated and interrelated propositions (Achen and Snidal 1989). Our theory, which we sketch in this chapter and present more fully in Chapter 2, integrates the study of transitions to competitive regimes and of breakdowns of competitive regimes, and by implication, the study of the durability of dictatorships and of competitive regimes.

A BREAK WITH THE PAST

Figure 1.1 illustrates the fundamental transformation of regimes in Latin America, showing the annual percentage of democracies in the region between 1900 and 2010. The first panel depicts the percentage of countries counted as democracies (as opposed to dictatorships) in the dichotomous classification developed by Adam Przeworski and his collaborators (Przeworski et al. 2000; Cheibub and Gandhi 2004). The second panel reflects the percentage of countries with scores greater than 5 in the Polity scale (Gurr, Jaggers, and Moore

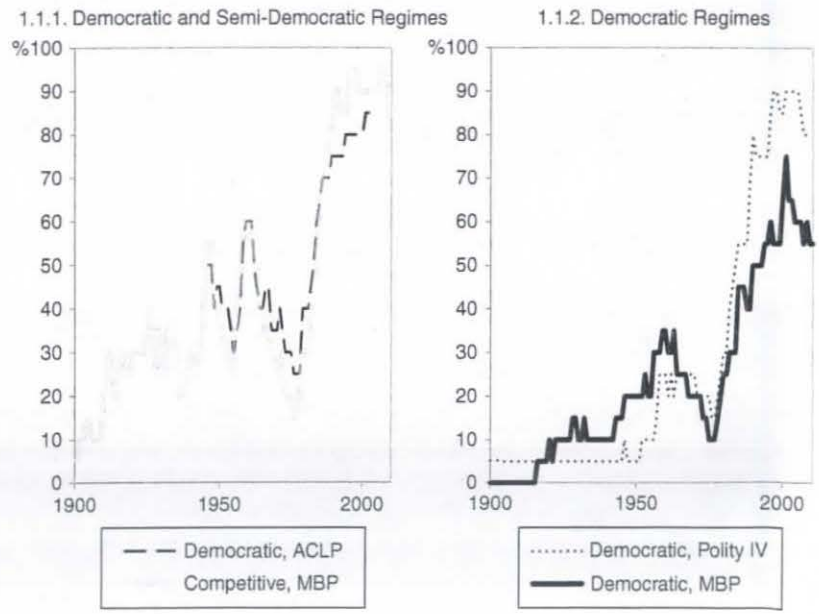

FIGURE 1.1 Percentage of Democratic Regimes in Latin America, 1900–2010
Key: ACLP: Classification developed by Alvarez, Cheibub, Gandhi, Limongi, and Przeworski.
Polity: Countries with scores greater than 5 in the Polity IV scale.
MPB: Mainwaring, Brinks, and Pérez-Liñán trichotomous classification.
Sources: Authors' elaboration based on Cheibub and Ghandi (2004), Przeworski et al. (2000), Polity IV 2012 (http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm), and Table 1.1.

1990; Jaggers and Gurr 1995; Polity IV Project 2012).[2] We also present the classification of political regimes developed for this project, introduced later.

Figure 1.1 suggests that the Przeworski et al. measure is more lenient than a classification based on a score of greater than 5 on the Polity IV scale. Yet all three measures confirm the occurrence of an unprecedented wave of change between 1978 and 1995. They depict a similar trend for the last part of the twentieth century, suggesting reliability in the overall picture.[3] Democracy expanded somewhat in the late 1950s, and then hit a nadir in 1976–77, followed by an unprecedented surge during the 1980s.

Until the wave of democratization that began in 1978, authoritarian regimes were pervasive in most of the region. Many democracies were short-lived, and several countries had had no experience whatsoever of competitive political regimes. The situation changed profoundly between 1978 and 1995. A region that had previously always been predominantly authoritarian witnessed the virtual demise of openly authoritarian regimes. Moreover, since 1978, competitive regimes have been far more durable than ever before. Compared to what occurred in earlier waves of democratization in Latin America, this wave has lasted much longer and has been broader in scope. This transformation is one of the most profound changes in the history of Latin American politics.

The increase in the number of democracies and semi-democracies in Latin America between 1978 and 1995 was dramatic. At the beginning of this period, Latin America had only three democracies, and the other seventeen countries had openly authoritarian regimes. By 1990, the only openly authoritarian governments were those of Cuba and Haiti. By 1995, Cuba was the sole holdout (although Haiti eroded back into authoritarian rule between 1999 and 2006). The shift away from authoritarianism was dramatic in speed and breadth. The trend is even more striking if we consider the total proportion of Latin Americans living under competitive regimes. In 1900, only 5 percent of the regional population enjoyed democratic or semi-democratic politics. In 1950, it was 58 percent. The percentage plummeted to 12 percent of the regional population by 1977, but it had reached 98 percent by 2006.

Figure 1.1 also displays the evolution of political regimes according to our own classification. We classify regimes in Latin America using a simple trichotomous scale developed with Daniel Brinks (Mainwaring et al. 2001, 2007): democratic, semi-democratic, and authoritarian. We lump together the democratic and semi-democratic regimes into a broader category of "competitive regimes" displayed in panel 1.1.1. We explain our coding of political regimes in Chapter 3.

[2] The Polity scale ranges between −10 (authoritarian) and 10 (democratic). The threshold of 5 is conventionally employed to distinguish full democracies from other types of regimes.

[3] The Polity score (the only available for the 1900–45 period beside our own classification) does not consider the extension of voting rights, so it overestimates levels of democracy in the early twentieth century. These four measures of democracy are strongly correlated. The series for the proportion of democracies and semi-democracies according to the Mainwaring et al. three-point scale correlates at .98 with the Przeworski series, at .93 with the Polity index, and at .97 with Freedom House scores.

THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

1) Political actors should be at the center of theories of regime survival and change. Political actors, not structures or cultures, determine outcomes, even though structures and cultures affect the formation and preferences of actors. We view presidents and organizations such as parties, unions, business associations, the military, and organized movements as the most important actors. These organizations and presidents control political resources and therefore exercise influence in the competition for power.

We locate our theory between structural or long-term cultural approaches, on the one hand, and agency and contingent action approaches, on the other. In many theoretical perspectives, purposeful action is the final step in a long causal chain that is largely determined by deep structural (e.g., Boix 2003; Skocpol 1979) or cultural (Foucault 1972; Inglehart and Welzel 2005) forces that transcend individual actors. In these structural and cultural accounts, actors' decisions are largely determined by macro forces. On the other hand, we emphasize the constraining and structuring of powerful organizations more than approaches that focus on individual leaders' decision making.

2) We emphasize the role of political factors that help political regimes survive or lead them to fail. By "political factors" we refer specifically to the impact of actors' normative preferences about democracy and dictatorship, their moderation or radicalization in policy preferences, and international political influences exercised through external actors. We counterpose an emphasis on these political factors to analyses that argue that the survival or displacement of regimes depends largely on structural factors such as the level of development, the class structure, or income inequalities, or on mass political culture.

These political factors have primacy in determining whether regimes fail or remain stable. The empirical evidence for Latin America in the twentieth century supports a primary focus on political factors such as the level of radicalization, actors' normative commitment to democracy, and a favorable international political environment. With a normative democratic commitment on the part of powerful political players and a favorable international environment, democracy can survive in the face of daunting challenges: poverty, significant ethnic cleavages, deep social inequalities, high inflation, and low growth (Linz 1988; Remmer 1996). Indeed, democratic and semi-democratic regimes have survived in post-1977 Latin America in the face of all these unfavorable conditions. This capacity of democracy to survive despite seemingly highly adverse conditions flies in the face of many theoretical expectations before the latest wave of democracy began.

Other analysts have also focused on political factors in understanding regime survival and fall. We add to and modify most previous work by presenting these

ideas in an integrated framework and by testing the theory and specific hypotheses in new ways.

2a) Actors' normative attitudes about democracy and dictatorship are important influences in regime survival or fall. If the most powerful actors have a normative preference for democracy – if they believe that democracy is intrinsically the best political regime even if it does not satisfy their other policy preferences – democracy is more likely to survive.

Our focus on the impact of actors' normative attitudes on regime outcomes builds on literatures in political science and sociology that have emphasized the importance of actors' beliefs in understanding political outcomes. Actors' beliefs influence what they view as desirable and how they pursue their interests (Berman 1998; Blyth 2002; Finnemore 1998; Goldstein 1993; Hall 1989; Sikkink 1991, 1993). If powerful actors view liberal democracy as an inefficient, corruption-plagued obstacle to rapid economic growth, as the Argentine military and big business did in the 1960s, when a competitive regime in a poor or medium income country falters in economic performance, it is vulnerable to breakdown. If powerful leftist actors believe that liberal democracy is a facade for bourgeois domination, as most of the Marxist tradition did, they are likely to mobilize for workers' gains even if this mobilization endangers the regime. Conversely, if actors intrinsically value democracy as a "universal value" (Coutinho 1980), they accept policy sacrifices to preserve democracy, and they are more likely to view democracy as an intertemporal bargain (Przeworski 1991, 2006) in which they can compensate for today's sacrifices by gaining tomorrow. We contribute to the literature on the political impact of actors' beliefs or preferences by testing this argument in new ways.

2b) Actors' policy radicalism hinders the probability that a competitive political regime will survive. Policy moderation facilitates the survival of competitive regimes. Several studies have claimed that the content of the policy preferences embraced by powerful political actors (for instance, a preference for or against income redistribution) have important consequences for political regimes. The *intensity* of actors' policy preferences, and not just their substance, is critical for regime survival and fall. Radical policy preferences make actors on the left and on the right of the policy spectrum intransigent and thus unlikely to tolerate the give-and-take of democratic politics.

3) A favorable regional political environment, characterized by the existence of many democracies in Latin America, increases the likelihood of transitions from authoritarian rule to competitive regimes and diminishes the likelihood of breakdowns of existing competitive regimes. Our theory emphasizes the embeddedness of countries' political actors and political regimes in a regional and international context.

Recent work on democratization has emphasized two factors that are at odds with an exclusive focus on domestic factors. First, democratization occurs in wave-like processes; what happens in neighboring countries has a significant impact on a region. Consistent with the arguments of Brinks and Coppedge (2006), Huntington (1991), and Markoff (1996) at a global level, change in political regimes in Latin America has occurred in waves. It would be difficult to explain wave-like change only on the basis of within-country conditions if there were no transnational effects. The likelihood that political transformations regional in scope could be explained solely by the simultaneous change of domestic conditions in multiple countries is very low. Theories of democratization that are based exclusively on country-level conditions are therefore ill equipped to explain waves of democratization.

Second, these wave-like processes often bring about profound changes in political regimes in a region in a short time. In Latin America, the change from a region that was overwhelmingly authoritarian in 1977 to one that is overwhelmingly democratic or semi-democratic occurred rapidly. Most comparative politics approaches that explain democratization involve long, slow processes. Political culture at the mass level, the level of development, the size and strength of the working class, and income inequality, all of which have been offered as explanations of democratization, usually changes only over the long run. Because the domestic factors that have traditionally been used to explain regime change move relatively slowly, the likelihood that they could account for profound change in a region in a short time is extremely low.

Synchronicity and rapidity of change do not definitively prove that democratization had powerful international causes, but they greatly increase the likelihood that international factors were at work. Many recent works have emphasized the impact of international actors,[4] regional influences,[5] and international organizations[6] on democratization. Consistent with this burgeoning literature, we underscore that battles over political regimes involve not only domestic actors, but also international and transnational actors.

Our work contributes in five ways to the existing literature on international effects on political regimes. First, we include international effects and actors as part of a theory of regime change and stability. Little previous work has integrated domestic and international actors in a theoretical understanding of regime dynamics. Second, an important question has remained unanswered by the existing literature. Because the wave of democratization was more or less contemporaneous with an increasing emphasis by U.S. foreign policy on "democracy promotion," it is hard to disentangle the effects of regional diffusion per se from the role of U.S. foreign policy. We separate these effects in Chapter 4. Third, although the literature on international diffusion of political regimes has burgeoned in recent years, the analysis of the mechanisms behind diffusion is less developed. We analyze this issue in Chapter 7. Fourth, we show that international influences have reinforcing dynamics that help explain the

[4] Brinks and Coppedge (2006); Gleditsch (2002); Gleditsch and Ward (2006); Markoff (1996); Pridham (1991, 1997); Starr (1991).

[5] Brown (2001); Levitsky and Way (2010); Whitehead (1986b, 1996).

[6] Pevehouse (2002a, 2002b, 2005).

magnitude and pace of waves of democratization and authoritarianism (Chapters 4 and 7). Finally, in Chapter 8 we show that while international actors facilitate transitions to democracy and prevent the breakdown of competitive regimes, they are not effective at promoting the advancement of competitive regimes once a transition has taken place.

EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS: UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL REGIMES IN LATIN AMERICA

Empirically, the book examines democratization and regime change in Latin America over a long sweep of time.[7] We hope to make three empirical contributions. First, we aspire to contribute to understanding the history of political regimes in Latin America from 1900 to 2010. Along with Daniel Brinks, and with the help of sixteen research assistants over the course of a decade, we coded political regimes as democratic, semi-democratic, and authoritarian. We discuss our coding rules and procedures in Chapter 3. Our classification of political regimes lays the groundwork for understanding the evolution of democratization and authoritarianism in the region and provides a research tool that other scholars can use.[8]

Second, this is the first book that tries to *explain* the emergence, survival, and fall of political regimes for Latin America as a whole over a long period of time. There is a huge literature on political regimes in Latin America. However, much of it focuses on single countries or a few countries. Drake (2009), Hartlyn and Valenzuela (1994), and P. Smith (2005) offer valuable descriptive histories of democracy in Latin America, but with little effort to explain regime emergence, survival, and demise.

Third, this is the first book that has attempted to extend an actor-based approach to political regimes to the empirical study of a large number of countries over an extended period of time. Many scholarly approaches agree that political actors (rather than structures or political culture) offer the most fruitful perspective to study political regimes. Such approaches claim that actors' choices determine regime outcomes, and that structures and cultures, even though they influence the actors that emerge and their behavior, do not determine their choices. Actor-based approaches to studying political regimes are common in case studies (Berman 1998; Capoccia 2005; Figueiredo 1993; Levine 1973, 1978; Linz 1978a; O'Donnell 1982; Stepan 1971, 1978; A. Valenzuela

[7] By Latin America we refer to the twenty countries in the western hemisphere that were colonized by Spain, France, or Portugal: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. We do not include countries colonized by Great Britain or the Netherlands.

[8] Drake (2009) and Smith (2005) also describe the evolution of democracy in twentieth-century Latin America.

1978; J. S. Valenzuela 1985; Viola 1982). Theoretical frameworks such as those of Linz (1978b) and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) also posit that actors (or blocs of actors) are the most useful unit of analysis. Yet given the time-intensive demands of studying a large number of actors across a long period of time in a substantial number of countries, there hitherto has been no extensive (i.e., involving a large number of cases) empirical testing of theoretical propositions about the effects of actors' preferences on regime outcomes.

Working with a different team of nineteen research assistants, we identified the main actors operating under every presidential administration in the twenty Latin American countries from 1944 to 2010 and also coded their attitudes toward democracy and dictatorship and their policy moderation/radicalism.[9] If actors (as opposed to structures or cultures) determine political outcomes, actually examining their preferences and behavior is essential. Some excellent studies have followed this precept for one or a small number of countries, but no previous work has coded actors for so many countries over a long period of time.

WHY DEVELOP A THEORY?

