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ABSTRACT

The conceptualization and measurement of the range of political regimes in-between authoritarianism and democracy is characterized by many shades of grey. After the end of the Cold War, scholars formulated numerous new political regime typologies, commonly presented as diminished subtypes of democracy and authoritarianism and as transitional rather than stable institutional forms. Correspondingly, scholars collected data to develop new longitudinal and cross-national measures of political regimes. Although these efforts led to important new insights, they also face limitations. A myriad of regime typologies precipitates conceptual confusion and dichotomous measurements hamper the investigation of hybrid regimes. The paper addresses these limitations by developing a new measurement model of political regimes. Conceptually, the model is anchored within theories of democracy and focuses on institutions regulating the access to and exercise of political power, i.e. (1) political participation and competition (2) respect for human rights and (3) institutional constraints on the executive. Empirically, the model approaches political regimes as multi-dimensional and focuses on differences in degree rather than in kind. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is applied on longitudinal data between 1972 and 2010 to measure the three political regime dimensions using multiple indicators. Second, Hierarchical Cluster Analysis allows for the study of political regimes beyond their constitutive attributes. We validate the new latent variables using content, convergent-discriminant and nomological validation. So doing, we illustrate the usefulness of the approach by presenting new empirical insights.

Keywords: Political Regimes, Conceptualization, Measurement, Multi-Dimensionality, Graded Approach

1. INTRODUCTION

The dichotomy between democratic and authoritarian regimes has long dominated our thinking about political regimes. The emergence of hybrid regimes that qualify as neither democratic nor authoritarian has complicated this scientific enterprise. Efforts to get a grasp on this ‘grey zone’ led to the formulation of several new subtypes, ranging from illiberal democracy (Zakaria, 1997), delegative democracy (O’Donnell, 1994), exclusive and tutelary democracy (Merkel, 2004), partial democracy (Carothers, 2002), to competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky & Way, 2010), electoral authoritarianism (Schedler, 2006), semi-authoritarian regimes (Ottaway, 2003), and illiberal autocracy (Møller & Skaaning, 2010), among others. In most of these cases, these hybrid regimes are considered transitory and/or temporary phenomena, ignoring the longevity of some of these regimes (O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986). The endeavor also goes against Collier and Levitsky’s (1997: 451) advice that “*if research on democratization degenerates into a competition to see who can come up with the next famous concept, the comparative study of regimes will be in serious trouble*”. The proliferation of regime typologies for the grey zone not only precipitates conceptual confusion, it also leads to empirical challenges, as different researchers attach different labels to the same cases.

This article seeks to overcome the limits of the ‘subtypes approach’ by developing a new measurement model for political regimes. This model is derived from various theories about democracy. Dahl (1970: 1) reminds us that “*there is no democratic theory – there are only democratic theories*,” and these theories share a concern for “*processes by which ordinary citizens exert a high degree of control over their leaders* (Dahl, 1970: 3)”. The various theories emphasize different aspects regarding the *access to and exercise of political power*, i.e. (i) political participation and competition (ii) respect for human rights and (iii) institutional constraints on the executive. These three institutions provide the basis of our measurement model.

The procedural theory of democracy, for instance, conditions democratic state-society relations on the existence of competition between political elites for people’s votes (Schumpeter, 1942). Leaders face checks on their power by the recurrent organization of elections. This allows the people, if necessary, to vote incumbents out of power. Marshall’s (1963) theory of political citizenship extends the procedural theory beyond the electoral forum. Political citizenship conveys political rights to individuals, allowing them to continuously participate and compete in the political arena. The human rights theory of democracy, on the other hand, points out that political participation and competition alone cannot prevent despotic rule to occur (Paine, 1791; Skaaning, 2008). Elections, for example, can be manipulated. The theory stresses respect for human rights as an institutional *sine qua non* for society to weigh on the democratic process (Dahl, 1971). Widespread rights of expression and assembly, among others, ensure that representative institutions function properly. They limit government interference in citizen’s life and as such guarantee the political performance of society. Respect for human rights, in other words, allow political participation and competition to be free and fair. They refer to Marshall’s (1963) notion of civil citizenship. The Madisonian theory of democracy, furthermore, builds upon the premise that the accumulation of legislative, executive and judiciary power in the hands of a few creates tyranny. In such a setting, leaders are not bounded by constitutional restrictions on their rule. Instead, they have the ability to pursue unconstitutional policies, for example against minority groups, and to dominate the jurisdiction and parliament. Madison’s theory postulates a horizontal system of autonomous institutions to constrain the power of the chief executive.

At present, differing views exist on how to conceptualize and measure political re-

gimes. Some scholars take a one-dimensional understanding of political regimes, evaluating them alongside a single dimension (Gugiu, 2013; Pemstein et al., 2010; Skaaning et al., 2015). Others, however, endorse a multi-dimensional approach of regimes and call for disaggregated measurements (Wig, Hegre, & Regan, 2015; Wigell, 2008). In a similar vein, divergences remain as regards the level of measurement. Some researchers adhere to categorical operationalizations of democracy, whereas others advocate continuous ones (Collier & Adcock, 1999).

This paper situates political regimes within a multi-dimensional property space, based on scores on three dimensions regarding the *access to and exercise of government*: (1) political participation and competition; (2) respect for human rights and (3) institutional constraints on the executive. In this space, each dimension is allowed to evolve separately of the others. Such an approach offers a more nuanced picture of a regime's nature and ensures more concept-measure consistency compared to one-dimensional approaches. Second, the three dimensions refer to graded concepts or as different *in degree* rather than *in kind* (Collier & Gerring, 2009). The third and fourth waves of democratization also fostered the occurrence of intermediate, i.e. hybrid regimes. As Diamond (1999) convincingly shows, after the Cold War the distribution of regimes shifted from a polarized democracy vs. autocracy distribution to a continuous one in which many countries have hybrid regimes. Such reality is difficult to grasp when using dichotomous concepts. Moreover, graded measurements are better capable to make fine-grained distinctions between regimes than typologies (Collier & Adcock, 1999). As figure 1 illustrates, this is important, even though this entails the loss of parsimony. In this figure, we compare three prominent regime typologies. Each typology has the merit of presenting a world-wide classification of political regimes over time¹. Still, important shortcomings remain. First, the figure indicates that the authors systematically disagree in the classification of countries for on average 35% of the cases². Second, the figure also illustrates that disagreements became more common in the post-Cold War period, when regime change accelerated and classification became more difficult³. Hence, there is a case for arguing that we need sharper differentiations. Situating countries in a three-dimensional metric space provides this opportunity.

[1] Geddes et al. (2014) distinguish democracies from party-based, personalist and military regimes and monarchies. Cheibub et al. (2010), meanwhile, identify presidential, semi-presidential and parliamentary democracies as different from monarchies, military regimes and civilian dictatorships. Wahman et al. (2013), furthermore, analyze democracies, multiparty autocracies, one-party/no-party authoritarian regimes, military regimes, and monarchies.

[2] In the figure, we compare 6,211 country-year observations for 194 countries in order to see whether classifications correspond. We code agreements when a country-year is a democracy/monarchy/military regime for all scholars. We code disagreements for all instances where authors classify certain country-year observations as both democratic and authoritarian. Likewise, within authoritarian regimes, we code different those country-years that hold alternative labels even though authors work with similar categories. For example, a disagreement exists when CGV call a regime a civilian dictatorship, while WTH or GWF call it a military regime or a monarchy. Such a logic is justified, for CGV also use military regimes and monarchies in their classification. We apply the logic consistently throughout the comparison.

[3] We obtain the same results when limiting our analysis to disagreements between democracy and autocracy alone, be it with lower percentages. This means that the dynamic we describe is not determined by the disagreements we code within authoritarian regimes.

**Figure 1. GWF, WTH and CGV Regime Typologies Compared.
1972 - 2010.**



Note. All cases are measured on January 1st. GWF refers to Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014), WTH refers to Wahman, Teorell and Hadenius (2013) and CGV refers to the classification of Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010).

A focus on multiple and continuous dimensions still allows for the development of a regime typology, grouping together countries with similar scores on the three dimensions. Countries with high scores on all three dimensions, for example, would go through as democratic, while countries with low scores on each of the dimensions would be autocracies. Doing so, we ensure defining types that have empirical referents (Møller & Skaaning, 2010). At the same time, this approach has the potential for more nuance with respect to classification, for it is based on graded instead of dichotomous measurements⁴.

We proceed as follows. First, we discuss more in detail the three theoretical dimensions of democracy. Thereby, we investigate the theoretical origins of the dimensions and look at how they have been used in the political regimes literature. Second, we situate their relevance in regards to empirical measurements of democracy. It will be shown that each of our three dimensions has been used in many studies of political regimes. This illustrates their importance. Third, we present the measurement model, putting emphasis on data sources, imputation of missing data and confirmatory factor analysis. The final section presents the empirical results, seeking to validate the new empirical constructs and to present empirical findings. We conclude by sketching out the most important findings of the paper and give suggestions for future research.

2. THEORIES OF DEMOCRACY

2.1. Political participation and competition

Schumpeter's (1942) procedural theory of democracy focuses on power relations between government and society (Shapiro, 2006). Central to the model are "that institutional

[4] This argument deserves more clarification. For Sartori (1987) political systems are configured by scores on multiple attributes, all of which need to be present before a case is to be considered democratic. Let's assume those attributes are political participation and competition (X_1), human rights (X_2) and institutional constraints (X_3). The traditional notion on a bounded whole would be $X_1 * X_2 * X_3$, with the attributes measured on a dichotomous scale. Here, the absence of one attribute would entail a similar outcome at a higher level ($0 * 1 * 1 = 0$). Measuring attributes on a graded scale, however, allows for more nuance when combined (see also: Collier & Adcock, 1999: 558).

arrangements for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will (Schumpeter 1942: 213).” Thus put, the theory articulates an institutional anchor between rulers and the ruled. On the one hand, the franchise permits the people to decide on the composition of the government by electing their representatives in periodical elections. Furthermore, they hold a check on the government because of their ability to vote incumbents out of office. Politicians, on the other hand, participate in a competitive political process for votes and political power. Their dependence on popular opinion and votes obliges them to prioritize the public interest. Without doing so, for example by implementing unpopular policies, their political aspirations might come to a premature end. Moreover, the theory suggests a division of labor between elected politicians and voters. Once elected, politicians acquire the legitimacy to make important decisions. This means that the government is only subject to popular control at the time of elections. Outside this period, voters should refrain from political interference because it impedes effective decision-making.

Elections provide clear institutional mechanisms for linking society and government. Yet, by drawing only on elections, we risk endorsing the belief that they automatically lead to a *pactum societatis* (Karl, 1995; Sartori, 1987). This assumption is problematic. One reason is that elections occur only intermittently and that during these constitutive periods political power might be abused. Moreover, elections can be severely manipulated by incumbents and at the same time only allow to choose between highly abstract alternatives (Schedler, 2002; Schmitter & Karl, 1991). Hence, it is important to take into account political participation and competition outside election periods as well.

This is reflected in Marshall’s (1963) notion of political citizenship, by which he means “*the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body (Marshall, 1963: 78).*” In this context, Marshall explicitly refers to parliament and *councils of local government as corresponding institutions* (p. 78). Implicitly, however, one can also think about the existence of political parties and pressure groups, among others (Turner, 1990: 191). Crucially, however, is that political parties and parliaments offer civil society extra means to participate in and to compete for the formation of government and policy. In this regard, political citizenship breeds additional incentives for considering government actions as legitimate, beyond elections.

Many path breaking studies on political regimes have put emphasis on political participation and competition as a dimension of democracy. Huntington (1993: 7) uses the dimension as the standard against which to decide whether a country is democratic or not. Political systems are democratic the moment credible elections take place, free competition exists and the adult population is allowed to vote. Dahl’s theory of polyarchy adds media access for political parties and opportunities for opposition parties to participate at lower levels of government to the equation (Coppedge, 2013: 25). Lipset (1959: 71), furthermore, conceives democracy as a political system where electoral rights create the opportunity for change in political leadership. Studying democratic breakdowns, Linz (1975) discriminates regimes according to whether leaders are elected, the degree of pluralism and the nature of participation. Even though Linz (1975) focuses on the ideology of the leaders as well, Mahoney (2003: 158) places Linz among the founders of the procedural dimension. Studies on hybrid regimes also have largely followed the procedural approach, focusing on the occurrence and nature of elections (Levitsky & Way, 2010; Lindberg, 2009; Schedler, 2013).

A range of comparativists have criticized the practice of equating political procedures and political citizenship with democracy, depicting it as a ‘*minimalist*’ approach (Diamond, 2003: 32 – 34). Instead, so the argument goes, political regimes consist of additional institutions, more than elections and political citizenship. These scholars argue in favor of ‘substantive’ definitions of political regimes. Put differently, they state that other ‘institutional guarantees’ should be dragged in. As a matter of fact, (political) philosophers and social scientists alike have written much about the link between human liberties and democracy. It is to this dimension we turn next.

2.2. Human rights

The idea of democracy as a human rights phenomenon is quite old. Writing during the French Revolution, Paine (1791), in his book *The Rights of Man*, situates sovereignty within the Nation. In short, it are citizens and not kings that are to make (political) decisions. Therefore, natural rights are key. Natural rights are those which appertain to man in right of his existence. Of this kind are all the intellectual rights, or rights of the mind, and also those rights of acting as an individual for his own comfort and happiness, which are not injurious to the natural rights of others (p. 44). Paine observes free speech as one of those natural rights of men always retained (Paine, 1791: 71). To this, Constant (1988) adds the right of everyone to associate with other individuals. The idea of natural rights also resonate in Berlin’s (1969) negative concept of liberty and Miller’s (1991) idea of liberal freedom. Both conceptions underline the importance of the freedom of the person and the group from external interference, like the state or other people. Skaaning (2008: 7) calls these rights personal exertion rights and, like Sen (2001), ties them to democracy (Skaaning, 2006).