Scholars working on political regimes confront several choices. In terms of the overall analytical strategy, the main question has been whether to develop a theory with an integrated set of hypotheses that is deduced from explicitly articulated initial assumptions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Boix 2003); a theoretical framework that provides a general orientation toward studying political regimes (Linz 1978b; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986); or a set of narrower empirical hypotheses (Cutright 1963; Morlino 2008: 47–51; Przeworski et al. 2000).[10]

Each of these options has advantages and disadvantages. Theories provide integrative ways of understanding the world – an advantage, given our objectives. A theory makes explicit who the actors are and how they are constituted, what motivates their behavior in regime games, and how they form winning coalitions. Empirical propositions that are not integrated by theories or by theoretical frameworks such as Linz (1978b) and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) do not explicitly embed their analyses into an understanding of these issues. In contrast, the empirical propositions that a theory deductively generates are part of an integrated whole (Bunge 1998: 433–43). Some scholars (Coppedge 2012: 49–113; Munck 2001) have commented on the lack of theoretical integration in most work on political regimes and argued that this

[9] To be precise, we coded all presidential administrations that lasted long enough to be in power as of December 31 in at least one year. If a president began his term in a given year and did not serve until the end of that year, we did not include that administration in our dataset.

[10] These distinctions could be seen as a continuum rather than as three discrete categorical possibilities.

constitutes a weakness in this literature. We agree with their judgment; our effort at building a theory responds to their observations.

Notwithstanding the sophistication of some of the work that has inspired us, there have been no previous efforts along the lines presented here to develop a theory of regime survival and fall.[11] The insights of the rich literatures on which we draw do not fully substitute for a theory of regime survival and fall. These insights are not generally connected to each other in a system of cohesive and logical relationships. As a result, work on political regimes has accumulated considerable knowledge, but with less theoretical integration than is desirable. As Coppedge (2012: 49–113) comments, with loose integration, a research finding about the importance of certain independent variables could be compatible with a wide range of theories.

Social scientists want to know not only whether some specific independent variables affect political outcomes, but also what theories hold up (Bunge 1998: 433–43). Because it consists of a system of integrated hypotheses deduced from explicitly articulated assumptions, a theory helps order and organize hypotheses.

Our book integrates previous streams of research into a cohesive theory. The core contribution of our work is not the five discrete hypotheses about regime survival and fall that we present later. Rather, it is the theory, which links these hypotheses in deductively logical ways, and the testing of it. A theory is a way of making sense of the world, of providing an integrated framework. Discrete hypotheses can also advance understanding in the social sciences, but theories help stimulate advances in how social scientists think about politics. The development and testing of theories is a critical part of social science (Achen and Snidal 1989; Bunge 1998: 433–43; Coppedge 2012: chapters 3–4; Ferejohn and Satz 1995; Munck 2001).

Our understanding of "theory" is not restricted to formal models. Our endeavor is a theory because it starts with some explicitly articulated assumptions about the relevant set of actors and the factors that determine their choice of regime coalition, and then we deduce an integrated set of hypotheses from these assumptions.[12]

ACTORS AND REGIME COALITIONS

The notion of political actors forms the first building block of our theory. We focus on a parsimonious set of the most important political actors: presidents,

[11] Linz (1978b) and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) developed theoretical frameworks that have some of the characteristics of a theory, but without a set of integrated hypotheses.

[12] The formal-theory approaches such as Boix (2003) offer tight integrated theories that provide logical microfoundations for specific macro-hypotheses. Some frameworks (Linz 1978b; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986) offer heuristics to guide the inquiry of researchers into cases or topics. In this regard, our theoretical discussion follows the second tradition more than the first one.

powerful organizations, and influential organized movements. In democratic regimes, the president and the largest parties are important actors. The government commands many resources, and because it directs the policy process, it strongly influences future resources and outcomes. As head of the government, the president exercises great influence over the government and more broadly over democratic politics. Parties are the primary route to achieving elected office in democratic politics. Democratic politics revolve significantly around the competition among parties.

The military, guerrilla organizations, social movements, nongovernmental organizations, unions, and business associations are sometimes major actors.[13] In authoritarian regimes, the most important actors always include the president and often include a hegemonic party (if there is one and if it is reasonably independent with respect to the president), the main opposition party (under authoritarian regimes with competitive elections), and the military.

In our theory, actors' purposeful action largely determines regime outcomes. Actors form preferences about a political regime based on what they see as desirable outcomes (specifically in terms of policy preferences and regime procedures) and they act on the basis of those preferences. Political actors are instrumental, but they are not always *only* instrumental or narrowly self-interested. The theory does not deny that actors' behavior can have unintended consequences.

Our understanding of who the actors are and what motivates them diverges from some theories. In class-based accounts, social classes are the actors. In contrast, in our view, social classes are usually not sufficiently organized and sufficiently politically cohesive to form political actors. Labor-based political parties and labor unions are actors, but the working class per se is not unless labor organizations or political parties forge political unity among most workers. Similarly, capitalists per se are usually not a unified political actor; they have competing interests and usually lack a single organization that speaks for all of them.[14] When their interests are deeply threatened, business owners might forge a temporary unity that enables them to function like an actor. For short periods, social classes can function like actors when they respond almost uniformly to a political event or process, but such uniformity is the exception. Usually, social classes face difficult collective action problems (Olson 1965); they are internally divided both structurally and politically.

[13] Congress is an important decision-making arena in competitive political regimes, but it is not sufficiently united to be an actor. In conflicts about political regimes, legislatures are usually divided along party lines, so we take the parties, not congress per se, to be the actors.

[14] In Chapter 6, we argue that big business in El Salvador usually functioned as a relatively cohesive actor from 1931 until 1977. This exception to the rule occurred in part because of perceived powerful threats from radical popular and/or insurgent movements. In addition, many big business enterprises in El Salvador were diversified across different sectors. For example, big coffee producers typically also owned firms in other sectors, thus reducing conflict among different economic sectors.

Our treatment of actors also diverges somewhat from that of pioneering contingent action approaches such as Linz (1978b) and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986). Both of these works focus on *blocs* of actors in a manner that is akin to our regime coalitions. They conceptualize the actors according to their positions regarding the existing regime. For example, Linz's loyal, semiloyal, and disloyal oppositions are *blocs* of actors that share a common orientation toward the democratic regime.

Public opinion is not an actor because it cannot per se act. However, in competitive regimes, public opinion is one of the most valuable resources that actors can employ. It often sways powerful actors one way or the other in regime battles. For example, it is unlikely that a successful coup could occur in the face of solid public support for democracy. Conversely, democracy is more likely to be imperiled if large parts of the public turn against it. In democracies, public opinion routinely limits what leaders can do (Brooks and Manza 2007). Likewise, the fate of dictatorships sometimes hinges on whether citizens turn so obviously against the rulers that it emboldens opposition actors and encourages splits in the ruling coalition. In short, public opinion is important in regime battles, but it is not an actor. Likewise, electoral support is a hugely important asset for parties and the president in democracies, but voters do not constitute an actor; they are divided and are almost never capable of cohesive action.

Actors have different kinds of political resources. "Political resources" are any assets (including material and human capacities, institutional advantages that accrue from formal rules of the game, and for the military, arms) that can be mobilized in the competition for power. Political resources may be highly concentrated or widely dispersed. Actors with intense preferences about the political regime work especially hard to mobilize their resources and to create new ones. For the government, military and state capacity always represents valuable resources.

Whether political regimes survive or are replaced depends on how powerful the coalitions that support them are. Every regime hosts at least two simple coalitions, one that supports the incumbent regime (for example, a democracy) and an opposition coalition that supports its displacement (e.g., the authoritarian coalition). Multiple coalitions (e.g., several opposition blocs pursuing different forms of authoritarian rule) are not unusual in times of great turmoil. Many actors remain on the sidelines and join neither coalition. These regime coalitions are usually not formalized, and the partners in the coalitions shift over time. Regime coalitions win state power when they control enough resources to prevail in the competition for power. In the advanced industrial democracies, the regime coalition that supports the status quo (i.e., liberal democracy) vastly overpowers any other alternatives, and therefore the probability of breakdown in the current historical context is virtually zero.

Once in office, the leaders of a regime coalition adopt policies and build, preserve, or modify the existing political regime. A regime type (a competitive regime or a dictatorship) survives if the size and leverage of its coalition is greater than the coalition working for regime change. The regime changes when the opposition coalition is more powerful.

Most actors are not intrinsically part of either the democratic or the authoritarian bloc. They may change regime coalitions depending on how effectively the existing regime satisfies their instrumental policy preferences and, in some cases, their normative preferences about the regime itself (i.e., some actors prefer democracy even if they believe they might get better policy outcomes under dictatorship). All political actors have policy preferences, and some of them have value preferences about the political regime itself. They support regime coalitions that they believe are likely to maximize their policy goals and their normative preferences about the regime.

BETWEEN STRUCTURE AND AGENCY: THE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS AND THE CORE VARIABLES

Another issue in the study of political regimes is where to anchor the proper level of analysis for explanations of regime change. Some scholars have emphasized long-run preconditions (e.g., Moore Jr. 1966) while others have emphasized leaders and contingent action in specific historical contexts (Capoccia 2005; Hartlyn 1984; Karl 1987; Kuran 1989, 1991; Linz 1978b; Stepan 1978). Rustow (1970) framed this question as a dilemma between functional theories and genetic explanations, Przeworski (1986) presented it as a tension between macro- and micro-oriented perspectives, and Karl (1990) conceived of it as explanations based on structure and others based on agency. This problem is related to the substantive distinction between explanations of democratization based on socioeconomic conditions and those based on political factors, but it is analytically distinct. Most explanations of regime change based on socioeconomic variables conceptualize long-term processes, but arguments about the impact of economic performance on political stability (e.g., Merkx 1973) often imply causal mechanisms operating in the medium or short run. Most arguments about political factors refer to short-term processes, but claims about political culture (e.g., Inglehart 1990, 1997; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Wiarda 2001) are based on long-term legacies.

We situate our analysis between long-term explanations such as social structures and short-term explanations based on actors' contingent decisions in quickly shifting conditions. Certainly, long-term factors such as the level of development, the degree of social inequality, and the persistence of profound ethnic, linguistic, or religious fractures affect the viability of democracy. But a fundamental theme in this book is that for our universe of cases, these long-term factors have limited capacity to explain regime survival and fall. To understand why regimes endure or fall, we need to shift the analysis to more proximate causes of regime change.

We do not deny the role of structural forces (patterns of economic development and dependence, class structures, legacies of social inequality, and so on) in

the constitution of political regimes. Structural conditions powerfully influence the emergence and development of political organizations and the distribution of resources. These more distant structural causes play a role in the genesis of political regimes. But the effect of structural variables is contingent and diffuse; it ultimately manifests itself in the organization of political actors and in the relative distribution of their political resources.

At the other end of the spectrum, we emphasize causal factors that are more distant than those analyzed by Kuran (1989, 1991) and Lohmann (1994) in their fascinating accounts of the transition to democracy in Eastern Europe and the former East Germany and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) in their landmark contribution on transitions to democracy. The short term agency based explanations of breakdowns and transitions of Linz (1978b) and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), while richly capturing important processes and interactions, do not tell us under what less proximate conditions breakdowns, democratic survival, and transitions are more likely. We need theories and hypotheses that are situated between structure (or causally distant cultural explanations) and agency to complement existing knowledge. This is the terrain where our theory is located.

Because our theory focuses mostly on fairly proximate variables in the sequence of causation, it is compatible with theories and theoretical frameworks that examine more distant or more immediate causes. For example, modernization theory and our theory could both help explain why democracies and dictatorships survive or fall. The former focuses on more distant causes, and ours on more proximate causes. However, for Latin America from 1945 until 2010, as we show in Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 9, the prominent more distant macro theories have little explanatory power for understanding regime change and survival.

At the meso level of analysis that inspires our effort, three variables affect whether regimes remain in power or fall: (1) whether actors have moderate or radical policy preferences (radical actors tend to be destabilizing in competitive regimes); (2) whether they have a normative preference for democracy or authoritarianism; and (3) how supportive the regional political environment is for competitive and authoritarian regimes. In this section, we introduce the arguments about these three variables.

Radical Policy Preferences. We define radical policy preferences as those toward one pole of the policy spectrum (e.g., toward the left or right when the policy space is effectively unidimensional[15]) in conjunction with an urgency to achieve these preferences in the short to medium term where they do not represent the status quo, or with an intransigent defense of these positions where these positions represent the status quo.[16] They have two main

[15] If there is more than one important dimension of competition, the radical/moderation continuum functions in all of them.

[16] In game theoretic terms, these actors have a large discount factor.

characteristics: (1) because their policy preferences are toward one pole of a policy spectrum, the unqualified adoption of their preferences imposes important costs on other actors; (2) their preferences are very intense, so the actors are intransigent (i.e., unwilling to bargain) and impatient (i.e., unwilling to wait for the long term to achieve their policy goals). Radical policy preferences need not be on the extreme left or extreme right, but they must be far enough from the policy preferences of other relevant actors to create polarization. The location of radical policy positions cannot be determined a priori, as it depends on the nature of the policy space.

The argument about radicalism captures the delicate historical balance between conservative actors' demand for security and progressive actors' demand for policy transformation. Put in Dahl's (1971) terms, mutual guarantees among actors increase the viability of polyarchy. For a democracy to survive in poor- and intermediate-income countries, it is helpful that the actors who can destroy the regime – the military and sometimes the economic elite – not fear the possibility of major losses in a short time. If they do, they are more likely to join the authoritarian coalition. At the same time, actors who pursue policy change should believe that transformations are ultimately viable as a result of democratic political competition. If the intensity of their policy preferences leads either conservative or progressive actors to believe that their goals cannot be achieved under competitive rules, those actors might support an alternative regime able to impose their most favored policies unilaterally. Their withdrawal from the democratic coalition often prompts their opponents to do the same, because uncertainty about policy gains will now turn into the prospect of permanent losses imposed by the radical group. The fear of major losses in the short term thus arises when some actors have radical policy preferences.

Actors' Normative Preferences about Democracy and Dictatorship. Some actors have strong value preferences about the political regime in addition to having instrumental policy preferences. These orientations range from a strong value preference for a particular form of authoritarianism to a strong normative preference for democracy, with indifference toward regime type in the midpoint of the scale.

A normative preference for democracy or dictatorship refers to the willingness of political actors to incur policy costs in order to defend or achieve their preferred regime. It means that an actor prefers a kind of regime on intrinsic grounds, as the best possible political regime. When candidates acknowledge their defeat in an election (rather than questioning its results) and gracefully congratulate their opponents, they are behaving in ways that signal commitment to the principles of the democratic regime. When government leaders accept defeat on an important issue that requires a legislative supermajority, even if they could modify procedural rules to impose the preferred legislation by simple majority, they are signaling commitment to existing procedures. This commitment is credible to others because the behavior implies a cost to the actor involved. Observers infer that the player must have a latent normative preference

(a favorable predisposition) toward the regime, and that this preference must be strong enough to overcome the short-term losses.

Normative preferences about the regime are part of an actors' belief system or view of the world. They are an example of "procedural utility" – the well-being derived from procedures above and beyond the outcomes they generate (Frey, Benz, and Stutzer 2004).[17] They are consistent with what Max Weber (1978) called "value rationality." This argument builds from evidence that individuals care not only about instrumental gains (outcomes), but also about procedures (Benz and Stutzer 2003; Frey et al. 2001; Frey et al. 2004; Frey and Stutzer 2005; Gangl 2003; Levi et al. 2009; Lind et al. 1993; Sen 1995, 1997; Stutzer and Frey 2006), including the ones that constitute a democratic regime.

A strong normative preference for democracy by powerful actors, especially the president and the major parties, reduces the odds that a competitive regime will break down. Actors' normative preference for democracy can help inoculate competitive regimes from breakdowns. If the key actors are normatively committed to democracy, a competitive regime can survive bad governing performance where it might not survive otherwise (Linz 1988; Linz and Stepan 1989; Lipset 1959; O'Donnell 1986: 15–18; Remmer 1996). Actors with a normative preference for democracy are not willing to subvert democracy to pursue radical policies. And – going back to our previous argument – if radical policies are not on the agenda, it is easier for all actors to accept a competitive regime.

Conversely, actors that normatively prefer a dictatorship readily seize on opportunities to delegitimize a competitive regime and bolster the authoritarian coalition. In moments of poor economic performance or radicalism by opposing forces, actors that are indifferent to democracy can easily be recruited to join the authoritarian coalition if it is already a force to reckon with (Lipset 1959).

A normative preference for democracy by the main opposition parties and leaders also signals to leaders of an authoritarian regime and their allies that the costs of establishing a competitive regime are likely to be bearable. It can help pave the way for a transition to a competitive regime by assuring the actors that support the authoritarian coalition that their interests are not likely to be radically threatened under a competitive regime.

These arguments rest on the assumption that actors' attitudes toward political regimes significantly influence political outcomes. Actors' values about what political regimes are desirable and feasible affect how they behave politically and how tolerant they are of policy failures, of dissent on the part of other actors with strongly opposing preferences, and of political unrest. Normative preferences create a cognitive map that shapes how actors understand political reality and their own interests (Blyth 2002; Finnemore 1998).

Most political regimes hit periods of bad government performance. Actors that are normatively committed to a given regime type accept periods of bad

[17] Frey et al. (2004: 381) define procedural utility as "the well-being people gain from living and acting under institutionalized processes as they contribute to a positive sense of self."

performance and blame the administration rather than the regime. In contrast, actors that are normatively indifferent or hostile to that regime might seize on the difficult period to attack the regime and join the opposition regime coalition (not merely the opposition to the government).

Actors' normative attitudes about democracy and dictatorship are not reducible to their economic interests or to cultural predispositions. These attitudes, however, are not perfectly exogenous, a prime mover of political processes. In order to avoid tautology, an explanation of regime outcomes based on normative preferences must be willing to inquire into the origins of attitudes toward democracy and dictatorship, their variance across countries, and their transformation over time. We address this issue in Chapters 2 through 7.

Like Dahl (1971: 124–88) and most authors who have contributed to this literature, we focus on powerful actors because their beliefs have a more direct impact on regime outcomes than mass beliefs. We focus exclusively on actors' value preferences about democracy and dictatorship as opposed to other social or cultural beliefs. Other scholars have argued that nonpolitical beliefs such as trust in individuals (Inglehart 1990, 1997) and religious beliefs (Huntington 1984, 1991; Levine 1992; Stepan 2001: 213–53) affect political regimes. These other beliefs have effects on democracy and authoritarianism, but they are not a central part of this book.

International Actors and Influences. International actors disseminate new beliefs about the desirability (or lack thereof) of different kinds of political regimes and policies, and they prove by example that some political projects are feasible (or not). They provide resources to empower some domestic regime coalitions, and they offer incentives to domestic actors, thereby altering the costs and benefits of different options in the domestic regime game. Where the regional political environment and the U.S. government are favorable to competitive political regimes, the costs and benefits of the regime game shift for domestic political actors, creating stronger incentives for transitions to competitive regimes. Where the United States and the Organization of American States (OAS) adamantly oppose the breakdown of competitive regimes, potential coup leaders and their supporters face higher costs.

International actors exercise indirect as well as direct effects on regime change. For example, external influences may affect domestic actors' radicalization and commitment to democracy, which in turn affect regime outcomes.[18] International actors also influence domestic actors' calculations about their policy benefits under different regimes. For example, if international actors threaten to impose sanctions against dictatorships, most domestic actors will typically lower their expectations regarding their policy benefits under authoritarian rule.

[18] There is a related body of work on the impact of the international diffusion of ideas on social policy. See Meseguer (2002) and Weyland (2006).

In addition to operating indirectly, international actors sometimes have direct impacts on political regimes. For example, U.S. or OAS military actions led to transitions to competitive regimes in Panama in 1990 and Haiti in 1995 and 2006. The U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965 helped maintain an authoritarian regime in power. On several occasions, including Honduras in 1983, Bolivia in 1984, and Peru in 1989, the United States lobbied against military coups and might have thereby directly influenced regime outcomes.

We summarize these five core empirical arguments as follows:

1. Policy radicalization makes a breakdown of a competitive regime more likely.
2. A normative preference for democracy by important actors (e.g., parties, leaders, the government) makes a transition to a competitive regime more likely.
3. A normative preference for democracy by important actors makes a breakdown of a competitive regime less likely.
4. A regional political environment favorable to democracy makes transitions to competitive regimes more likely.
5. A regional political environment favorable to democracy makes breakdowns of competitive regimes less likely.

None of these empirical arguments is surprising or counterintuitive. The originality of our work rests in an attempt to integrate these arguments through an actor-based theory on regime change and stability and on how we develop and test the theory.

Like all theories about highly complex political realities, ours simplifies reality. Its purpose is not to capture all the complexities of regime change and survival, but rather to call attention to a few highly important issues within an integrated theoretical framework.

TESTING THE THEORY

Most work on political regimes has chosen between extensive and intensive testing. We undertake both kinds of testing because both give us different kinds of leverage for understanding the emergence, stabilization, and fall of democracies and dictatorships.

We followed two overarching principles about testing the theory. First, quantitative evidence across a broad range of cases should support the theory. When it is possible to measure theoretically important independent and dependent variables in a reasonably efficient and valid manner, quantitative analysis is a useful beginning point to assess the causal impact of the independent variables. Otherwise, there is no good way of knowing how extensively a theory travels. In addition, the quantitative analysis tests a wider range of alternative explanations more rigorously for a broader range of countries than our qualitative evidence.

The quantitative analysis in Chapter 4 provides this *extensive* test of our theory. It tests whether our theory holds up for a large number of observations (twenty Latin American countries for 1945–2005, for a total of 1,220 country-years). In the quantitative analysis, the dependent variable is whether a regime breaks down or survives in a given year. Over the course of a decade of research, we collected information on a wide variety of independent variables to test our theory and several competing theoretical approaches to regime change and survival. The dataset contains several original variables (including our regime classification, a novel indicator of U.S. policies toward Latin America, and new indicators of actors' radicalism and normative regime preferences) with varying time coverage beginning in 1900 and ending in 2010. Because of data limitations, our quantitative explanation focuses exclusively on the period since 1945. The quantitative testing is indispensable for seeing how far in space and time a theory travels – that is, for assessing its generality and its scope conditions (Goldthorpe 1991; King et al. 1994).

Our second principle for testing is that structured case studies must fit the theory. Theory building is facilitated by detailed case knowledge (Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010). With large macro processes such as the rise and fall of political regimes, it is not sufficient that quantitative evidence line up behind a hypothesis or a theory. With such processes, several competing accounts could explain the same quantitative findings. Theory that is not informed by the reality of cases is therefore more prone to misunderstand large macro causal processes. The combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis is far better than either alone.

In Chapters 5 and 6 we employ qualitative case studies of Argentina and El Salvador to provide *intensive* testing of our theory. Structured case analyses are an essential part of our testing process for five reasons. First, because structured qualitative case analysis allows for attention to sequences, it is useful for assessing causal mechanisms. Sequences and actors' interactions can help disentangle mechanisms that are not clear on the basis of regression analyses. We can analyze what precipitated regime change or "reequilibration" (Linz 1978b) at crucial historical moments.

Second, the structured case studies enable us to examine interactions among actors. Such interactions are decisive in regime outcomes. Although the quantitative analysis in Chapter 4 provides an essential test of important parts of the theory and of competing explanations, it does not test hypotheses about interactions among actors. For example, in Argentina, from 1930 until 1976, the lack of a normative preference for democracy was mutually reinforcing among actors. President Juan Perón's (1946–55) authoritarian proclivities and radical tendencies generated deep hostility and reinforced radicalism in much of the anti-Peronist camp from 1946 to 1966. Likewise, after 1983, the building of a normative preference for democracy was mutually reinforcing among actors. It is very difficult to capture such interactions in a quantitative analysis involving twenty countries over a long period of time.

Third, part of our theory addresses the formation and dissolution of regime coalitions. The structured qualitative cases help illuminate and test this part of our theory. The case studies revolve centrally around the formation of winning regime coalitions and the stability or lack thereof that results from those coalitions. This key part of the theory is difficult to test quantitatively.

Fourth, the variables for actors' normative regime preferences present challenging problems of endogeneity. Do actors' normative preferences cause regime change, or does regime change causes actors' normative preferences? These problems are both statistical and substantive. We address the econometric problems in Chapters 3 and 4, and the structured qualitative cases in Chapters 5 and 6 also help untangle these problems of endogeneity. They also illustrate more clearly than the quantitative analysis why normative preferences for democracy or dictatorship are important in understanding regime change and stability.

Fifth, the structured case studies allow us to scale down to the level of political actors in each historical period. We can then study actors' attitudes toward democracy and dictatorship and their radicalism or moderation in more detail. These issues create questions of internal validity for which a case study can be particularly enlightening (Gerring 2007: 43–48). The case studies also enable us to explore the actors' reasons for a low normative preference for democracy and radicalization. Such information allows us to reconstruct historical causal sequences that lead to regime breakdown or stability.

We draw on the rich tradition of qualitative research that has enriched the analysis of why democracies emerge (R. Collier 1999; Huntington 1991; Levine 1973, 1978, 1989; O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992; J. S. Valenzuela 1985; Yashar 1997), consolidate or fail to (Linz and Stepan 1996), and stabilize or break down (Capoccia 2005; D. Collier 1979; Figueiredo 1993; Linz and Stepan 1978; O'Donnell 1973; Potter 1981; Santos 1986). We part paths from most of this tradition by (1) trying to be more systematic in coding actors and our core independent variables; (2) working with a larger number of country cases (twenty) than most qualitative studies; and (3) using quantitative analysis to test the extension of our theory beyond the qualitative cases.

The number of countries that we study – the twenty countries of Latin America – occupies an uncommon intermediate niche in regime studies. A majority of the work on political regimes involves a small number of countries, most often one or two, and most of the rest is quantitative work based on a larger number of countries. One of the least developed strategies in studies on political regimes is the intermediate-N strategy (in terms of the number of countries) that we pursue. Region-wide studies of democratization that are sensitive to intra-regional differences are uncommon (for an exception, see Bratton and van de Walle 1997).[19] Both the intermediate-N strategy and the regional research

[19] Many works focus on differences across a few cases in a given region, but few simultaneously take a region as a whole and evince a strong interest in intra-regional differences.

design, which in principle are discrete but in our case are combined, are useful compliments to the large-N and small-N studies that dominate regime studies.

This intermediate niche has distinctive advantages. The much larger number of countries and observations than single-country case studies enables us to test hypotheses in a more systematic and extensive manner than a single country or a few countries would allow. The twenty countries display considerable variance in regime types across countries and over time, and offer a broad range of conditions in terms of the independent (and control) variables for this study. At the same time, the number of countries is sufficiently small that we know a reasonable amount about regime dynamics in a majority of them. This knowledge helps generate hypotheses and informs the understanding of causal mechanisms. The mixed quantitative/qualitative, intermediate-N strategy pursued here is not superior to other alternatives, but it is an underutilized strategy that yields distinctive benefits. We try to bridge the gap between qualitative area studies and large-N research through close knowledge of some cases for intensive testing and a more extensive test of hypotheses provided by a quantitative design.

CASE SELECTION FOR QUALITATIVE CASES

In this section, we first discuss why we chose two countries for our qualitative cases as opposed to looking at a similar number of transitions, breakdowns, and regime survivals in a larger number of countries. We then explain the logic for choosing Argentina and El Salvador.

The need to examine actors' interactions and use structured case studies to understand sequences and causal mechanisms precluded a qualitative analysis of more than a small number of cases and dictated a strategy of treating these cases in enough detail to support our primary claims. In light of these considerations, we focus on two country studies over time rather than selecting breakdowns and transitions from a larger number of countries.

The logic of our qualitative analysis of Argentina and El Salvador rests primarily on understanding interactions among actors, processes, and sequences to understand regime outcomes. Because within-country observations allow for close examination of processes, interactions, and sequences, it is generally easier to identify causal mechanisms than in cross-country comparisons. Within-country observations have far less variance in most control variables than observations across countries and thus help clarify which independent variables account for the change in the dependent variable. Finally, given the extensive historiography, focusing on two countries allowed for greater coverage of the secondary literature and for better case knowledge than would have been possible had we chosen the same number of breakdowns, transitions, and stabilizations but with a larger number of countries.

Within-country observations are ideal for process tracing – for close attention to sequences and causal mechanisms (D. Collier 1993; Collier, Brady, and

Seawright 2004: 250–64; Collier, Mahoney, and Seawright 2004; George and Bennett 2004: 204–32; Mahoney 2003: 360–67). Within-country analysis reduces the number of explanatory variables because many change slowly and hence do not explain short-term variations in the dependent variable. We increase the number of observations by looking at multiple administrations within each country. This combination of a smaller number of explanatory variables and multiple within-country observations ameliorates the well-known concern about the indeterminate research design in many small-N studies: many variables, few cases (Lijphart 1971: 685–91). In within-country qualitative analysis, the logic of causal inference is not reducible to a cross-country comparative method based on a small number of observations – a method that is vulnerable to deep weaknesses in causal logic. Unless it is accompanied by within-country process tracing, it is difficult in small-N cross national comparison to weigh competing explanations (Collier, Brady, and Seawright 2004; George and Bennett 2004: 153–66; Goldthorpe 1991; King et al. 1994: 199–207).

In the post-1977 wave of democratization in Latin America, there have been two dramatic changes relative to earlier periods. First, many countries that earlier went through cycles of democratic breakdowns and transitions back to competitive political regimes become stable democracies. Eight countries in the region had at least three breakdowns since 1900: Peru (with seven transitions and six breakdowns), Argentina (six transitions and five breakdowns), Panama (five transitions and five breakdowns), Ecuador, Honduras (five transitions and four breakdowns each), Uruguay, Costa Rica (four transitions and three breakdowns each), and Chile (three transitions and three breakdowns). Notwithstanding the breakdowns in Peru in 1992 and Honduras in 2009, as a group, these countries have been vastly less prone to breakdowns of competitive regimes since 1978 than they were before then.

Second, eight countries have shifted from deep authoritarian pasts, with little (and short-lived) or no prior experience with competitive regimes, to having stable competitive regimes in the post-1977 period. This includes Bolivia, whose experience of competitive regimes before 1978 was limited to the 1956–64 period; the Dominican Republic, which was semi-democratic from 1924 to 1928[20]; El Salvador, which had no experience of a competitive regime until 1984; Guatemala, which was semi-democratic from 1926 until 1931 and from 1945 to 1954; Haiti, which never had a competitive political regime until the one that broke down after a few months in 1991; Mexico, which was semi-democratic from 1911 to 1913 but otherwise authoritarian until 1988; Nicaragua, which was semi-democratic from 1929 to 1936 but then had authoritarian regimes until 1984; and Paraguay, which had dictatorships steadily until

[20] The Dominican Republic also had a very short-lived competitive regime for seven months from February to September 1963, but it did not reach our threshold of surviving until December 31 of the year in which it was inaugurated.

1989. Except for Haiti, these countries have gone from largely unchecked and often brutal histories of dictatorship before the third wave of democratization to competitive regimes after the transitions.

The story of the third wave is largely the story of these two sets of countries.[21] Accordingly, we chose two countries that together exemplify the most common regime patterns in twentieth-century Latin America: one (Argentina) that had many breakdowns before the third wave and has been steadily democratic during the third wave, and one (El Salvador) that has shifted from persistent authoritarianism before the third wave to a durable competitive regime. Sixteen of the twenty countries in Latin America squarely fit one of these two patterns.