Marshall’s (1963) theory of civil citizenship closely corresponds with the human rights theory of democracy. Civil citizenship refers to those rights that are crucial for the maintenance of the freedom of the individual, like freedom of thought and faith, freedom of speech and the right to own property (p. 78). What matters is whether governments allow people and organizations to enact basic freedoms. Countries with regular government crackdowns on the media or NGO’s, for example, face considerable democratic shortcomings. Even though respecting human rights is also key for fair political participation and competition, the dimension differs conceptually as well as empirically from political citizenship in that focus is given to the way political power is exercised rather than accessed⁵.

Several studies on political regimes have used the human rights theory of democracy. Dahl’s (1971) theory of polyarchy as the presence of eight institutional guarantees includes several aspects of civil citizenship, like the freedom of expression and freedom of organization. Yet, by adding franchise and competition to his definition, Dahl conflates political participation and competition with human rights. This point is supported by Bollen (1990), classifying Dahl’s list of eight institutions into two dimensions: political rights and political liberties. Political liberties designate the notion of human rights. More recently, Lindberg et al. (2015) differentiate between electoral and liberal conceptions of democracy. The electoral component refers to political participation and competition, whereas the liberal aspect stresses human rights among other institutions, like checks and balances and transparency. Gilbert and Mohseni (2011), lastly, identify human rights as a distinct and defining aspect of hybrid regimes.

[5] Speaking for Great Britain only, it is important to notice that Marshall (1963) saw the development of political, civil and social citizenship as autonomous processes. He puts it as follows: ‘When the three elements of citizenship parted company, they were soon barely on speaking terms. So complete was the divorce between them that it is possible, without doing too much violence to historical accuracy, to assign the formative period in the life of each to a different century – civil rights to the eighteenth, political to the nineteenth and social to the twentieth (p. 81).’

Clearly, extending the conceptualization of political regimes by adding human rights is theoretically justified. Adherents of ‘substantive’ definitions of political regimes have put emphasis on an additional phenomenon as well, i.e. horizontal accountability. Thereby, they have largely drawn from Montesquieu’s (1748) early insights about a separation of powers. This idea is addressed in our third dimension.

2.3. Institutional constraints

The institutional constraints conception of democracy dates back to Montesquieu and featured prominently in the drafting of the U.S. constitution. In *Federalist Paper No. 47*, James Madison presents the core of the argument: “...*The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny (Madison, 1977: 153)*”. Madison believed that power was by definition corrupting and that once attained, one will always try to increase it, be it a majority or a minority. Widespread electoral and human rights alone are not able to counter this dynamic. In this regard, Madison agrees with Montesquieu that there is no credible liberty when, for example, legislative and executive power interfere with judicial power. What Madison suggested was a constitutional system of checks and balances. Such a system entails that legislative, executive and judicial departments have partial independence and exercise mutual control. This power structure would safeguard the natural rights of citizens and furthermore abort state tyranny. In countries where “*the whole power of one department is exercised by the same hands which possess the whole power of another department, the fundamental principles of a free constitution are subverted (p. 193)*.”

Madison’s concerns are not directly addressed by Marshall’s theory of citizenship. Yet, a separation of powers supports political and civil rights of citizens by affirming that government power is under civilian control and shared. An independent judiciary, for example, controls for the constitutionality of government policy. So doing, citizens are able to prevent elected governments to exceed term limits and to block policies that might harm minority interests, among others. As such, the accent is on the extent to which executive powers of the chief executive (be it a president or a monarch) are constrained by countervailing powers. The dimension thus bundles horizontal restrictions on government goals, yet also encompasses binding rules for revising the constitution and the independence of different levels of government, among others.

Students of political regimes have addressed the Madisonian theory of democracy in various ways. O’Donnell (1994: 55), for example, bases a *new species* of regimes, delegative democracies, entirely on the Madisonian idea of horizontal accountability. Delegative democracies are characterized by representative institutions such as elections and freedom of speech, yet fall short on a web of institutionalized power relations, i.e. a separation of powers. In such a setting, chief executives can rule *as they see fit* (p. 59) without any accountability to the nation. Zakaria (1997) has called these kinds of political regimes illiberal democracies. Furthermore, Sklar’s (1996) theory of developmental democracy identifies lateral accountability, i.e. *the obligation of office-holders to answer for their actions* (p. 27), as part and parcel of a well-functioning democracy. Meanwhile, Schedler et al. (2009) draw on the Madisonian dimension to zoom in on a wide set of constraining institutions in new democracies. In all, political participation and competition, human rights and institutional constraints on the executive form the core of our political regimes concept. We now turn to how these three dimensions have been used in the political regimes literature.

3. RELEVANCE OF THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF DEMOCRACY IN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Table 1 illustrates how these three dimensions of democracy have been used in past studies of political regimes. The procedural theory of democracy has been most popular. In a recent article, Skaaning et al. (2015) present the Lexical Index of Electoral Democracy, concerned with competition amongst parties, elections and franchise. Munck's (2009) Electoral Democracy Index, on the other hand, focuses on the right to vote, elections and the right to run for office. Arat's (1991) Index of Democraticness encompasses participation, inclusiveness, competitiveness and coerciveness, whereas Vanhanen's (2000) Index of Democracy envelops the electoral success of smaller parties and the percentage of the population that actually votes. Cheibub et al. (2010), furthermore, investigate executive and legislative selection processes and multiparty competition, while ignoring suffrage rights. Geddes et al. (2014) and Boix et al. (2012) apply a similar methodology, yet take into account the presence of suffrage rights for 10% of the population. Paxton et al. (2003) solely explore suffrage rights, while Lindberg et al. (2015) and Bollen (2009) study competition, elections and suffrage.

Table 1. Relevance of the Three Dimensions of Democracy in Previous Studies of Political Regimes.

Dimension	Principles	Institutions	Popular Operationalizations
<i>Political Participation and Competition</i>	Competition	Elections	Arat (1991), Boix et al. (2013), Bollen (2009), Bowman et al. (2005), Cheibub et al. (2010), Coppedge et al. (2008), Freedom House (2014), Gasiorowski (1996), Geddes et al. (2014), Gugiu et al. (2013), Hadenius (1992), Lindberg et al. (2014), Munck (2009), Mainwaring et al. (2001), Paxton et al. (2003), Pemstein et al. (2010), Skaaning et al. (2015) Vanhanen (2000)
	Participation	Political Parties	
	Franchise	Parliament	
		Voting Rights	
<i>Respect for Human Rights</i>	Freedom of Expression	Interest Groups	Bowman et al. (2005), Coppedge et al. (1990), Coppedge et al. (2008), Freedom House (2014), Gasiorowski (1996), Gugiu et al. (2013), Hadenius (1992), Lindberg et al. (2014), Mainwaring et al. (2001), Pemstein et al. (2010), Skaaning (2008).
	Freedom of Assembly	Civil Justice System	
	Freedom of Religion	Independent Media	
	Right to Property	Free Trade	
	Right to Information		
<i>Constraints on the Chief Executive</i>	Equality for the law		Coppedge et al. (2008), Gugiu (2013), Marshall et al. (2014), Lindberg et al. (2014), Pemstein et al. (2010), Wig et al. (2015)
	Separation of Powers Horizontal Accountability	Supreme Court Constitution	

A range of studies go beyond the procedural theory of democracy. The Freedom House (2014) indicators on political rights and civil liberties are cases in point, unmistakably taking a human rights perspective. Similar initiatives are found in Gasiorowski (1996), Mainwaring et al. (2001), Bowman et al. (2005) and Hadenius (1992). Most of these studies combine different indicators into a one-dimensional scale. Thereby, given the ambiguity of political rights, the human rights and procedural dimension tend to be easily conflated. Coppedge et al.'s (1990) Polyarchy Scale and Skaaning's (2008) Civil Liberties Dataset do better at grasping human rights *stricto sensu*, laying emphasis on the freedom to organize, the freedom to express and the freedom to access information, among others.