Argentina had experienced chronic instability of both competitive and authoritarian regimes between 1930 and 1983, including five breakdowns of competitive regimes during this period. We address two questions. First, why did competitive regimes consistently break down before 1983 despite many favorable social and economic conditions? Second, what explains the dramatic change from the chronic breakdown of competitive regimes until 1976 to democratic survival in the period since 1983?

Chapter 6 focuses on El Salvador and asks the opposite questions. What explains persistent authoritarianism for almost the entire twentieth century until 1984? How did a country with a history of consistent and often brutal authoritarianism overcome daunting obstacles and experience a transition to a competitive political regime? Why did this regime fend off threats and become stable? Whereas Chapter 5 explains repeated breakdowns in Argentina during much of the twentieth century and the absence of breakdowns after 1983, Chapter 6 explains the absence of transitions in El Salvador during most of the twentieth century and the occurrence of a transition after 1984.

Although we present detailed qualitative evidence about only two country cases, our analysis was informed by reading about a much larger number of countries and by doing some fieldwork at some point in our careers in twelve countries in the region: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. This fieldwork enhanced our understanding of these national realities.

LATIN AMERICA AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

If we cast our argument as a somewhat general theory of regime change and survival, why should we focus on a single region of the world? We have two theoretical and one pragmatic reason for following this strategy.

[21] The remaining four countries are Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, and Venezuela. Brazil and Colombia had only one breakdown, so they did not follow the more common pattern of multiple breakdowns. Cuba and Venezuela are exceptions because as of this writing they have authoritarian regimes.

First, as we argued elsewhere, regions have particular dynamics and political processes that are specific to those regions (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2007). Social science generalizations that are based on large-N, cross-regional, or worldwide units of analysis must be attentive to these regional specificities (Bunce 1995, 1998, 2000). Otherwise, social scientists will generalize where they should not. Causal inferences based on a worldwide sample could lead to a misleading understanding of what factors promote democratization in some regions. Different regions may present distinctive and *systematic* causal patterns that an assumption of worldwide causal homogeneity would obscure. The effect is more substantial and hence the need for caution is greater when entire regions of the world rather than simply a few countries are exceptions to a generalization.

Consider the finding in Chapter 4 that the level of development does not affect the probability of transitions to or breakdowns of competitive regimes. The fact that modernization theory does not hold for a wide income range in Latin America between 1945 and 2005 is important, and it suggests a likely pattern of causal heterogeneity by region. Even though *on average*, wealthier countries are more likely to transition to democracy and less likely to establish dictatorships (Przeworski et al. 2000), the causal effect of economic development may differ across regions in the same broad band of levels of development. Particular causal factors may have heterogeneous effects in different regions of the world. Therefore, an analysis that overlooks regional patterns may impose a misleading assumption of causal homogeneity (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2003; 2007).

A conventional response to this argument is that regions represent "proper names" that should be replaced by "variable names" in the analysis. In principle we agree, but until all the variables that define regional patterns in world politics are thoroughly identified (which is an extraordinarily difficult task), an assumption of causal homogeneity across regions may induce greater bias in the results of an empirical analysis than the assumption of causal heterogeneity at the regional level.

Second, as we emphasize throughout this book, political developments in one country influence regimes in other countries of the same region. Regions are more than labels for arbitrary sets of countries; they identify geographic networks defined by spatial and cultural proximity. In Chapters 4 and 7, we show that it is impossible to understand regime outcomes without emphasizing region-wide factors. Analyses that fail to consider regional influences would overstate the importance of domestic factors, conclude that regime change and survival are highly idiosyncratic processes, or perhaps commit both mistakes.

Regime change has occurred in region-wide waves: a first wave of democratization from 1902 to 1911; a second wave from 1938 to 1946, a counterwave from 1948 to 1955; a third wave of democratization from 1956 to 1958, another counterwave from 1962 to 1977; and finally, the post-1977 wave of democratization. In Chapters 4 and 7, we show that region-wide influences account for this wave-like behavior. To explain the vicissitudes of democracy and authoritarian

regimes, idiosyncratic factors come into play in every country, but there nevertheless have been distinctive region-wide trends, including the post-1977 trend toward democracy. To understand political regimes, we therefore must examine both region-wide trends and explanations *and* country-specific processes.

It is impossible to understand regime outcomes by focusing only on individual countries or only on global trends. Political regimes were traditionally a subject matter for comparative political scientists who focused on domestic processes, but regime dynamics are not exclusively domestically driven. Both because of regional specificities and because of distinctive intra-regional influences, social scientists and historians must be attentive to the importance of regions in politics. International influences on political regimes are especially important within regions (Gleditsch 2002). If we always treat countries as the unit of analysis and fail to pay attention to regional effects and dynamics, we will miss these regional effects and as a result will fail to understand causal processes.

While advocating the importance of regions in comparative politics, we reject the assumption that Latin America is relatively homogeneous in a descriptive sense (i.e., that variance in fundamental conditions across countries in the region is small), and we reject gross generalizations about regions as a whole unless there is empirical evidence to support them.[22] Our approach looks at regional influences, but it treats the countries within the region as distinct. In Chapter 4, we treat each country differently by virtue of assigning each one a different score for most independent variables and for the dependent variable for a given year. We believe that this is the way that regions of the world should be studied. Latin America has important common trends and influences, but it also has huge cross-country differences in everything from political regimes to the level of development. For example, in 2005, Argentina had a per capita GDP of $5,721 in 2000 dollars, more than fifteen times greater than Haiti's ($379), which was one of the lowest in the world outside of sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2007). Similarly, seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Venezuela) had lengthy experiences of democracy before 1978 while a handful of others had histories of continuous or nearly continuous dictatorships late into the twentieth century (El Salvador, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Paraguay). Our research design is predicated on recognizing these differences across cases and within cases over time.

Our empirical focus on one region does not entail a position against broader generalizations in social science research. We adopt an intermediate position: generalizations are important, but there are few truly universal findings in analyses of political regimes.[23] Most generalizations in social science are

[22] Broad generalizations about Latin America as a whole characterize some works that emphasize Iberian political culture.

[23] Universal findings are expected to hold for most representative samples of the same population, but the definition of the population is itself an analytical task (Ragin 2000: 43–63). For instance, "universal" may simply refer to all U.S. voters in the second half of the twentieth century.

bounded by geographic or historical contexts.[24] Regional specificities are not the only way to bound generalizations in social science, but because regions are large parts of the world with distinctive dynamics and intra-regional influences, delimiting some analyses and generalizations by regions is useful. We do not claim that regions should be the primary unit of analysis in comparative politics or that analysis of regions is superior to other research designs. But regions *are* substantively important, and the reasons for this importance have been underarticulated in political science. For developing and testing theories about regime change, it is substantively useful to examine regions.

We also have a pragmatic reason to focus on Latin America. Even though our theory of regime change should travel beyond Latin America, a focus on one region allows for testing hypotheses using better-quality data for a longer historical period, without assuming that some indicators (e.g., U.S. policy toward democracy) would have an equivalent effect in other regions of the world. We coded political regimes in the twenty Latin American countries between 1900 and 2010, and also identified and coded the normative and policy preferences of 1,460 political actors throughout the region from 1944 to 2010. Much of the critical information collected for this project involved labor-intensive coding of political regimes and actors. Nothing remotely similar to this coding of actors is available for other regions. The use of more conventional, readily available indicators would have allowed us to expand the geographic scope of our tests, but would have undermined the validity of the indicators and thus the interpretation of the results.

Consistent with a perspective that emphasizes regional influences and dynamics while underscoring the specificity of individual countries, we deal with two different levels of analysis: countries and Latin America as a region. Our primary analysis of the rise, survival, and fall of political regimes takes place at the country level. However, region-wide actors and influences affect country level actors, processes, and regime outcomes. At the country level of analysis, our theoretical puzzle is to explain the rise, survival, and fall of regimes. At the regional level, it is to explain waves of democratization and authoritarianism. The regional trend is the mere aggregation of country outcomes, but country patterns in turn are influenced by what takes place in the region.

Analysts have used a variety of different theoretical approaches and independent variables to explain why democracy exists in some countries but not others. Many factors affect the likelihood that democracy will exist. One final advantage of focusing on Latin America is that it holds constant a few such factors: predominant religious preference, presidential systems, and Iberian colonial experience (except for Haiti). These commonalities reduce the number of independent variables and thus facilitate the explanatory process.

[24] For an excellent example of how presumably universal findings may be historically bounded, see Boix and Stokes (2003) on the historically changing relationship between the level of development and democracy.

PLAN FOR THE BOOK

Chapter 2 outlines our theory of regime change and durability in more detail. Chapter 3 discusses waves of regime change in Latin America from 1900 to 2010. It describes the evolution of our dependent variable over time, focusing on periods of expansion and contraction of democracy. This chapter also addresses the measurement of our main independent variables. We introduce novel indicators of normative regime preferences, radicalism, and international conditions, and discuss the historical evolution of those factors for our sample of twenty countries. In the last part of the chapter we treat actors' normative preferences as an endogenous explanatory variable, showing that dominant preferences may be influenced by incumbent regimes, but they are not a mere reflection of structural conditions.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 test the theory. Chapter 4 presents a quantitative analysis of the twenty Latin American countries for the 1945–2005 period. A set of survival models allow us to reconstruct the probability of transitions and breakdowns in particular countries and years, and also the overall wave of democratization experienced by the region after 1977.

Chapters 5 and 6 present intensive tests of the theory through qualitative case studies. Chapter 5 examines Argentina, which had chronic breakdowns of competitive regimes before 1978 despite many favorable circumstances and has enjoyed a democracy without breakdown since 1983 despite many unfavorable circumstances. Decreased radicalism, an increase in commitment to democracy, and a more favorable international environment have been crucial in Argentina's post-1983 political transformation. In Chapter 6, we trace the reasons for the breakdown of the traditional very powerful authoritarian coalition and the emergence of a democratic coalition in El Salvador in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Chapter 7 further explores the mechanisms behind our finding that international actors and influences are an important explanation of regime outcomes. This finding has become common in regime studies since 1986, but the mechanisms behind it are not clear in the existing literature. We discuss six mechanisms that help explain the impact of international actors on regime outcomes: (1) the preferences of actors regarding political regimes and policy diffuse across country borders to domestic actors, generating an indirect mechanism of influence on political regimes; (2) domestic actors in one country draw inspiration from events in another country (demonstration effects); (3) international actors sway domestic actors to join a regime coalition; (4) international actors provide resources to strengthen some actors; (5) international actors such as the Catholic Church simultaneously function as domestic actors, and as domestic actors they influence regime outcomes; and (6) international military interventions. The combination of quantitative testing in Chapter 4 and qualitative analysis in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 enable us to add to the existing literature on regional influences on political regimes.

Chapter 8 explores the implications of our theoretical conclusions for the current (and future) direction of Latin American regimes. It describes regional tendencies in the evolution of political regimes after the third-wave transitions. To an unprecedented degree, competitive regimes have survived during this time. However, an analysis of the levels of democracy achieved by those competitive regimes after 1978 indicates, alongside many striking advances, two different problems in the region: democratic stagnation and democratic erosion. Some countries had relatively low levels of democracy after their transitions to competitive politics, and they have been unable to improve significantly over the past three decades. Other countries are experiencing an erosion of political rights and civil liberties.

Current democratic stagnation is partially anchored in historical legacies. In countries where political actors lacked a normative preference for democracy before 1978, they failed to invest in the development of institutions (competitive parties, independent courts, and civic-minded security forces) important for building high-quality democracy. By contrast, democratic erosion is related to more recent trends. Governments in Venezuela (since 1999), Bolivia (2006), Ecuador (2007), and Nicaragua (2007) have revitalized the somewhat radical forces in the region, and they have fostered intransigence in some sectors of the right. Regional political influences are more supportive of leftist radicalism that does not embrace (and often even opposes) liberal democracy. During most of the period since 2001, the United States emphasized antiterrorism more than human rights as the focus of its foreign policy, weakening the credibility of democracy promotion efforts. Because of the opposition of some leftist presidents with dubious democratic credentials to OAS interventions, the OAS cannot act as coherently as it did during the 1990s on behalf of democracy. We test those arguments using a latent growth curve model for levels of democratization in nineteen post-transition countries during the contemporary period.

Chapter 9 discusses the implications of our findings for alternative theoretical approaches to explaining regime change and survival. The Latin American experience creates doubts about some prominent existing theoretical approaches to political regimes: modernization theory, class theory, theories based on economic performance, and theories based on political culture. The evidence presented in this book suggests that some prominent theories of political regimes are not convincing. We argue that a theory can help integrate some of the most important lessons about the emergence and fall of political regimes in ways that are consistent with the historical evidence about Latin America.

9

Rethinking Theories of Democratization in Latin America and Beyond

We began this book because we wanted to understand regime survival and fall in twentieth-century Latin America. As we studied these issues, we developed doubts about many theoretical approaches to understanding political regimes. It became essential to engage in a broader effort to theorize about the rise and fall of democracies and dictatorships.

Therefore, we developed a theory to explain the survival or fall of democracies and dictatorships. Starting from assumptions about how actors are constituted and what motivates them to join regime coalitions, we deductively derived five hypotheses about regime survival or fall. We particularly drew on three literatures: (1) transitions, breakdowns, and the survival of political regimes; (2) international factors in regime change and survival; and (3) the impact of ideas and beliefs on political outcomes. But we go beyond most of the existing work in these literatures by articulating an integrated theory and testing it in new ways. We believe that this theory is more realistic than competing theories; that there are benefits to systematizing it as a theory; and that it explains regime change and survival in twentieth-century Latin America better than alternative theoretical explanations.

This chapter undertakes three main tasks. First, we summarize our theoretical arguments and contributions. Our theory is based on more realistic microfoundations than most alternatives, and it has stronger empirical support. In addition, we devised an original research strategy to test hypotheses about actors across a much broader range of countries and time than previous actor-based theories. We also articulate our contributions to the literatures on actors' normative regime preferences, their policy radicalism or moderation, and international influences on regime outcomes.

Second, we briefly argue that the theory could fruitfully be extended beyond Latin America. As examples of this potential, we claim that prominent analyses of the breakdowns of democracy in Spain (1936) and Germany (1933) and of the transition to democracy in Spain (1977) are fully consistent with our approach.

We then use the Latin American experience and some broader evidence to reflect on the theoretical approaches commonly employed to understand the emergence and fall of democracies and dictatorships. We argue that the Latin American experience in the twentieth century is not consistent with modernization theory, class theories, works based on economic performance, mass political culture approaches, works based on formal institutions, and theories that strongly emphasize leadership and agency. We do not question all the results that have stemmed from these theoretical approaches, but the evidence in this book suggests modifications, boundaries, and nuances to these theories.

RETHINKING REGIME SURVIVAL AND CHANGE

We offer an alternative theoretical framework with more realistic microfoundations than existing theories. In agreement with Coppedge (2012) and Munck (2001), we believed that it could be fruitful to articulate a theory that makes explicit how we conceptualize the actors and what drives their behavior. Articulating how to conceptualize the actors, making explicit assumptions about what motivates them, and linking different levels of analysis (actors and coalitions at the country level, as well as international forces) integrates different elements in potentially useful ways. Hypotheses that could otherwise seem ad hoc instead are grounded in the theory.

Our theory integrates the analysis of actors' normative preferences about political regimes and policy moderation or radicalism in an explicitly articulated way rather than just presenting discrete hypotheses. Our primary contribution is not the discrete hypotheses, but rather the theory and the testing of it.

Likewise, we followed many works that established the empirical importance of international factors in regime change and survival, but with few exceptions, this work did not integrate the findings about international factors into a theory of regime change and survival. In order to advance understanding of how international forces and influences in democratization function, we concluded that it would be useful to connect domestic and international factors into a theory.