Several researchers provide measures for the existence of horizontal constraints on the executive (Lindberg et al., 2014, Marshall et al., 2014, Wig et al., 2015). Also here, researchers generally use aggregated artefacts of subscales rather than the subscales themselves. Thereby, they conflate the three dimensions. Pemstein et al.'s (2010) Unified Democracy Scores combine ten highly aggregated measures of democracy, including the Polity Index, into one measure. The Polity Index incorporates a variable measuring constraints on the chief executive. In a similar vein, Gugiu et al.'s (2013) Cluster Classification Index draws on five existing scales, also using Polity. The same is true for Coppedge et al. (2008) Revised Index of Polyarchy. One may, however, question the validity of this Revised Index, for Dahl pays no attention to institutional constraints whatsoever in his definition of polyarchy.

The three dimensions of democracy are clearly present in popular measurements of political regimes. This contrasts, however, with the way these dimensions have been measured: all too often in a one-dimensional space and in combination with each other rather than apart. The limits of such an approach, however, is that it becomes difficult to comprehend the very meaning of an empirical construct, for it combines multiple aspects. A multi-dimensional continuous approach has the potential to bring about more concept-measure consistency and to reveal what is going on with different dimensions of democracy. Correspondingly, multiple indicators of the same concept have the potential to improve measurement validity. We now turn to the measurement model.

4. MEASUREMENT MODEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND COMPETITION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS

The development of a new measurement model of political regimes proceeds in three steps. First, we compile the Institutions, Liberties and Development (ILD) Dataset, bringing together a large array of time-series cross-sectional (CNTS) data on political institutions, human rights and societal development from 1946 on⁶. Second, and most critical, we select indicators corresponding best with the theoretical dimensions. Third, we apply a confirmatory factor analysis.

4.1. Empirical indicators

Table 2 presents the selected empirical indicators and the descriptive statistics per dimension. For political participation and competition, we take a measure on the amount of parties in the legislature (*lparty*) and the existence of political parties in a country (*defacto*) from Cheibub et al.'s (2010) Democracy-Dictatorship (DD) Dataset. From the Political Institutions and Political Events (PIPE) Dataset (Przeworski, 2013) we select an indicator on whether political pluralism is allowed in the political system (*opposition*). Furthermore, we take the Legislative Index of Electoral Competitiveness (*liec*) from the Database on Political Institutions (Keefer, 2012), measuring how many political parties compete in the political system as well as whether they are elected or not.

With regards to respect for human rights, we take two variables from Skaaning's (2008) Civil Liberties Dataset. The first variable measures the freedom of opinion and expression (*freexp*), whereas the second variable indicates the freedom of assembly and association

[6] The ILD codebook (Annex 1) is available in the online appendix of this article (<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/staff/mathias-deroeck/my-website/>) and will be recurrently updated. The dataset is available upon request.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Empirical Indicators for Political Participation and Competition, Human Rights and Institutional Constraints. 1972 - 2010

Variable	Variable Name	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min / Max	N	Source
<i>Political Participation and Competition</i>						
Political Pluralism	Opposition	0.65	0.48	0 / 1	6,164	Przeworski et al. (2013)
Parties within the Legislature	Lparty	1.48	0.78	0 / 2	6,307	Cheibub et al. (2010)
Existence of Political Parties	Defacto	1.63	0.65	0 / 2	6,319	Cheibub et al. (2010)
Legislative Index of Electoral Competition	Liec	5.42	2.14	1 / 7	5,736	Keefer (2012)
<i>Respect for Human Rights</i>						
Freedom of Opinion and Expression	Freexp	2.51	0.96	1 / 4	5,947	Skaaning (2008)
Freedom of Assembly and Association	Freass	1.10	1.13	1 / 4	5,947	Skaaning (2008)
Freedom of Assembly and Association	Assn	0.99	0.85	0 / 2	4,738	Cingranelli & Richards (2014)
Freedom of Speech	Speech	3.18	0.73	0 / 2	4,743	Cingranelli & Richards (2014)
Respect for Civil Liberties	Fh_cl	3.18	1.96	0 / 6	6,500	Freedom House (2011)
Media Freedom	Media	1.45	1.16	0 / 3	6,726	Whitten-Woodring & Van Belle (2014)
<i>Institutional Constraints</i>						
Executive Constraints	Xconst	4.19	2.33	1 / 7	5,645	Marshall et al. (2014)
Checks and Balances	Checks	2.51	1.70	1 / 18	5,588	Keefer (2012)
Political Constraints Index V	Polcon	0.32	0.33	0 / 0.89	6,117	Henisz (2000)

Note: Datasets include: Political Institutions and Political Events Dataset v.2 (Przeworski, 2013); Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited Dataset v.1 (Cheibub et al., 2010); Database on Political Institutions (Keefer, 2012); The Civil Liberty Dataset (Skaaning, 2008); The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset v.5.21.14 (Cingranelli & Richards, 2014); Freedom in the World Country Ratings (Freedom House, 2011); Global Media Freedom Dataset (Whitten-Woodring & Van Belle, 2014); Polity IV Project (Marshall et al., 2014) and the Political Constraints Dataset (Henisz, 2000). Annex 2 provides additional information on the selected variables.

(*freass*) in a country (Skaaning, 2008). The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Database, moreover, provides measures on the freedom of assembly and association (*assn*) and the freedom of speech (*speech*) (Cingranelli & Richards, 2014). We also use the civil liberties variable from Freedom House (*fh_cl*) and a variable on media freedom (*media*) from the Global Media Freedom Dataset (Freedom House, 2011; Whitten-Woodring & Van Belle, 2014). Each indicator is coded positively and reflects the degree to which human rights are respected in a country.

For institutional constraints, finally, our measurement also relies on multiple indicators. We take a proxy for the institutionalized constraints on the decision-making powers of chief executives from Polity IV (*xconst*) (Marshall et al., 2014). Keefer's (2012) Database of Political Institutions makes available a variable measuring checks and balances (*checks*) in a country. Lastly, we use the Political Constraints Dataset for retrieving the Political Constraints Index V (*polcon5*), measuring the extent to which executive preferences are constrained by other political actors (Henisz, 2000). The variables discussed form the basis of the measurement model.

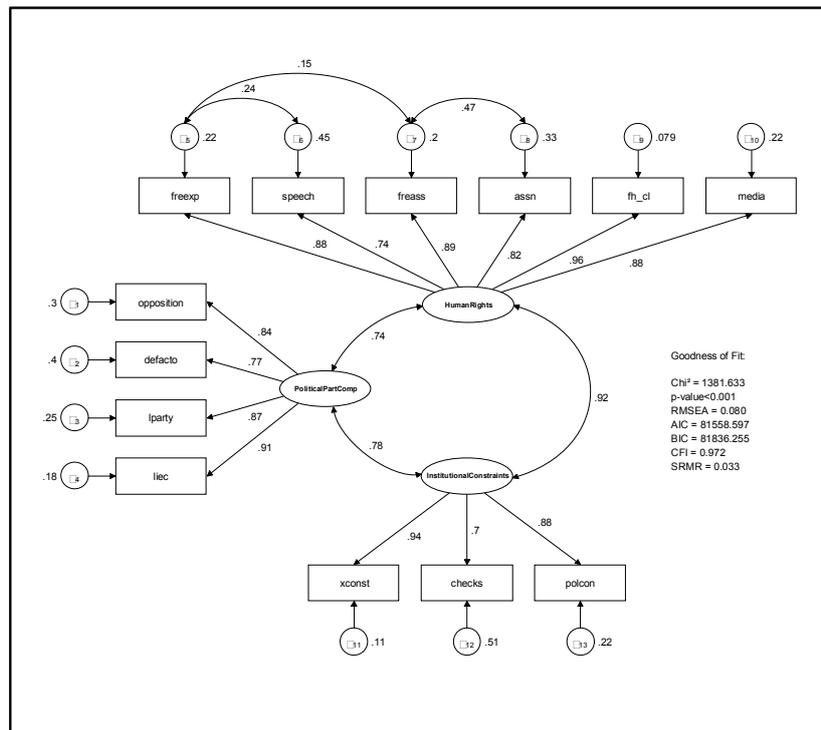
4.2. Measurement model

Figure 2 presents the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation⁷. The path diagram visualizes the equations of the measurement model. As is clear, the latent regime dimensions are all estimated using multiple indicators in order to improve validity. Thereby, a one unit change in the latent institutionalized constraints variable, for example, would lead to 0.94 units change in executive constraints (*xconst*) ($\rho < 0.001$), 0.70 units in checks and balances (*checks*) ($\rho < 0.001$) and 0.88 units in the political constraints index (*polcon5*) ($\rho < 0.001$). This means that the latent variable explains most of the variance in the executive constraints (*xconst*) variable. A similar logic holds for the other dimensions as well, with all coefficients significant at the 0.001-level. The two-headed arrows reflect the correlation between the latent variables. They remain intermediate with reference to political participation and competition and institutional constraints ($r = 0.78$) and political participation and competition and human rights ($r = 0.74$), whereas the institutional constraints and human rights dimensions are strongly correlated ($r = 0.92$), meaning that in reality they are undistinguishable. Hence, we also estimate a latent variable reducing respect for human rights and institutional constraints to a single dimension.

The goodness of fit measures investigate the convergence between the model covariance [Σ] and population covariance of the observed variables [$\Sigma(\theta)$] (Bollen, 1989). They evaluate the fit of the model with the observed data. All tests suggest a reasonable model fit. The χ^2 test has a rather low value ($\chi^2 = 2,629$) and is significant ($\rho < 0.001$). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation approaches the conventional value of 0.05 (RMSEA = 0.080 with 90% CI between 0.076 and 0.083), while the Comparative Fit Index scores better than the standard convention of 0.95 (CFI = 0.972) (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). We predict the factor scores of the latent variables (*ppc*, *hr*, *instconst*) as well as the combined dimension for human rights and institutional constraints (*hrconst*) using the regression method. Missing values are imputed by conditioning on the variables with observed values. The next section seeks to validate the latent measurements.

[7] For more information on the model, we again refer the reader to the online appendix (Annex 3).

Figure 2. Measurement Model of Political Regimes. 1972 - 2010.

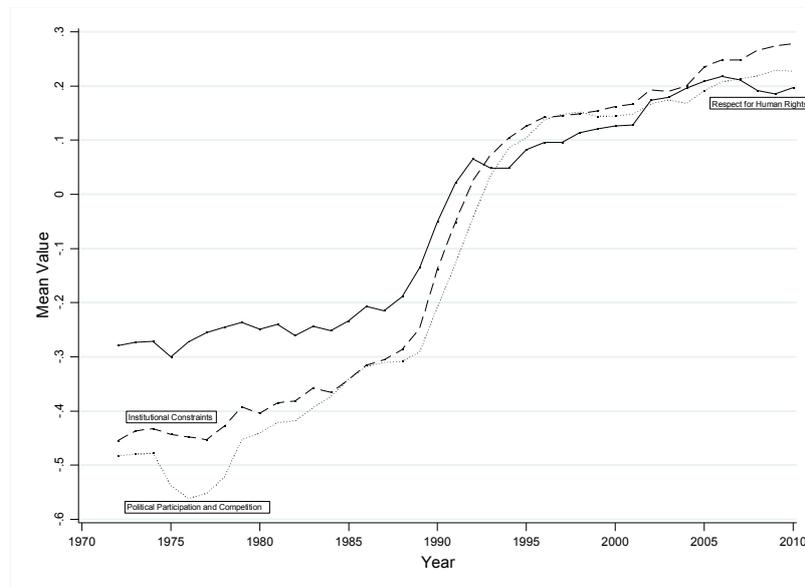


5. VALIDATING THE LATENT MEASURES OF POLITICAL REGIMES

Validity refers to whether indicators, like our factor scores, measure what they intend to measure, i.e. political participation and competition, human rights and institutional constraints. One should be aware that our measurement model is based on data that was already validated in previous research. Yet, since we restructure the data in light of our three dimensions, validation remains necessary. For doing so, we draw on Seawright and Collier's (2014) distinction between content validation, convergent-discriminant validation and nomological validation.

Content validation is interpretative and legitimizes a measurement when it “*makes sense* (p. 115)”. Figure 3 shows the mean evolution of the three dimensions from 1972 until 2010. Several things get clear. First, our three dimensions illustrate democracy's third and fourth wave. Starting from 1972, all dimensions show a gradual increase in the degree of democracy around the world. This dynamic accelerates from the nineties onwards, in tandem with the end of the Cold War. Second, our measurement puts the current ‘democratic rollback’ debate into perspective (Diamond, 2015; Levitsky & Way, 2015). Basically, both sides make valid points, depending on which dimension of democracy and what timeframe under study. Our results show that the decline in democracy situates in the human rights dimension of democracy, declining from 2005 on, whereas political competition and participation and institutional constraints remain stable. Correspondingly, we find that Diamond's democratic rollback hypothesis only fits the 2005 – 2008 period only, as from 2009 human rights are again on the rise.

Figure 3. Mean Evolution of Political Participation and Competition, Human Rights and Institutional Constraints. 1972 - 2010.



Note. Dots = Political Participation and Competition; Dashes = Institutional Constraints and Solid Line = Human Rights.