A second contribution of this book is our effort to test an actor-based theory of political regimes across a wide time period and over a sizable number of countries (twenty), using both quantitative and qualitative tests. Actors make history, although structures, cultures, and formal rules of the game condition those actors. Many authors have enriched the understanding of democratic transitions and breakdowns through case studies, usually using one or a small number of countries or through inductive generalizations such as those presented by Linz (1978b) and O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986). The work in this qualitative tradition has bumped up against some limits. How can we go beyond case studies and examine how far in time and space these insights travel? How can we aggregate and test the knowledge built through these case studies? How can we test hypotheses about actors across a broader range of cases?

To build on insights of previous studies and to test them, we integrated some hypotheses through a theory and then coded actors in the twenty Latin American countries for each presidential administration from 1944 to 2010. This endeavor required developing clear and explicit coding rules, ensuring consistency across different coders, and undertaking substantial historical research on political regimes and actors in the twenty Latin American countries. In order to test hypotheses about the impact of actors' preferences on regime outcomes, it was essential to actually look at actors' preferences rather than using inadequate aggregate proxies. The coding of actors enabled us to test hypotheses about radicalism and actors' normative preferences with greater validity, and much greater extension across time and space, than we otherwise would have been able to. This kind of historical qualitative coding grounded in explicitly articulated coding rules could be useful for other research projects.

International Actors and Regime Outcomes

Prior to 1986, theoretical works on regime change that emphasized the role of political factors focused largely, and usually exclusively, on domestic processes. Research beginning with Stepan (1986) and Whitehead (1986b) established that this traditional approach had neglected international influences. Over the last twenty-five years, a substantial body of literature has emphasized international influences in regime outcomes.

Our book adds to the literature that has shown that it is essential to examine regional political and ideological trends, the policy of hegemons, and the interconnection between domestic and transnational actors. Transnational trends and actors profoundly influence domestic regime outcomes. It is impossible to understand regime dynamics exclusively in terms of the cumulative effect of isolated political processes in individual countries. What happens in one country affects others. Moreover, developments among transnational and international actors affect political regimes in multiple countries.

We drew on many insights from this literature, but only a few works in this field are richly theoretical, and none integrated their emphasis on international factors into a theory of regime change and survival.[1] Our treatment of this issue added to the existing literature on international influences in democratization in four ways. First, we incorporated international influences into a theory of regime change that links domestic and international factors. Second, we quantitatively disentangled different international effects (U.S. policy toward authoritarian and democratic regimes in Latin America, the regional political environment, and the average world level of democracy) more than most previous work has.

[1] The excellent work of Levitsky and Way (2010) is a partial exception, but their dependent variable is different from ours. They analyzed whether competitive authoritarian regimes that existed in the early 1990s became democratic or remained authoritarian subsequently.

Third, our analysis in Chapters 4 and 7 documented the dynamic consequences of international influences. International effects not only operate across countries; they also sustain democratization trends over time. Regional influences affect domestic actors in individual countries, and those actors in turn refract those influences back into the regional arena. Waves of democratization as well as counterwaves of authoritarianism are hard to explain without understanding such dynamic effects.

Fourth, this literature has not adequately theorized the mechanisms by which international actors influence regime outcomes. International actors may influence some regime outcomes directly, but their effects are often mediated by other variables. In Figures 2.1 and 7.3, international actors influence domestic actors' attitudes toward democracy and dictatorship, their policy preferences, and their political resources. These variables in turn shape domestic actors' decisions about which regime coalition to join and how many resources those coalitions have.

International actors can influence regime outcomes by (1) generating policy preferences and attitudes about dictatorship and democracy that disseminate across country borders; (2) creating demonstration effects; (3) swaying domestic actors' decisions to join one of the competing regime coalitions; (4) providing resources to domestic actors and thereby influencing the power of the two competing regime coalitions; (5) joining one of the competing regime coalitions (e.g., the Catholic Church) and thereby swaying the regime outcome; and (6) undertaking a military invasion that topples or preserves the political regime.

We also emphasized that there are limits to the explanatory power of international variables. International actors usually exercise their influence indirectly, by affecting domestic actors' calculus of policy benefits under the competing regime coalitions and their normative preferences about the political regime. They explain change over time better than change across countries at a given point in time, and in Latin America they have infrequently been the main cause of a regime change. Moreover, international support does little to enhance the quality of democracy in contexts where it is low. The international community has devised mechanisms to deal with overt attempts to impose authoritarian rule, but it is ill equipped to deal with more subtle or gradual authoritarian regressions.

Normative Preferences for Democracy and Dictatorship

Our emphasis on the central role of actors' normative preference for democracy or dictatorship in explaining regime outcomes theoretically resonates with works by Berman (1998), Capoccia (2005); Dahl (1971: 124–88), Levine (1973), Lijphart (1977), Linz (1978a, 1978b), and O'Donnell (1986: 15–18).[2]

[2] Few of these scholars argued that attitudes toward democracy affect its odds of survival, but they made related points. For example, Dahl (1971: 124–88) argued that activists' beliefs influenced regime outcomes. His discussion of beliefs included the legitimacy of polyarchy (pp. 129–40), which coincides with our focus on normative commitment to democracy. Lipset (1959: 90) claimed that citizen beliefs in democratic legitimacy help protect the regime from the destabilizing consequences of low effectiveness (i.e., poor performance).

We added to this literature in four ways. First, we brought together two bodies of literature that have been largely divorced from one another: work that emphasizes the impact of actors' beliefs on different political outcomes and the scholarship on political regimes. Little of the expanding literature on actors' beliefs focuses on regime outcomes (Berman 1998 is an exception), and little of the work on political regimes emphasizes the importance of actors' beliefs (Dahl 1971: 124–88, Linz 1978b, and Stepan 1971 are exceptions).

Second, we tested arguments about the impact of actors' normative preferences on regime survival or fall in new ways. The coding of 1,460 actors across 290 presidential administrations in Latin America from 1944 to 2010 enabled us to undertake a more extensive test of the impact of actors' beliefs on regime outcomes than any previous work. The qualitative analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 enabled us to look at causal mechanisms intensively.

Third, we confronted in new ways some challenges that causal claims about normative preferences must address (see the discussion in Chapter 2). Other scholars have devised strategies for assessing the causal impact of beliefs in qualitative small-N studies. We add to this discussion by confronting these challenges for an intermediate number of countries over a long period of time. Our strategy includes devising careful coding rules to distinguish between sincere and strategically stated preferences and to ensure a clear separation between the independent and dependent variables; undertaking statistical tests for reverse causality; looking at reverse causality and examining causal mechanisms in the qualitative case studies; ensuring that normative preferences are not reducible to structural or broader cultural variables; and verifying in the qualitative case studies that actors' regime choices cannot be readily explained by their material gains.

Fourth, we added to the discussion of why actors' normative preferences sometimes change. Actors' preferences are not static (Bowles 1998), but social scientists have not often systematically addressed why they change.

We do not claim that democracy emerges or stabilizes because political actors have the "right values." Actors derive procedural utility from political regimes (Frey et al. 2004), and they measure the performance of incumbent regimes against their normative preferences. If actors are normatively committed to democracy, they are willing to tolerate disappointing policy outcomes that might tip uncommitted actors to join the authoritarian coalition. Actors that are committed to democracy are less likely to understand policy failures as a *regime* failure. Instead, they might accept policy failures as a consequence of negative legacies inherited from a previous regime, of negative trends in a country's terms of trade, of a poor leader who can be replaced through the democratic process, of a difficult time in the world economy, or of policies that are not tightly conditioned by the political regime and therefore might not change even if the regime

changed. Given this reasoning, a change of regime would not necessarily produce better policy outcomes (Linz 1988; Remmer 1996). A normative preference to democracy extends actors' time horizons.

It is impossible to understand regime fall and survival in Latin America without examining changing normative views about democracy and dictatorship. For example, the Cuban revolution inspired a generation of revolutionary struggle in the region based on the belief that socialist revolution was desirable and possible, with negative consequences for democracy including a powerful counterreaction from conservative forces, leading to many military coups. Similarly, the embracing of liberal democracy as an ideal by actors across the political spectrum in the 1980s and the 1990s facilitated the establishment and survival of competitive regimes in bad economic times.

Radicalism and Moderation

Actors' radicalism or moderation is another important determinant of regime outcomes. Greater radicalism makes it more difficult to sustain a competitive regime. This argument builds on but refines the insights of Bermeo (1990, 1997, 2003), Figueiredo (1993), Przeworski (1991), Sani and Sartori (1983), Santos (1986), and Sartori (1976), among others. We modify this literature by how we conceptualize and define the continuum from moderation to radicalism. Whereas Sartori (1976) focused exclusively on ideological distance among actors, we define radicalism as policy positions toward the left/right pole in combination with urgency to achieve these positions in the short to medium term where these positions do not represent the status quo or with an intransigent defense of these positions where these positions represent the status quo. Although we build on Sartori's insights, his formulation overstates the destabilizing effects of polarization on competitive regimes when leftist or rightist actors perceive their projects as long term.

Sartori's formulation also misses the deleterious impact of actors that are not extreme in ideological terms, yet whose policy impatience coupled with policy preferences toward the left or right of center makes them threatening to other actors and contributes to regime breakdown. Chapter 5 discussed two somewhat radical actors par excellence: Juan Perón in the period from 1946 to 1970 and Argentina's labor unions from 1955 through 1976. Although most unions were not ideologically extremist, they combined policy preferences to the left of center (statist, nationalistic, pro-union, etc.) with considerable policy impatience, as manifested by factory takeovers, general strikes, and repeated willingness to support military coups to achieve policy gains. Similarly, although Perón rejected socialism, his confrontational discourse and behavior, his somewhat left-of-center policies, and his willingness to run roughshod over the opposition in order to achieve his policy goals made him a somewhat radical and deeply polarizing figure.

The analysis of radicalism poses questions for bargaining models of policy making and regime change. Conventional representations of impatience assume positive payoffs and thus identify a first-mover advantage: impatient actors are willing to accept a discounted offer today rather than wait until tomorrow (Rubinstein 1982; Sutton 1986). Our historical analysis of radical actors in Latin America identified a very different pattern of behavior that calls for a different formal setup (Primo 2002). If the incumbent regime promises to deliver the player's ideal policy in the future but demands some policy loss or patience today, a radical actor will endure large immediate loses and may prefer to gamble on an alternative regime. In this sense, radical players display a behavior inclined toward risk (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). This reverses the first-mover advantage, as governments need to offer additional benefits in the short run to appease radical players, who appear to be disloyal opponents exercising blackmail (Linz 1978b; Sartori 1976).

CAN THE THEORY TRAVEL BEYOND LATIN AMERICA?

For reasons outlined in Chapter 1, we focused on Latin America rather than a broader set of countries. This raises a question: Can the theory travel beyond Latin America? We cannot extend the theory empirically to other regions of the world here except by way of brief illustration, but two observations are in order.

First, our theory is compatible with several extant *theoretical* traditions in democratization studies. For example, it is compatible with Linz's (1978b) emphasis on orientations toward the democratic regime (loyal, semi-loyal, and disloyal oppositions); with O'Donnell and Schmitter's (1986) and Przeworski's (1991) delineation of actors into blocs depending on their orientation toward the political regime; and with Berman's (1998) argument that Social Democratic parties' programmatic beliefs strongly affected their behavior in interwar Sweden and Germany, which in turn affected the survival or breakdown of democracy in the 1930s. It is also compatible with the extensive literature that has documented international influences in regime outcomes. These compatibilities suggest that our theory can travel beyond Latin America.

In addition, analyses of many non–Latin American cases of breakdowns of competitive regimes, transitions from authoritarian rule to competitive regimes, stabilizations of authoritarian regimes, and democratic stabilizations are fully consistent with our theory. We illustrate this point by briefly indicating the strong compatibility of our theory with existing analyses of (1) the breakdown of democracy in Spain in 1936; (2) the breakdown of democracy in Germany in 1933; and (3) the stabilization of democracy in Spain after 1978.

Without using exactly the same concepts as we do, many scholars have argued that democracies broke down because actors had weak normative preferences for democracy or had normative preferences for dictatorship, or because radicalism made it impossible for some actors to be willing to abide by democracy. Most interpretations of the breakdown of democracy in Spain in the 1930s

mesh with our theoretical approach. Casanova (2010) and Linz (1978a: 144, 151, 169) emphasized the negative impact of international influences, especially the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy, on Spanish democracy. No powerful actors had a steadfast normative preference for democracy (Casanova 2010: 95, 111, 116, 122; Linz 1978a: 149, 160–68, 180–81; S. Payne 2006: 41–45, 346–47, 350–54[3]). When this is the case, especially in a polarized high-stakes environment, actors easily turn against democracy. Powerful radical actors from the far left to the far right were willing to use violence to pursue political ends (Casanova 2010; Linz 1978a: 145, 153–54, 157–58, 187–94; Malefakis 1996: 644–46; S. Payne 2006; Preston 2006: 53–64). They were decisive in the spiral of violence, revenge, and hatred that led to the breakdown. Right-wing radicalism fueled left-wing radicalism, and vice versa. No actors were willing to make significant policy sacrifices in order to save democracy. By the time Franco launched his coup in July 1936, several powerful actors on the right had a normative preference for dictatorship (Casanova 2010: 124, 137).

Many scholars have also analyzed the German breakdown of democracy in 1933 along the lines that are fully consistent with our theory. Some extremely radical actors, no actors with solid normative preference for democracy, several (including the Nazis, the Communists, and some traditional right-wing parties) with a normative preference for dictatorship, and an inhospitable international political environment – all in the context of a severe economic crisis – led to the breakdown. The German Social Democrats (SPD), the largest party during much of the Weimar Republic, embraced some radical policy preferences including orthodox Marxism (Berman 1998: 77–95, 123–31, 180–98). They did not have a clear normative preference for democracy (Berman 1998: 85–88, 130–31, 180–81). Berman argues that if the SPD had been more flexible, less radical, and more oriented toward preserving democracy, it could have undercut the Nazis' appeal. Chancellor Heinrich Brüning (1930–32) and the Center Party were willing to sacrifice democracy in order to achieve other policy goals (Berman 1998: 187; Weitz 2007: 122–23). The Communists and the Nazis had very radical policy preferences and a normative preference for different kinds of totalitarian dictatorship. The rightist German People's Party (*Deutsche Volkspartei*) was somewhat hostile to democracy, and the German National People's Party (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*) combined radical right-wing policy preferences with a normative preference for authoritarian and monarchical rule (Lepsius 1978: 37, 43, 45; Weitz 2007: 92–97). The *Landvolkbewegung* was a right-wing peasant movement with radical policy preferences and antidemocratic normative preferences (Lepsius 1978: 53–54). The army and the Protestant and Catholic churches were hostile to democracy (Weitz 2007: 115–21).

A third case that has often been analyzed in ways entirely consistent with our theory is the stabilization of democracy in Spain after 1978. Many conditions

[3] Echoing our terminology, S. Payne (2006: 354) wrote that "[m]ost major actors had limited or no commitment to democracy."

favored democratic consolidation in Spain, but this favorable outcome was by no means a foregone conclusion (Agüero 1995: 18–22; Linz and Stepan 1996: 87–115). Democratic consolidation was facilitated by strong support from the European Union (Linz and Stepan 1996: 113). De-radicalization of the Socialist Party (Tussell 2005: 285, 327), the Communist Party, the labor movement (Fishman 1990b), and the right (Share 1986) also facilitated democratic survival. By the time of the transition in 1978, actors with a normative preference for dictatorship were weak (G. Alexander 2002: 138–81). Finally, by 1978, most actors either already had a normative preference for democracy or quickly developed one. This includes the right (G. Alexander 2002: 138–81); Prime Minister Adolfo Súarez (1976–81) and his party, the Union of the Democratic Center (*Unión de Centro Democrático*, UCD) (Share 1986: 86–153); and labor (Fishman 1990b). The fact that most powerful actors have had an unambiguous normative preference for democracy and the highly supportive international political environment enabled the democratic coalition to thwart difficult challenges including the Basque terrorist organization ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*, Basque Homeland and Freedom), a military that had strong *golpista* factions until 1981 (Agüero 1995), and a bruising depression in recent years.

ALTERNATIVE THEORIES OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Throughout this book, especially in Chapters 4 through 6, we have compared our theory with alternatives, but without an extended discussion of the implications of our results for these alternative theories. In this section, we examine the implications of our analysis and empirical results for modernization theory, class theories, work on the impact of economic performance on regime fall or survival, mass culture theory, work on the impact of formal institutions on regime fall or survival, and work that strongly emphasizes political agency and leadership.

Some of our observations in this section focus on inconsistencies between the evidence for Latin America and broader research findings. Other arguments hold beyond Latin America. For example, our criticisms of class and mass cultural theories of democratization, while initially inspired by the Latin American experience, go beyond it.

Modernization Theory

One of the most influential theoretical approaches to studying democracy is modernization theory, which was famously formulated by Lipset (1959, 1960: 27–63) and subsequently empirically supported by many other scholars.[4] Modernization theory claims that more economically developed countries are

[4] The second part of Lipset's classic (1959) article made a different claim about the effects of regime legitimacy and efficacy that anticipated some points in our book.

more likely to be democratic, and proposes causal mechanisms to explain this relationship.

Lipset argued that wealthier countries are more likely to be democratic for several reasons. Higher education, which is associated with greater wealth, promotes more tolerant worldviews. Greater wealth tends to reduce political extremism and to increase the size of the middle class, which he claimed tended to be more prodemocratic than the poor. In developed countries, the lower strata tended to have more reformist political perspectives (Lipset 1959: 83), and the upper strata tended to have more democratic values (Lipset 1959: 83–84).

Many subsequent authors have demonstrated that higher levels of development are strongly associated with a greater likelihood of democracy (Bollen 1980, 1983; Bollen and Jackman 1985a,1985b; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Coppedge 1997; Dahl 1971: 62–80; Diamond 1992; Epstein et al. 2006; Huntington 1984, 1991: 59–72; Jackman 1973; Lipset et al. 1993; Londregan and Poole 1996; Przeworski et al. 2000).[5] Recent work has demonstrated that the likelihood of democratic breakdowns diminishes and the likelihood of democratic transitions increases at higher per capita income (Epstein et al. 2006).

However, the seemingly robust association between income and democracy does not hold for Latin America for the lengthy period from 1945 to 2005 (Landman 1999; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2003; O'Donnell 1973). During this period, competitive regimes were as vulnerable to breakdown at a higher level of development as at lower levels (Tables 4.4 and 4.5). The level of development likewise had no impact on the probability of a transition from authoritarianism to a competitive regime (Tables 4.2 and 4.3).[6] As we discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, modernization theory does not go very far toward explaining regime outcomes in Argentina and El Salvador.

Building democracy in poor countries *is* difficult, and yet as the experience of poor countries in Latin America shows, the obstacles are not insurmountable. We reject Lipset's (1960: 40) argument that a certain level of development is a requisite for democracy or that "a high level of education ... comes close to being a necessary" condition for democracy. Costa Rica was a relatively poor country with a relatively low level of education at the inauguration of its competitive regime in 1949, with a per capita GDP of $1,546 in 2000 constant dollars, below the mean value of $1,846 for our entire dataset. Yet this regime has now lasted for more than six decades, becoming the longest-lasting democracy *ever* outside countries that today are part of the advanced industrial democracies.

[5] Acemoglu et al. (2008) argue that using a proper model specification, the level of development does not affect regime outcomes across all countries for which data was available. They advocate fixed effects models.

[6] In model 4.3.3 with the Gini index of income inequality, a higher per capita GDP seemed, against conventional expectations, to lower the probability of a transition. However, because of the large number of gaps in the data on income inequality, the number of observations fell from 576 to 222. Given the consistency of the results across many model specifications with 576 observations, it seems very likely that the result in model 4.3.3 stems from the reduced number of observations.

A low per capita income did not preclude building what has become a high-quality democracy. Competitive regimes have also endured at fairly low levels of development in countries such as Ecuador since 1979 and Nicaragua and El Salvador since 1984, or (a non–Latin American example) India from 1947 until Indira Gandhi's declaration of a state of emergency from 1975 until 1977, and then again since 1977.

We do not claim that modernization theory is wrong, but the relationship between the level of development and democracy has been far from determinate in Latin America until a high level of development makes radicalization unlikely. At a high level of development, democracy has historically never broken down (Przeworski et al. 2000; Epstein et al. 2006). It therefore seems that a high level of development is a sufficient condition to ensure the survival of a competitive political regime. It is possible, as Przeworski (2006) suggests, that the reason is that at high levels of development, few actors are radical, and radical actors are isolated. If this argument is correct, then the core causal mechanism linking high income to democracy is de-radicalization. Below that high level of wealth, for Latin America, the relationship between the level of development and democracy has been overpowered by the political factors to which we call attention.

High levels of poverty and glaring inequalities provide grist for radicalism and dampen the likelihood of strong normative commitments to democracy. Yet as the examples of the southern cone suggest, this effect is far from linear. As Lipset (1959: 90–91) himself recognized, poverty and inequality do not directly produce radicalization and do not automatically suppress normative preferences for democracy (see also Dahl 1971: 81–104; Moore 1978; Portes 1971; Powers 2001; Weyland 2002).

Class, Inequality, and Democratization

The Latin American evidence and broader evidence are largely at odds with class theories of democratization. These theories see some social classes as being consistently prodemocratic when democracy is possible and others as consistently supporting authoritarian regimes when stable dictatorship is feasible. The most prominent class theories include Acemoglu and Robinson (2006), Boix (2003), Moore (1966),[7] and Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992).

Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) argued that prospects for democracy rest on the balance of power among social classes. In their general theoretical statements, they claimed that the working class is the agent of democratization par excellence (p. 8). Therefore, a strong working class is favorable to democracy. Conversely,

[7] Moore (1966) argued that a historical coalition of a strong landed aristocracy, a relatively weak bourgeoisie, and a modernizing state produced fascism; the combination of a recalcitrant aristocracy and an absolutist state triggered socialist revolutions; and the hegemony of the bourgeoisie over the aristocracy, the agricultural labor force, and the state led to the establishment of liberal democracy. See J. S. Valenzuela (2001) for a compelling critique.

they saw the landed elite (pp. 60–61) and the bourgeoisie as usually favorable to the status quo before democracy and as resistant to democratization.

Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) and Boix (2003) assume that classes try to maximize income and choose a political regime accordingly. They posit that democracy will economically benefit the poor and redistribute away from the rich. They conclude that the poor favor democracy over any nonrevolutionary authoritarian regime, whereas the wealthy concede democracy only to avoid revolution. The wealthy have more to lose with democracy in more inegalitarian societies. According to Boix, the rich block the emergence of democracy in unequal societies unless the cost of repression is high, but they accept democracy if capital mobility prevents high taxation.

Although they differ in many ways,[8] these class theories share four assumptions: (1) classes are the most important political actors; (2) members of social classes value political regimes exclusively for economic reasons; (3) democracies redistribute income in favor of the poor; and (4) given this outcome, the working class and the poor are strong supporters of democratization while the bourgeoisie or the rich concede democracy only reluctantly.[9] In addition, Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) and Boix (2003) assume that (5) high inequality reinforces resistance among the rich, making the establishment and survival of democracy unlikely.

These assumptions are not consistently realistic, and shortcomings of class theories result. First, classes as Boix and Acemoglu and Robinson conceptualize them (i.e., the poor and the rich) do not form cohesive political actors. Members of the same class are divided by religious, national, ethnic, and other value questions. These divisions make it difficult to act cohesively, and rich and poor face daunting collective action problems (Olson 1965). Moreover, in the struggles for and against democracy in most countries, political parties, militaries, and other nonclass organizations are key actors. This is clear in our analysis of Argentina (Chapter 5) and El Salvador (Chapter 6). The history of both countries involved important class-related actors. But in both countries, political parties, militaries, churches at some periods, and guerrillas in others were powerful actors whose behavior was not reducible to class interests. Throughout the region, actors other than classes have been powerful.

Second, class theories assume that the only issue that drives political conflict in all countries is income distribution and resource allocation. Classes prefer

[8] Rueschemeyer and colleagues and Moore employ class categories, and they delve into the historical development of democracy in different parts of the world. Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) and Boix (2003) base their analysis on income categories (poor, middle sector, rich) rather than class understood structurally, and Boix's evidence is largely quantitative. For Boix, the relationship between inequality and democracy is linear: more inequality generates a lower probability of democracy. In contrast, Acemoglu and Robinson posit an inverted-U-shape relationship; democratization is very unlikely at high or low levels of inequality.

[9] Rueschemeyer and colleagues make these assumptions in their general theoretical propositions, but their analysis of Latin America clearly breaks from the first and fourth.

political regimes for purely instrumental material reasons – to advance their economic interests. However, an extensive literature has argued otherwise (Haggard and Kaufman 2012). Again, it is difficult to understand the history of political regimes in Argentina (especially) or El Salvador as a battle exclusively over material goods.

As we have argued throughout this book, value divides about democracy and authoritarianism are not reducible to economic issues, and they often strongly influence regime outcomes (Berman 1998; Dahl 1971: 124–89; Ollier 2009; Viola 1982). So do conflicts over religion (Casanova 2010; Huntington 1996; Levine 1973; Linz 1991; Pérez-Díaz 1993; Stepan 2001; J. S. Valenzuela 2001), urban/rural and regional cleavages, nationalism (Linz 1997; Linz and Stepan 1996: 24–33; Stepan 1994, 2001: 181–212; 323–28; Stepan et al. 2011), and ethnicity (Diamond 1988; Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Snyder 2000). Empirical analyses of post-Soviet countries in the 1990s underscored that citizens value democracy independently of economic results (Hofferbert and Klingemann 1999; Rose and Mishler 1996). In addition, international ideational currents – the Zeitgeist of an epoch – affect the survival and fall of political regimes. For most countries, it is impossible to understand the survival or fall of political regimes by looking exclusively at class conflict related to income distribution. A range of policy issues, not just economic distribution, affects regime outcomes (Haggard and Kaufman 2012). By emphasizing that actors do not join or defect from regime coalitions based exclusively on the regime's material payoffs, we are better able to understand the survival of competitive regimes in the third wave despite dismal economic performance in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s.

Third, these class approaches rest on the questionable assumption that democracy is consistently good for the working class's material interests and that noncommunist authoritarian regimes are detrimental to the income of the poor. The empirical evidence however, is mixed, as our book and other works show. Huber and Stephens (2012) made a compelling argument for why competitive regimes, by allowing left parties to organize and gain office, may promote redistribution over the long run. They also documented that in the short run these effects are subject to constraints imposed by international factors (Chapters 6–7), and that Latin America has also experienced an authoritarian path to redistribution illustrated by Argentina and Brazil in the twentieth century (Chapter 4; Segura-Ubiergo 2007: chapter 2).

Whether we look at changes in real wages or income distribution, it is far from evident that Latin American workers have fared better materially under competitive regimes than under authoritarianism. Real wages fell in most countries after the establishment of competitive regimes in the third wave of democratization, including quite dramatically in Argentina after re-democratization in 1983. In Peru, the real urban minimum wage declined an astonishing 84 percent between 1980 and 1992. Real urban minimum wages fell drastically after the transitions to democracy in five of the six countries for which ECLAC reported

data in 1992.[10] Conversely, real wages increased under many authoritarian regimes between 1945 and 1980. In the 1970s, real income improved at least 30 percent in all deciles of the Brazilian population under the military dictatorship. Real mean income for the poorest decile increased 50 percent from 1970 to 1980 (Skidmore 1988: 287).

For Latin America, the average currently existing competitive regime has not promoted income distribution in favor of the poor. For the seventeen countries for which data are available (all but Cuba, Haiti, and Nicaragua[11]), mostly from the World Bank inequality dataset, from the year of a transition to a competitive regime until 2010,[12] income distribution improved on average by a trivial 1.2 points (from 52.0 to 50.8) on the 100-point Gini index (weighting every country equally). Conversely, some populist and nationalist left-of-center (but not revolutionary) authoritarian regimes have redistributed income to the poor – a possibility that these works often neglect.[13]

The evidence beyond this book about the impact of regime type on income distribution and social policy is mixed. Huber and Stephens's (2012) analysis of eighteen Latin American countries between 1970 and 2007 suggests that a longer history of democracy may lead to greater investments in social programs and to a reduction in income inequality over time (chapter 5). On the other hand, Mulligan et al. (2004) show that on average, democracies do not spend more than dictatorships on social programs, that they tax less than dictatorships, and that they promote less income redistribution than dictatorships (p. 60). Bollen and Jackman (1985b) also showed that democracies are not more redistributive than dictatorships. Nelson (2007) reports converging findings about the impact of democracy on health and education. Democracies do not have demonstrably better results than dictatorships do in these social domains. Burkhart (1997) shows that democracies improve income distribution only at a fairly low level of democracy.

The fourth shortcoming of these class theories is that the empirical evidence to substantiate their claims about the relationship between class position and support for democracy is thin. Boix and Acemoglu and Robinson present little evidence to support the claim that the poor actually prefer democracy and have fought for it on a consistent basis. Rueschemeyer et al. (1992: 8) note that the

[10] ECLAC 1992, tables 6 and 7, pp. 44–45. ECLAC also reported data for urban real minimum wages for Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, but did not give an average figure for Brazil. ECLAC 1995: 131–34, and ECLAC 1994: 127–28, also report figures for urban minimum wages. In most third-wave democracies, urban minimum wages fell after the transitions to competitive regimes.

[11] For Nicaragua, there are no data points close to 1984, the year of the transition to semi-democracy. For Cuba and Haiti, there are none whatsoever.

[12] For Colombia, Costa Rica, and Venezuela, no data were available for the transition years (1958, 1949, and 1959, respectively). We used the earliest available data points: 1970, 1961, and 1962, respectively.

[13] Along similar lines, Albertus (2011) showed that in Latin America, authoritarian regimes have undertaken more agrarian reform than democracies have.

Latin American cases do not fully conform to their general theory. R. Collier (1999: 33–76) argues that their theory does not work for many Latin American and Western European cases because elites and middle sectors rather than the working class were primarily responsible for establishing democracy.

The relationship between class and support for democracy is more mediated and less linear than class theories suggest. The historical evidence about which classes were more likely than others to support democratization is more mixed than class theorists claim (R. Collier 1999; Levitsky and Mainwaring 2006; J. S. Valenzuela 2001). In many cases, some sectors of the elite were at the forefront of democratization even in the absence of a credible revolutionary threat, and in some cases, the poor actively preferred a nonrevolutionary authoritarian regime to democracy.

Until recent decades, organized labor in most Latin American countries did not consistently support democratic regimes. As an illustration, in Argentina (Chapter 5), organized labor supported Peronism from 1945 on, notwithstanding its frequently authoritarian character. In 1962 and 1966, labor supported military coups against competitively elected governments. In Latin America, populist leaders with radical policy preferences and authoritarian proclivities often captured organized labor's support because of their promises or delivery of benefits for workers and their symbolic appeals to the poor (Germani 1974: 169–92, Lipset 1960: 87–126; Ostiguy 2009).