Third, we find that the extraordinary dynamic of democratization lowers around 1995. The latter finding does not need to imply that no big changes took place within countries. Yet, this finding suggests that the immediate aftermath of the Cold War was a rather exceptional period for democratization (Levitsky & Way, 2015).

Next, we situate the population of states within a three-dimensional space⁸. The interactive graphs are to be found on the authors' website (annex 4)⁹. The values of the property concepts determine the scales of the graph. Two findings are noteworthy. First, comparing the distribution of countries in 1972, 1982 and 1992 respectively, we find an evolution from a dichotomous to a continuous distribution of countries. This means that over time more countries get situated in the grey zone between democracy and authoritarianism. Diamond's (1999) earlier findings for Latin America thereby hold for the world as a whole. Second, the clustering of countries in the lower left sphere of the cube tends to decrease over time. This gives indications that also authoritarian regimes are opening up to a certain extent, a finding supported by studies on electoral and competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky & Way, 2010; Schedler, 2013).

Convergent-discriminant validation entails the validation of measurements by investigating associations with similar empirical constructs. Thereby, high correlations indicate the new indicator measures similar phenomena. The path model above (figure 2) already applied one special kind of convergent-discriminant validation. As shown, our latent variables explain a high degree of variance in the observed measures of political regimes. We conduct two additional analyses. First, we correlate the factor scores with other popular scales, shown in table 3.

[8] We use the package 'Scatterplot3D' in R Statistical Software to create these graphs.

[9] <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/staff/mathias-deroeck/my-website/>

Table 3. Pearson Correlations Between Latent Regime Dimensions and Established Scales of Democracy and Autocracy, 1972 – 2010.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Political Part. & Comp.</u>	<u>Human Rights</u>	<u>Executive Constraints</u>
Polity2 (Marshall et al., 2014)	0.83	0.91	0.96
DD (Cheibub et al., 2010)	0.73	0.81	0.85
BMR (Boix et al., 2013)	0.75	0.85	0.88
Contestation (Coppedge et al., 2008)	0.85	0.95	0.97
Inclusiveness (Coppedge et al., 2008)	0.72	0.48	0.55
Status (Freedom House, 2011)	0.76	0.92	0.89
UDS (Pemstein et al., 2010)	0.82	0.95	0.95
Participation (Vanhanen, 2000)	0.59	0.53	0.58
Competition (Vanhanen, 2000)	0.85	0.86	0.91
Lexical Index (Skaaning, 2015)	0.91	0.91	0.91

Note. DD = democracy/dictatorship; BMR = Boix, Miller and Rosato's dichotomous measure of democracy; UDS = Unified Democracy Scales

It is clear that our measure of political participation and competition correlates highly with Skaaning's (2015) Lexical Scale, suggesting the variable operationalizes the theoretical dimension rather well. Likewise, the human rights and institutional constraints dimensions are strongly associated with several measures of democracy, like Polity 2, Freedom House, UDS and Contestation, among others. Table 3 thus shows that our three measures tap into the concept of democracy. It also suggests, however, that existent scales do well in measuring the democracy – autocracy axis. Yet, given lower correlations between these scales and our measure for political participation and competition, a multidimensional approach remains appropriate. One should also take into consideration that our factor scores originate from these scales, undermining somewhat the strength of this validation.

We present a stronger validation in table 4. Table 4 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA by regime type for the three latent variables between 1972 - 2010. On one hand, we witness a clear distinction between democracies and autocracies in regards to mean scorings on the latent dimensions. In general, democracies score positively on all three dimensions, illustrating that in such a context governments are under strong civilian control. The opposite is true for authoritarian regimes¹⁰. Second, we find that whereas autocratic regimes perform poorly on human rights and institutional constraints, some still allow a degree of political competition and participation. In WTH's classification, multiparty autocracies even equal the mean level of political competition and participation we find in democracies. This again underscores the importance of a multidimensional approach. Measurements that only take into consideration the procedural dimension might overestimate real levels of democracy. We find that multiparty autocracies combine political participation and competition together with violations of human rights and the absence of horizontal institutions. Political participation and competition is thus real but unfair and executive power remains unchecked.

[10] The results do not change when conducting the analysis on a year-by-year basis to control for autocorrelation.

Table 4. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Political Participation and Competition, Human Rights and Institutional Constraints by Regime Type. 1972 – 2010.

GWF	A	B	C	CGV	A	B	C	WTH	A	B	C
<i>Party Reg.</i>	-0.43	-0.63	-0.74	<i>Parl. Dem.</i>	0.48	0.75	0.90	<i>Democracy</i>	0.49	0.71	0.85
<i>Personalist</i>	-0.53	-0.64	-0.87	<i>S-P. Dem.</i>	0.46	0.57	0.74	<i>Multiparty</i>	0.18	-0.24	-0.24
<i>Military</i>	-0.82	-0.57	-0.86	<i>Pres. Dem.</i>	0.45	0.48	0.58	<i>One-Party</i>	-0.85	-0.92	-1.08
<i>Monarchy</i>	-1.03	-0.62	-0.93	<i>Civilian</i>	-0.39	-0.53	-0.65	<i>No-Party</i>	-1.19	-0.62	-1.04
<i>Democracy</i>	0.48	0.61	0.79	<i>Military</i>	-0.78	-0.72	-1.01	<i>Military</i>	-0.91	-0.73	-1.03
				<i>Royal</i>	-1.03	-0.55	-0.89	<i>Monarchy</i>	-1.12	-0.64	-1.00
F	1449.1	2633.0	3770.3		1688.6	2747.3	3771.7		3552.4	4863.2	6232.9
X²	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
Eta²	0.53	0.67	0.74		0.57	0.69	0.75		0.76	0.82	0.85
N	5,249	5,249	5,249		6,319	6,319	6,319		6,615	6,615	6,615

Note: A = Political Participation and Competition, B = Human Rights, C = Institutional Constraints. Numbers in columns are averages. GWF stands for Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014), WTH for Wahman, Teorell and Hadenius (2013) and CGV for Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010).

Nomological validation, finally, seeks to test whether well-established causal relationships in a research field are reproduced by the new indicator. If so, the new measurement corresponds to the phenomenon of interest. Table 5 shows the estimates of a dynamic model with first-order autoregression for the disturbance terms. We estimate the effect of GDP per capita (logged) on the levels of political participation and competition, human rights and institutional constraints. In addition, we also estimate the effect of GDP per capita on the mean of the three dimensions (Model IV). We find that GDP per capita has a positive and significant effect for all models¹¹. In model IV, a one-unit increase in Log GDP per capita corresponds with a 0.32 units increase in the mean level of democracy ($R^2 = 0.25$; $\rho < 0.001$). The effect is larger for the variation between-countries ($R^2 = 0.27$) than for variation within-countries ($R^2 = 0.19$). The findings correspond with previous findings (see for example Coppedge, 2013: 279).

[11] We also estimate a lagged dependent variable (LDV) and a fixed effects model and the results remain the same.

Table 5. Estimates of the Effect of GDP per Capita (log) on the Level of Political Participation and Competition, Human Rights and Executive Constraints, 1972 – 2010.

Dependent Variable	Model I. Political Part. & Comp		Model II. Human Rights		Model III. Institutional Constraints		Model IV. Level of Democracy	
	Coef.	(S.E.)	Coef.	(S.E.)	Coef.	(S.E.)	Coef.	(S.E.)
Intercept	-1.44 ***	(0.02)	-1.17 ***	(0.01)	-1.54 ***	(0.01)	-1.29 ***	(0.01)
Ln GDP per Capita	0.17 ***	(0.13)	0.15 ***	(0.10)	0.19 ***	(0.13)	0.16 ***	(0.11)
R ² Within	0.17		0.15		0.18		0.19	
R ² Between	0.17		0.30		0.29		0.27	
R ² Overall	0.15		0.27		0.27		0.25	
N	6,658		6,658		6,658		6,658	
Rho	0.84		0.93		0.93		0.93	

Note. We estimate a Random Effects Model With First-Order Autocorrelation (AR1) to account for Serial Autocorrelation and within- and between country effects. *** = significant at the $p < 0.001$ -level. GDP per Capita variable is taken from Gleditsch (2002) Expanded Trade and GDP Dataset (latest version).

A last validation strategy diverts from Seawright and Collier's framework. In the introduction, we have already argued that our approach allows treating political regimes as bounded wholes. We apply a Ward's Linkage Cluster Analysis on our latent measures of democracy. So doing, we make use of the latent measure of political participation and competition (*ppc*) and the latent measure combining human rights and institutional constraints (*hrconst*). Ward's method is an Exploratory Hierarchical Cluster Analysis technique where distances are based on the sum of squares of two hypothetical clusters (see Everitt et al., 2011). The findings are thus inductive and result from specific patterns in the data.

We find six clusters in the data. Two clusters have high to very high scores on both dimensions, which we label respectively as democracies ($\bar{M}_{ppc} = 0.52; \bar{M}_{hrconst} = 1.00$) and flawed democracies, scoring substantially lower on respect for human rights and institutional constraints ($\bar{M}_{ppc} = 0.41; \bar{M}_{hrconst} = 0.43$). In 2010, we identify the United States, France and the United Kingdom as democracies and Turkey, South Africa and Georgia, among others, as flawed democracies. Likewise, there are two clusters with low to very low scores on both dimensions. We name these categories autocracies ($\bar{M}_{ppc} = -1.47; \bar{M}_{hrconst} = -1.19$) and consultative autocracies ($\bar{M}_{ppc} = -0.83; \bar{M}_{hrconst} = -1.05$). The latter label is based on higher averages on both dimensions compared to the autocracy cluster, allowing for more voice in political decision-making. Yet, the label remains arbitrary. Eritrea, Chad and Saudi-Arabia are examples of autocracies in 2010, whereas China, Iran and the People's Republic of Korea are consultative autocracies. More important are two clusters where the latent dimensions detach, labelled by us as hegemonic hybrid regimes ($\bar{M}_{ppc} = 0.10; \bar{M}_{hrconst} = -0.71$) and competitive hybrid regimes ($\bar{M}_{ppc} = 0.17; \bar{M}_{hrconst} = -0.14$). Competitive hybrid regimes have a relatively high degree of political participation and competition, yet fall short on human rights and institutional constraints (like Russia, Nigeria and Rwanda). The same is true for hegemonic hybrid regimes, yet with worse human rights records and institutional constraints (for example Belarus, Tunisia and Zimbabwe). Interestingly, the flexibility of our measurement allows for disentangling both types of regimes over time. Figure 4 presents the evolution of these six categories between 1972 and 2010. The graph shows that both hegemonic and competitive hybrid regimes rise spectacularly after the end of the Cold War, in tandem with flawed democracies. The percentage of democracies in the world, on the other hand, stalls, while (consultative) autocracies are on the wane, especially from the early nineties on.

Figure 4. Regime Classification of States (% of cases). 1972 - 2010.

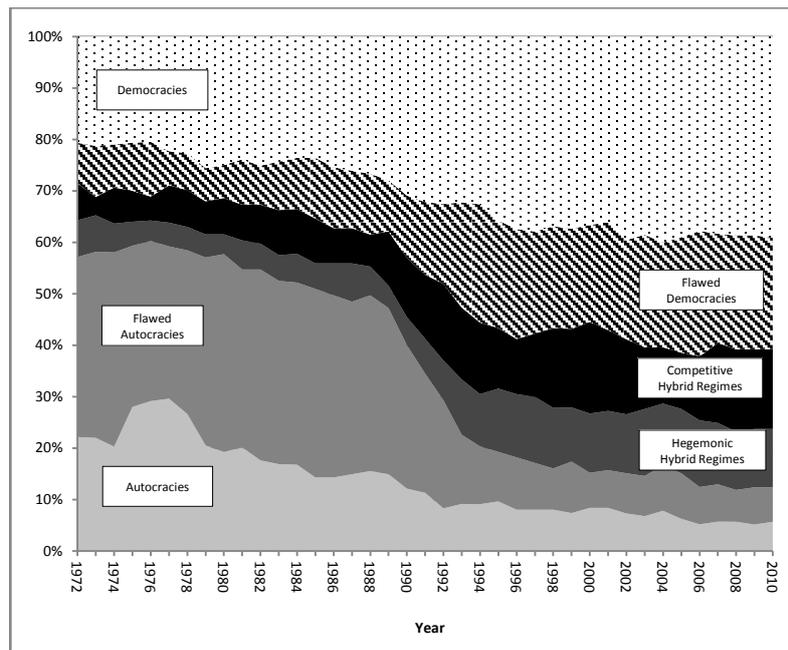


Table 6 portrays a cross-tabulation examining the relation between WTH's regime classification and our clusters of political regimes. We opt for WTH's classification because they focus most on hybrid regimes. The results indicate that our cluster solution, and thus measurement, is satisfying. 97% of the cases WTH classify as democratic are classified by us as democratic as well, whereas a slight 2.10% is hybrid and 3 cases authoritarian (Maldives 1972 – 1974). More important, however, is that our approach dissects the WTH's multiparty autocracy category generally into two parts: 40.06% are identified in our measurement as competitive hybrid regimes, whereas 29.15% are hegemonic hybrid regimes. This indicates that our measurement allows for more flexibility and identifies regime categories of theoretical interest. We mostly identify military regimes (78%) and monarchies (85%) as authoritarian. However, we also find that within these categories differences exist as regards political participation and competition, human rights and institutional constraints. Some monarchies/military regimes allow for more democratic institutions than others. Table 7 presents a list of countries by political regime anno 2010, according to our cluster solution. The findings have face validity.