Rather than understanding democratization in terms of consistent democratic or authoritarian proclivities of class actors (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992) or of consistent first choice preferences that shift only if the first choice regime is not feasible (Boix 2003), we see classes as being *conditional* authoritarians and conditional democrats (Bellin 2000). As the Argentine case discussed in Chapter 5 showed – and our coding of actors in other countries confirmed – under some circumstances, organized labor will support authoritarian leaders, movements, parties, and regimes even if democracy is feasible. Whether labor supports democracy depends on (1) its normative preferences regarding the political regime and (2) whether it believes authoritarian or democratic leaders and parties better serve labor's policy goals. The fact that the working class does not consistently support democracy helps explain why the size of the working class had no impact on reducing the probability of democratic breakdowns in our quantitative analysis in Chapter 4 (Tables 4.4 and Tables 4.5).[14]

Voting patterns and public opinion surveys also show a mixed relationship between class position and support for democracy. For example, in Mexico, during the democratization process from 1988 to 1997, the poor and least educated solidly supported the PRI (the ruling authoritarian party). The middle and upper classes and the most educated were more likely than the poor to support the largest democratic opposition party, the PAN (Domínguez and

[14] A large working class was favorable to democratic transitions in the regressions in Table 4.4 but at most weakly favorable to transitions in Table 4.5.

McCann 1996: 99–100, 203–04; Klesner 2004: 103–07, 112, 116; Magaloni 1999: 228–31; 2006: 122–50; Magaloni and Moreno 2003: 268–69).

An analysis that sees the poor as the bearers of democracy and the rich as its opponents must also confront the fact that in public opinion surveys, respondents with lower income usually evince less democratic attitudes than those with higher income. In eleven of the nineteen Latin American countries included in the 2008 AmericasBarometer,[15] wealthier respondents displayed stronger pro-democracy attitudes (at $p < .05$) than poor respondents in response to the statement "Democracy has problems, but it is better than any other form of government."[16] Interestingly, in light of the 2009 coup, Honduras was the only country in which higher-income respondents gave less democratic answers. In the remaining seven countries, income did not have a statistically significant effect on responses to this question. The 2010 AmericasBarometer surveys confirmed this finding. The correlation between household income and support for democracy was positive and significant ($p < .05$) in fifteen of the nineteen countries, positive but insignificant in two cases (Brazil and Nicaragua), and negative but insignificant in only two countries (Bolivia and Honduras). The results of the bivariate correlations do not prove that poor citizens are generally less supportive of democracy, but they call into question a fundamental assumption of class theories of democratization.[17]

Fifth, most of the empirical evidence does not support the core claim that inequalities have a powerful impact on regime survival and change. Teorell (2010: chapter 3) finds no impact of inequality on democracy. According to Muller (1988: 61), the level of inequality had no impact on the probability of a democratic transition, although high inequalities made democracies more vulnerable to breakdown (pp. 61–65). Burkhart (1997) found that high inequality lowered the level of democracy (a different dependent variable than we use in this book), but the effect was modest.

The evidence in this book is consistent with these broader findings. For Latin America, income inequality had no statistically significant impact on the survival or fall of democracies or dictatorships (see Tables 4.3 and 4.5). According to some class theories, the deterioration of the already skewed income distributions during the 1980s and 1990s should have made competitive regimes more vulnerable and wealthy elites more resistant to democratization. In fact, competitive regimes

[15] The AmericasBarometer is conducted by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. All countries in our sample, with the exception of Cuba, were covered by the 2008 and 2010 waves of the project.

[16] Responses to the statement are captured by a seven-point scale, ranging from "Disagrees a lot" to "Agrees a lot." We ran a bivariate OLS regression for each country using this item as the dependent variable. The income variable is calibrated for local currency and coded using an eleven-point scale in all countries.

[17] In a study of mass attitudes in eight Latin American countries, Booth and Seligson (2009) found that household wealth is uncorrelated with support for core principles of democracy or demands for democracy, in statistical models that also control for educational levels (tables 4.3 and 7.1).

became far less susceptible to breakdown during the third wave. Even in the absence of a revolutionary threat, wealthy elites were critical actors in supporting democratization in many countries, including Chile in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (J. S. Valenzuela 1985, 2001), Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s (Cardoso 1986; L. Payne 1994), El Salvador in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Johnson 1993; Wood 2000a, 2000b; Chapter 6 in this book), and Mexico in the 1980s and 1990s. Bad income distribution did not prevent a large number of transitions to competitive regimes from occurring, and the further exacerbation of glaring inequalities did not lead to the breakdowns of competitive regimes after 1978.

Boix's (2003) own results provide weak support for the idea that better income equality increases the likelihood of transitions to democracy and decreases the likelihood of democratic breakdowns. In only one of four models for all countries (Model 3A) in his book did income distribution affect the likelihood of transitions to democracy at $p < .10$ (Boix 2003: 79–81). Income inequality had a significant impact on democratic breakdowns in three of the four models for all countries, but in one of the three (Model 1A), contrary to the theory, inequality facilitates democratic survival. Additional interactions of income inequality with other variables in the model do not provide unequivocal support for Boix's theory.

Boix qualifies his argument by asserting that high capital mobility (or high asset specificity) makes it easier for the rich to invest outside their country, and hence lowers the probability of major redistributive efforts. He argues that in contexts of high capital mobility, governments are forced to keep taxes low; otherwise, capital flight will result (pp. 12, 19, 25, 39). Because taxes are low, elite resistance to democracy will diminish.

In Latin America, however, increasing capital mobility after 1985 coincided with notable *increases* in tax collection in most countries. According to ECLAC data, between 1990 (the earliest data point) and 2010, total central government tax revenue increased substantially (at least 5 percent of GDP) in nine Latin American countries (Nicaragua, +14 percent; Bolivia, Ecuador, and Argentina, +10 percent; Colombia, +7 percent; Brazil and the Dominican Republic, +6 percent; Paraguay and El Salvador, +5 percent) under competitive regimes. In most other countries, tax revenue increased somewhat. Only in Venezuela (−7 percent) did central government tax revenue decrease at least 5 percent of GDP during this period of increasing capital mobility.[18] Therefore, for Latin America greater capital mobility did not reduce the capacity of democratic governments to collect taxes. A cross-regional comparison between Western Europe and Latin America further underscores the problematic nature of this argument. Both capital mobility *and* tax collection are higher in Western Europe than Latin America. Circa 2003, the average total tax revenue for fifteen EU countries was 41 percent of GDP, while according to 2005 estimates, nine Latin American countries had central government tax revenue of less than 15 percent

[18] ECLAC's data on central government tax revenue are online at http://www.eclac.org/estadisticas/

of GDP (ECLAC 2008). No Latin American democracy approached the level of the average EU country.

The impact of inequalities on democratic regime stability depends on what is going on in different countries at different times (Frey et al. 2004: 389–90).[19] In the 1990s, in times of deep economic crisis, poor people accepted the exacerbation of inequalities in order to achieve macroeconomic stability (Powers 2001; Stokes 2001; Weyland 2002).

We believe that our theory better interprets the survival and fall of democracies and dictatorships in and beyond Latin America than class theories. The main differences are as follows: (1) we view organizations, not classes, as the most important actors – some but not all organizations primarily defend class interests; (2) we assume that actors are interested in a broader range of policy outcomes than just material and distributive issues; conflicts over religion, ethnicity, and nationality, among others, influence regime outcomes; (3) we believe that many actors have normative preferences about the political regime in addition to policy preferences; (4) we situate our theory in an international context more than most class theories; and (5) we see the relationship between class and regime preference as highly conditional.

Economic Performance

Some authors have shown that democratic and authoritarian regimes are more likely to survive if their economic performance is better. Most of this literature is empirical and does not invoke strong theoretical claims about the relationship between economic performance and regime stability. We do not dispute the empirical assertions made by these authors. Among well-known works that peg democratic stability to economic performance are Gasiorowski (1995), Haggard and Kaufman (1995) and Lipset (1960: 64–70).[20]

The general theoretical proposition that government performance affects regime stability in developing countries is sensible. Consistent with this literature, we expected the regime's economic performance to affect actors' adhesion to the incumbent regime – but we expected this impact to be modest, especially in competitive regimes.

By the logic of our theory, poor economic performance creates a threat to the survival of democracy only if (1) some actors conclude that authoritarianism offers net policy advantages to them – that is, they believe they would be better

[19] Moore (1978: 41) comments that in popular perception, "a high degree of inequality may not only be acceptable but even regarded as very desirable, as long as in the end it somehow contributes to the social good as perceived and defined in that society."

[20] Lipset argued that regimes needed a combination of good performance and legitimacy. A reservoir of legitimacy can enable a democracy to remain stable despite poor performance. Thus, his was not a simplistic performance-based argument. See also Linz (1978b: 16–23) on the relationship between legitimacy and performance.

off under an authoritarian regime; (2) this net policy advantage is not offset by a normative commitment to democracy; and (3) the authoritarian coalition is powerful enough to consider overthrowing a democratic regime. Actors' decisions about whether to work to overthrow a competitive regime hinge on all of their policy preferences and their normative preferences about the political regime, as well as a strategic calculation about the odds of successfully subverting the regime. Democratic regimes can win support on bases other than regime performance (Linz 1988; Remmer 1996). Citizens do not necessarily attribute performance failures to the regime; they normally blame particular administrations or parties in office.

Consistent with our expectation, the most democratic period in the history of Latin America (since the mid-1980s), and the period with by far the highest-ever rate of survival of competitive regimes (since 1978), coincided with a prolonged period of dismal economic and social performance in most countries (1982–2002). The logic of our theory correctly predicts that actors' normative preferences for democracy, low radicalism, and strong regional support for democracy could protect competitive regimes in times of bad performance. Bad performance had adverse effects on democracy, but it has rarely led to regime breakdown in the post-1977 period.[21] For a generation, regime survival has not depended on economic performance, suggesting that the impact of bad economic performance on political regimes is mediated by citizen expectations, which vary over time; by the way political leaders do or do not politicize bad economic performance; and by actors' normative commitment to democracy.

In Latin America, the rate of economic growth had little or no impact on the survival of competitive (Table 4.4) or authoritarian regimes (Table 4.2). Inflation also had no impact on regime change (Tables 4.3 and 4.5). Competitive regimes have been vastly less vulnerable to breakdown since 1978 compared to 1945–77, even though the median regime's economic performance fell from solid in the earlier period to poor. The average per capita GDP growth rate of competitive regimes was 1.9 percent for the 1945–77 period and a meager 1.1 percent for the 1978–2005 period, and the mean inflation rate jumped from 19 percent in the earlier period to 257 percent in the later years. Yet the breakdown rate of these regimes was more than ten times greater (9.3 percent in the earlier period versus 0.8 percent in the post-1977 period).

The Latin American experience since 1978 shows that the impact of economic performance on regime survival is mediated by actors' understanding of what is possible in a given moment (i.e., their view of constraints and opportunities) and can be overcome by their normative attitudes about political regimes. Democracy in Latin America would be in better shape in many countries if

[21] There have been only six breakdowns since 1978: Bolivia in 1980; Peru in 1992; Haiti in 1991 and 1999; and Honduras and Venezuela in 2009. Because the Haitian regime of 1991 lasted only a few months before giving way to a coup before the end of the year, our regime classification registers only the other five breakdowns.

economic performance had been better during the third wave. Nevertheless, competitive regimes survived despite economic and social disappointments, a deterioration of public security, and rampant corruption in many countries. Although poor economic performance has weakened many competitive regimes, it has doomed few. Poor governing performance has bred citizen disaffection and paved the way to populist politicians with dubious democratic credentials, but it has rarely caused regime breakdowns during the third wave.

At some historical junctures, because of ideological currents, some actors might conclude that an authoritarian regime is more likely to be efficient and therefore more effective at fostering growth. This was the case in Argentina in 1965–66 (Chapter 5), when many actors concluded that democracy was inefficient and suboptimal despite the Illia government's respectable record in economic growth. However, even if government performance is deficient, actors might doubt that an authoritarian regime would be better for them. In the aftermath of bad economic performance and the accumulation of huge foreign debts under authoritarian regimes in the 1970s and early 1980s, citizens in most Latin American countries gave competitive regimes great leeway in managing the economy until the late 1990s (Powers 2001; Stokes 2001; Weyland 2002).

In many countries, citizens and elites had little reason to believe that a new round of authoritarianism would ease their economic troubles. The new competitive regimes inherited challenging and in several cases ruinous economic legacies. The dismal economic performance of these antecedent authoritarian regimes helps explain the disappearance of actors that have a normative preference for dictatorship and the high tolerance for poor economic performance under competitive regimes in most of Latin America from 1982 to 2002 (Powers 2001; Remmer 1996; Weyland 2002).

Assuming that some actors anticipate a net policy advantage under some form of authoritarian rule, policy preferences may still be offset by a normative commitment to democracy (Frey et al. 2004). Even where past achievements have not built a cushion to buffer democracies from poor performance, good economic performance might not be necessary for regime stability at some historical moments. Actors' policy expectations and their normative preferences about the regime mediate the relationship between government performance and regime stability. Actors that are committed to democracy have a reservoir of goodwill toward competitive regimes; they do not readily jump ship to further their policy goals.

Finally, even if some actors anticipate net gains from authoritarianism and lack a strong normative preference for competitive politics, the authoritarian coalition must be powerful enough to overthrow a democratic regime. In contexts where international actors might impose sanctions against coup leaders, only actors unusually concerned with economic growth are likely to believe that the growth advantage they presume an authoritarian regime would offer is sufficient to offset the risk of supporting a coup.

We do not claim that Latin American democracies have been permanently inoculated against instability resulting from bad performance. Citizen tolerance for poor economic performance under competitive regimes appears to have dropped somewhat in many countries in the late 1990s. At that time, a new period of prolonged stagnation (1998–2002) in the region as a whole and of increased poverty in many countries fueled growing disgruntlement in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. The theoretical lesson is that citizen and elite sensitivity to poor economic performance varies widely across time and space (Kapstein and Converse 2008).

Mass Political Culture and Democratization

Political culture studies based on individual attitudes see democracy as emanating from democratic values among the citizenry; where citizens have democratic values, democracy flourishes (Almond and Verba 1963; Inglehart 1990; 1997: 160–215; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). We agree that mass support for democracy is a powerful resource for democratic actors. But our work diverges from political culture approaches based on mass surveys in several ways. First, we emphasize the role of leaders and organizations, not of ordinary citizens, in determining regime outcomes The beliefs of leaders and organizations usually have more weight than citizen views in determining regime outcomes (Berman 1998; Bermeo 2003; Dahl 1971: 124–88; Linz 1978b).

Second, whereas our theory calls for analyzing specific actors and coalitions that trigger regime change or stabilize the incumbent regime, mass political culture approaches usually do not establish convincing mechanisms by which mass attitudes determine regime outcomes. They usually lack a sense of agency – that is, of specific actors or mechanisms through which mass beliefs about politics affect regime change. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) discuss this issue in greater detail than most work on mass political culture. They argue that political regimes confront pressures for change when mass values are incongruent with the regime (pp. 158, 174, 186–91).The variable "demand for freedom" is at the core of their theory that mass values are the most important long-term determinant of democracy. However, based on how the variable is constructed, it is difficult to see why it represents citizen demands for democracy. It is based on a factor analysis that combines five items: postmaterialism, personal happiness, tolerance of homosexuality, willingness to sign a petition, and interpersonal trust. None of these five survey items constitutes a demand for democracy, and it is not clear how any of them facilitates a transition to democracy.[22]

[22] By contrast, Mattes and Bratton (2007) measured demand for democracy using a battery of indicators that capture whether respondents reject one-man rule, reject military rule, reject one-party rule, and prefer democracy above other forms of government. Booth and Seligson (2009) measured demand for democracy using a dichotomous indicator that captured if respondents preferred an elected leader to a strong but unelected leader (Chapter 7).