Table 6. Political Regime Clusters and WTH Regime Classification.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Full Democracy	2,031	0	0	7	0	0	0	2,038
	(72.20)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.55)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(30.81)
Flawed Democracy	720	2	0	312	0	0	2	1,036
	(25.60)	(0.21)	(0.00)	(24.32)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.80)	(15.66)
Competitive Hybrid Reg.	59	92	36	514	0	5	28	734
	(2.10)	(9.62)	(7.91)	(40.06)	(0.00)	(0.61)	(11.16)	(11.10)
Hegemonic Hybrid Reg.	0	114	31	374	0	19	29	567
	(0.00)	(11.92)	(6.81)	(29.15)	(0.00)	(2.31)	(11.55)	(8.57)
Consultative Autocracy	0	318	106	68	6	772	107	1,377
	(0.00)	(33.26)	(23.30)	(5.30)	(16.67)	(94.03)	(42.63)	(20.82)
Autocracy	3	430	282	8	30	25	85	863
	(0.11)	(44.98)	(61.98)	(0.62)	(83.33)	(3.04)	(33.86)	(13.05)
Total	2,813	956	455	1,283	36	821	251	6,615
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

Notes: A = Democracy, B = Military Regime ; C = Monarchy, D = Multiparty Autocracy, E = No-Party Regime, F = One-Party Regime and G = Other. Pearson $\chi^2(30) < 0.00$; Cramer's V = 0.57; Gamma = 0.73; Kendall's tau-b = 0.65; Kendall's tau-c = 0.60; Kappa = 0.36. Column percentages are in parentheses.

6. CONCLUSION

Political regimes are among the 'essentially contested concepts' within political science. Many scholars have taken on both the theoretical and empirical enterprise of distinguishing hybrid regime types, framing them as incomplete instances of democracy and authoritarianism in transition to democracy. Although the research field benefits from a certain degree of conceptual and empirical diversity, researchers should also recognize the limits of regime typologies.

The alternative this paper proposed is threefold. First, we constructed a new conceptualization of political regimes drawing from theories of democracy. Attention was given to institutions regulating the access to and exercise of political power, i.e. (1) political participation and competition (2) respect for human rights and (3) institutional constraints on the executive. We have identified them as configurative institutions of political regimes, pertinent throughout past (empirical) research on the subject and at the basis of our measurement.

Second, we presented a multi-dimensional model that took into consideration differences in degree and was built from multiple indicators. We argued that such an approach allows for more fine-grained distinctions between countries and offers more flexibility when treating political regimes as bounded-wholes. In light of the proliferation of hybrid regimes, this approach should be preferred above dichotomous ones. Third, drawing from validated indica-

tors, the paper came up with some interesting empirical findings. For one, we set the ‘democratic rollback’ hypothesis into perspective. While Diamond (2008) is right in saying democracy declines from 2006 on, we found that the decline is restricted to human rights and revives in 2009. For the other, we showed that (consultative) authoritarian regimes are opening up over time and identified a massive growth in hegemonic and competitive hybrid regimes and flawed democracies at the end of the Cold War. Hybrid regimes are clearly indicative of our time.

Table 7. Regime Classification of States anno 2010.

Full Democracy		Flawed Democracy		Competitive Hybrid Regime	Hegemonic Hybrid Regime	Consultative Autocracy	Autocracy
Andorra	Macedonia	Albania	Paraguay	Algeria	Angola	Brunei	Chad
Australia	Mauritius	Argentina	Peru	Armenia	Azerbaijan	China	Eritrea
Austria	Mexico	Benin	Philippines	Burkina Faso	Bahrain	Cuba	Fiji
Belgium	Malta	Bolivia	P.N. Guinea	Bhutan	Belarus	Iran	Guinea
Brazil	Moldova	Bosnia-Herz.	Rep. Of Korea	Bangladesh	Cameroon	Kuwait	Jordan
Canada	Mongolia	Botswana	El Salvador	Cambodia	Ivory Coast	Oman	Libya
Chile	New Zealand	Burundi	Serbia	DRC	Central Afr. Rep.	Korea, P. Rep.	Mauritania
Costa Rica	Norway	Bulgaria	Seychelles	Ecuador	Congo-Brazzaville	Sudan	Myanmar
Croatia	Netherlands	Colombia	Sierra Leone	Ethiopia	Djibouti	Swaziland	Qatar
Cyprus	Poland	Comoros	Suriname	Gabon	Eq. Guinea	Turkmenistan	Saudi-Arabia
Czech Republic	Portugal	Domenican Rep.	Turkey	Haiti	Gambia	United Arab Em.	
Denmark	Romania	East Timor	Ukraine	Honduras	Iraq	Vietnam	
Estonia	South Africa	Ghana	Zambia	Maldives	Kyrgyzstan		
Finland	Slovakia	Guinea-Bissau		Madagascar	Kazakhstan		
France	Slovenia	Georgia		Morocco	Laos		
Germany	Spain	Guatemala		Mozambique	Syria		
Greece	Sweden	Guyana		Nigeria	Tajikistan		
Hungary	Switzerland	Indonesia		Niger	Tunesia		
Iceland	Taiwan	Kenya		Pakistan	Uzbekistan		
India	United Kingdom	Kosovo		Russia	Venezuela		
Ireland	Uruguay	Liberia		Rwanda	Yemen		
Israel	United States	Lebanon		Senegal	Zimbabwe		
Italy		Malaysia		Singapore			
Japan		Malawi		Sri Lanka			
Latvia		Mali		Tanzania			
Lesotho		Namibia		Thailand			
Lithuania		Nepal		Togo			
Liechtenstein		Nicaragua		Tonga			
Luxembourg		Panama		Uganda			

Note. For reasons of space, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Bahamas, Cape Verde, Domenica, Grenada, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Saint-Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Trinidad & Tobago, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa are not listed, but belong to the category of ‘full democracies.’

While the paper agrees with Coppedge’s (2013) point that a disaggregated strategy toward political regimes would *open up a fascinating new avenue for research* (p. 30), caution on this matter is necessary. Our research demonstrated that our theoretical dimensions of democracy are correlated to a high degree, especially with respect to human rights and institutional constraints. Even though our concentration on three independent dimensions showed potential to bring up new insights, a critical reader might find in it a confirmation that democracy is a one-dimensional phenomenon. While we hear these arguments, still in our view high correlations might also be sparked by flaws in data collection. Many of the indicators on political regimes are based on subjective assessments of small teams of experts rather than objective facts or large coding teams. Possibly, evaluators are guided by general knowledge about the country instead

of awareness about specific institutions, resulting in higher correlations. Using improved data, Lindberg et al. (2014) indirectly show that different components of democracy have independent dynamics. Before throwing out the baby with the bathwater, we are thus largely in support of data collection efforts allowing for more nuanced measurements of reality, like V-Dem and others (Lindberg et al., 2014; Wig et al., 2015).

Correspondingly, we view multi-dimensional and graded measurements as offering important new avenues for future research. This is not only so because they are more fine-grained, flexible and suited for investigating regime hybridity, but also because they shift one's ground to alternative questions. Morocco is a case in point. Traditionally, the country is perceived as a place of political stasis – a monarchy. Yet, such a classification closes one's eyes for important institutional dynamics. In the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring, Morocco has pursued constitutional reforms curtailing the power of the monarch, ensuring more protection of citizens against arbitrary arrest and giving more clout to opposition forces (Masoud, 2015). Seemingly, many things are happening below the radar of monarchy. It are to these kinds of questions that we may want to turn in the future.

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