Booth and Seligson (2009: chapter 8) theorized a more specific causal mechanism that is consistent with our approach, arguing that elites with a low commitment to democracy find it easier to curtail civil liberties and political rights when large segments of the population simultaneously present low levels of support for democratic principles, national political institutions, and regime performance. However, their comparison of those "triply dissatisfied" citizens against satisfied citizens showed only modest differences in terms of support for confrontational politics, military coups, and unelected governments (Figure 8.3). The evidence supports their arguments but does not sustain more sweeping claims about the impact of mass political culture on political regimes.

In contrast to theories that claim that mass political culture determines regime outcomes through some difficult-to-specify mechanisms, we begin with concrete, identifiable historical actors. Citizen opinion affects these actors, but the relationship between citizen opinion and actors' behavior is very far from linear (Bermeo 2003).

Third, mass political culture approaches generally do not attempt to explain regime change, which is one of our primary concerns. They can attempt to explain regime stability on the basis of patterns of association between mass attitudes and regime type, for example, that authoritarian mass attitudes are conducive to authoritarian regimes. But because mass attitudes are putatively relatively stable over the medium term, they are less successful at explaining dramatic change.

Inglehart and Welzel (2005) assert that self-expression (which is exactly the same variable as "demand for freedom") values explain political regimes. However, their own data indicate that their cultural explanation of regimes based on self-expression values works only modestly for the 1995–2002 period and not well for the 1978–89 period. They report modest country-level correlations, ranging from about .32 to about .39, between self-expression values measured between 1990 and 1995 and levels of democracy (measured by Freedom House scores) from 1995 to 2002 (figure 8.3, p. 184). Even more problematic for their argument, the correlation between self-expression values (again measured between 1990 and 1995) and the level of democracy from 1978 to 1989 is consistently low, ranging from about .01 to about .16. Because they claim there is very high stability over time in self-expression values, the correlation between these values from 1978 to 1989 and democracy in those years must also be low. At best, their theory is valid to a very modest extent for the 1995–2002 period and generally not valid for a longer time period (1978–89).

Fourth, mass political culture approaches usually disregard the problem of reverse causality – that is, the possibility that a democratic political regime fosters a democratic political culture (Barry 1978: 47–74; Muller and Seligson 1994; Seligson 2002). For instance, Booth and Seligson (2009) showed that respondents in countries with a longer history of democracy tend to express stronger support for democratic principles (chapter 4). Inglehart and Welzel (2005: 176–209) explicitly addressed reverse causality, claiming that a democratic political culture causes democracy and not vice versa. They correctly noted

that "[i]f self-expression values cause democracy, they must be in place before democracy" (Inglehart and Welzel 2005: 178). Their statistical work thus implicitly assumes that all democracies in their sample transitioned to democracy *after* their measurement of self-expression values (i.e., 1990 or 1995, depending on the country), but this is not the case. Twenty-three of the sixty-one countries in their sample were democracies for *generations* before their measurement of the independent variable.[23] Moreover, the history of democratization in these countries raises serious doubts about an argument that invokes self-expression values as the cause of democracy. Inglehart's (1990, 1997) own work indicates that self-expression values emerged in recent decades, which means that they cannot explain the emergence of democracy in many countries before then.

Many other countries in their sample (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Greece, Portugal, the Philippines, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, Uruguay) transitioned to democracy before their measurement of self-expression values. Most of the countries that underwent transitions to competitive regimes at the time that fits their argument (between 1989 and 1996 – see Inglehart and Welzel 2005: 176–80) were in the Soviet bloc. In this region, international influences, in particular Gorbachev's willingness to accept growing autonomy of countries dominated by the Soviet Union, followed by demonstration effects that spread across the region and later by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, were hugely important (Brown 2000; Kuran 1991; Lohmann 1994).

Finally, the empirical predictions of mass political culture approaches are not demonstrably fruitful for explaining regime patterns in Latin America. There is no convincing empirical basis for claiming that a change in mass attitudes was primarily responsible for transitions to competitive regimes after 1977 or for democratic stability in the third wave. In contemporary Latin America, mass attitudes are far from unequivocally supportive of democracy. In the 2011 Latinobarómetro, for eighteen Latin American countries (all but Haiti and Cuba), only 58 percent of respondents agreed that "Democracy is better than any other form of government." Seventeen percent agreed that "Under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democracy," and 18 percent agreed that "For people like us, it does not matter whether the regime is democratic." Another 7 percent did not know or did not respond.[24] This distribution of responses does not support the hypothesis that democratic mass values explain stable democracy. Conversely, the available empirical evidence does not support the idea that mass attitudes caused earlier breakdowns (Bermeo 2003).

[23] Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, Venezuela, and West Germany.

[24] Corporación Latinobarómetro, *Informe 2011*, p. 40. Online at http://www.latinobarometro.org/latino/LATContenidos.jsp

In short, mass political culture (or public opinion) influences whether democracies and dictatorships survive or fall. But the empirical evidence does not support strong causal claims about the impact of public opinion on the survival and fall of political regimes (Bermeo 2003).

Mass political culture could determine regime types if elites were "sampled" from the larger population or if, in order to mobilize followers as a political resource, elites needed to embrace the policy and normative regime preferences of mass publics. These two statements are partially true, but elites do not faithfully reflect mass preferences, for two reasons. Given their location in the social structure, elites usually differ from the larger population in terms of preferences (Dalton 1985; Iversen 1994). Even when elites claim to represent mass publics, there are serious monitoring problems (Przeworski et al. 1999). Elites have significant autonomy and preferences of their own, and elections do not suffice to induce them to mirror mass preferences. Elites frame the menu of feasible policy and regime options for their followers, and in this way they also shape mass preferences (Chhibber and Torcal 1997; Przeworski and Sprague 1986; Sartori 1969; Torcal and Mainwaring 2003).

We expect a correlation between elite and mass attitudes at the national level, but this correlation might be modest, and the causal direction of the association is not obvious. Because elites play a critical role in all episodes of regime change while mass publics play an important role only in some episodes (mass actors are mostly absent from processes based on elite pacts or imposition), it is safer to assume that the main explanatory variable behind regime outcomes is the elites' normative and policy preferences rather than mass attitudes per se.

Agency and Democratization

Some social scientists have underscored the role of elite values and strategies in regime breakdowns and transitions, emphasizing the importance of leaders' decisions (Capoccia 2005; Di Palma 1990, Linz 1978b, O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, Stepan 1978). Following these scholars, we acknowledge the importance of leaders' decisions, perhaps especially in moments of regime crisis. Whereas structural and cultural theories such as Inglehart's focus on causally more distant explanations, these works that focus on agency highlight more causally proximate explanations.

Our theory, which is situated in the causal chain between structural approaches and agency explanations, is compatible with an emphasis on leaders and agency. We almost always consider the president an actor, which is consistent with an emphasis on individual leadership. The core of our theory, however, emphasizes political factors that, although amenable to being influenced by agency, are not *primarily* a result of individual leaders' decisions. In the short term, the political variables that we highlight are key parts of the landscape that political leaders confront. In this respect, our theory is not primarily about agency or political leadership. Organizations and movements more than individual leaders are at the core of our theory and empirical analysis.

For example, after the United States began to emphasize democracy in its Latin American policy and after the OAS institutionalized a system of sanctions to support competitive regimes and reduce the incentives for coups in 1991, open coups in the western hemisphere have been a rare exception. Even relatively inept leaders of competitive regimes have rarely fallen to coups. The development of international mechanisms to sanction overt coups has had greater weight in determining broad regime outcomes than the quality of political leadership. This is a contrast to what occurred in the past, when presidents who exercised poor decisions could trigger a coup (Stepan 1978). In the current inter-American system, the effect of poor presidential leadership on regime survival is circumscribed by norms about the desirability of democracy and sanctions.

Formal Institutional Rules and Democratic Stability

Our theory also differs from those that focus on the impact of formal political institutions on regime continuity and change. Linz (1994) famously argued that presidential systems are more vulnerable to breakdown than parliamentary systems. However, other scholars have questioned this argument (Cheibub 2007; Shugart and Carey 1992). Presidentialism might help explain democratic breakdowns before the third wave, but during the third wave, the breakdown rate of competitive regimes has been very low with presidential systems still in place throughout Latin America. Presidentialism does not help explain variance across the twenty countries of Latin America or over time in the region because presidential systems have been a constant.

In another well-known argument based on formal institutional rules, Shugart and Carey (1992) theorized that systems with strong constitutional powers for the president might be more vulnerable to breakdown than those with more balance between the executive and legislature. In a converging argument, Fish (2006) argued that strong legislatures are good for democracy. Although these arguments about the impact of formal institutions are intuitively sensible, and although Fish's claim has solid empirical support for a broad sample of countries, this hypothesis does not hold up for Latin America. On this point, our skepticism is grounded in empirical observations rather than theoretical conviction. In Latin America, the constitutional powers of presidents actually expanded during the third wave of democratization (Negretto 2009). As a result, in the models presented in Chapter 4, greater presidential powers enhanced democratic survival.

Although formal rules shape actors' incentives and behavior, their impact on regime survival or fall is mediated by many other factors that seem to have more weight than the formal rules. The willingness of actors to accept policy losses does not depend directly on the formal rules of the game, and it has an important

impact on the capacity of competitive regimes to survive. Intransigent actors stretch their legal prerogatives to the limit (and beyond it) in order to impose their preferred policies, and they seek to undermine the power of veto players by casting them as illegitimate institutions. By contrast, non-radical players accept the existing institutional design as exogenous and bargain to achieve their policy preferences within the constraints imposed by those rules. In its focus on actors, our theory is fully consistent with institutional approaches to regime change and survival. But we focus on organizational actors (parties, militaries, unions, etc.), not formal institutional rules.

LOOKING AHEAD

The inability of these alternative theoretical approaches to account for the historical transformation of political regimes in Latin America may portend well for the region. By 2010, at least ten of the twenty Latin American countries remained below the income level of Argentina in 1976, identified by Przeworski et al. (2000: 98) as the threshold above which "no democracy has ever been subverted."[25] If modernization were the main source of inoculation against coups, most Latin American competitive regimes would still be at risk.

Latin America also remains one of the most unequal regions in the world. Data compiled by the United Nations Development Program in its 2011 *Human Development Report* indicated that the richest 20 percent of the population in the typical Latin American country earns sixteen times more than the poorest 20 percent. As a comparative reference, the mean ratio between the richest and the poorest quintiles of the population is about nine times for countries at high levels of human development, eleven times for countries at medium levels of development, and ten times for countries at low levels of development. On average, Latin American countries lost nine positions in the international ranking of human development once income inequality was taken into account.[26] Even though a combination of social policy, leftist governments, and commodity booms led to an improvement of income distribution in the last decade covered by our study (Gasparini and Lustig 2011), prospects for democracy in Latin America would be bleak if inequality was an insurmountable threat to competitive politics.

Most of Latin America remained shielded from the recession that undercut the U.S. and EU economies in the years after 2008. Estimates by the Economic

[25] Nominal GDP has risen over time, but the comparison refers to income measured in constant (2005) purchasing power parity dollars (data from the Penn World Table 7.0 for 2009). Using the figures in our dataset (in constant dollars, but not PPPs), some eighteen countries still remain below the threshold.

[26] Adjustments for income inequality in the HDI world ranking ranged from a loss of twenty-four positions for Colombia to a moderate gain of three positions in the case of Nicaragua (http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2011_EN_Table3.pdf).

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) indicate that the economy of the average Latin American country grew by one-third between 2004 and 2010, and by 8 percent even in the difficult global environment experienced between 2008 and 2010.[27] Yet at the turn of the decade, Latin American growth often remained volatile and dependent on primary export booms, inflation emerged as a pressing issue in several countries, and the typical unemployment rate fluctuated around 8 percent.

There is no clear evidence that Latin American leaders were savvier, more prudent, or more inclined to act as statesmen by 2010 than they were two decades earlier. The legacy of past leaders who navigated the stormy waters of democratic transitions, such as Raúl Alfonsín in Argentina or Patricio Aylwin in Chile, or those who tamed hyperinflation, such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso in Brazil, reminds us that Latin American leadership has always included a good measure of vision and talent, as well as – in more unfortunate instances – short-sightedness and negligence.

Presidential institutions will remain a feature of Latin American politics for years to come. Some constitutional rules that presumably compound the effects of presidentialism have even expanded over time. Repeated constitutional reforms have extended the legal prerogatives of Latin American presidents (Negretto 2013). Constitutional amendments (or acts of judicial review) have also relaxed restrictions on presidential reelection to accommodate the ambitions of popular incumbents in Argentina (1994), Bolivia (2008), Brazil (1997), Colombia (2005), Costa Rica (2003), the Dominican Republic (2002), Ecuador (2008), Nicaragua (2009), Peru (1993), and Venezuela (1999, 2009). If extraordinary leaders or particular institutions were necessary to sustain democracy, the future of competitive regimes in the region would be uncertain.

By contrast, normative regime preferences, policy orientations, and international forces changed over the long run in ways that made Latin American political actors more willing to accept democracy by 2010 than at any previous point. If the argument presented in this book is correct, this fundamental transformation involving organizational ideas and collective goals, transnational networks, and international organizations anticipates a more promising future for democrats in the region than most alternative theories would predict.

At the same time, there are reasons to temper this optimism with caution. Chapter 8 documented a slight increase in radical policy preferences and a modest decline in normative commitments to democracy since the late 1990s. It also showed that investments in the construction of democratic institutions (or the lack thereof) have lasting consequences for the quality of competitive regimes over the long run. In this context, democratic stagnation and erosion have been common phenomena. A surge in radicalism could have deleterious effects for the

[27] *Anuario Estadístico de América Latina y el Caribe* (2011), table 2.1.1.1 (http://www.eclac.cl/publicaciones/xml/7/45607/LCG2513b.pdf).

strength of twenty-first-century democratic coalitions in the countries plagued by weak states, bad governance, and social exclusion.

These findings open an exciting research agenda that we can only begin to sketch. Studies of democratization have usually relied on theories that invoke the power and motivations of specific *actors*, but they have tested their theories using aggregate cross-national data at the *country* level. This inconsistency between the level of analysis invoked by the microfoundations of the theory and the units of analysis employed for hypothesis testing is common in other subfields – including comparative studies of political economy, conflict, institutions, and policy making – and it poses three important challenges.

The first challenge that future studies of democratization (and other subfields) must confront is the generation of systematic indicators to portray political actors in multiple countries and different historical periods. We addressed such measurement issues in ways described in Chapter 3. Large collaborative efforts would be required to develop accurate measures for political actors – their preferences, goals, and resources – worldwide. Yet the payoff of such large-scale undertaking for the social sciences could be great.

Previous chapters have shown that normative orientations and policy preferences have powerful consequences for regime change and stability. But once those preferences are identified, several questions emerge. Where do these preferences originate? How do they change? Under what conditions certain preferences spread in society? The second challenge for comparative politics is to take those questions seriously. We explored the origin and changes of normative preferences in Chapters 2 through 6, partly to dispel concerns about endogeneity, but a full treatment of this issue transcends the scope of this book. This is an area in which interpretive and positivist approaches in political science will need to engage in a joint effort (Bowles 1998).

Third, we need to extend our models of how actors' preferences aggregate into collective outcomes. The theoretical literature has addressed this issue in many ways (for a classic example, see Schelling 1978), but *empirical* estimators to model such processes have lagged behind. Hierarchical models conventionally assume that variance in the outcome variable takes place at a lower level of aggregation than variance in explanatory factors (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). Yet the combination of actors' preferences in social outcomes presents the opposite situation. We handled this issue by averaging actors' preferences at the country-year level in order to create summary measures. More powerful estimators of aggregate choices may become available in the future.

These analytical challenges comprise an agenda that transcends the study of regime change and has broader implications for the field of comparative politics. We started this book in search of an explanation for the emergence, survival, and fall of democracies and dictatorships in the past. We end this book by looking ahead – to the perils to be met by future democratic actors in Latin America, and to the questions to be met by future social scientists seeking to understand them.