

**A Middle-Quality Institutional Trap:
Democracy and State Capacity in Latin America**

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Online Appendix:

Operationalization of Concepts and Sources Used in Coding the Data

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This is an Online Appendix for *A Middle-Quality Institutional Trap*. First, it offers a detailed discussion of the way we operationalize the concepts of modern State, state capacity and democracy, and the rules used to code data on these concepts and on state-and-regime paths.¹ Second, it provides a list of the sources used in the process of coding the data presented in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 in *A Middle-Quality Institutional Trap*.

1 Operationalization of Concepts

1.1 Modern State

We date the origins of modern States—their date of birth—in terms of a key aspect of state formation: *territorial consolidation*. There is no modern State without a minimal amount of coercive and administrative capacity. Thus, for a central authority to control a certain territory it needs to be able to command security forces and it needs the administrative capacity to raise taxes at the very least. However, it is possible and useful to rely on a minimal definition of the modern State, based on the concept of territorial consolidation, so as to identify the unit of analysis—countries—that are compared in terms of their variable possession of the property of state capacity.

Territorial consolidation is (1) *achieved* when the boundaries of the territory over which a central government claims control are relatively settled, and (2) *maintained* inasmuch as subsequent territorial boundaries are a continuation of the same territorial State and hence as the same country the founders of a modern State created. That is, a territory can be considered consolidated, even though subsequent changes may occur

¹ For relevant discussions about measurement, see Gerardo L. Munck, *Measuring Democracy: A Bridge Between Scholarship and Politics*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009; Cullen Hendrix, “Measuring State Capacity: Theoretical and Empirical Implications for the Study of Civil Conflict.” *Journal of Peace Research* 47(3) 2010: 273–85; Hillel David Soifer, “Measuring State Capacity in Contemporary Latin America.” *Revista de Ciencia Política* 32(3) 2012: 585–98; Katherine Bersch and Sandra Botero, “Measuring Governance: Implications of Conceptual Choices.” *The European Journal of Development Research* 26(1) 2014: 124–41; Juan Pablo Luna and Hillel David Soifer, “Capturing Sub-National Variation in State Capacity: A Survey-Based Approach.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 61(8) 2017: 887–907; and Agustina Giraudy and Jennifer Pribble, “Rethinking Measures of Democracy and Welfare State Universalism: Lessons from Subnational Research.” *Regional & Federal Studies* 29(2) 2019: 135–63.

(i.e., the territorial boundaries may be altered, either through expansion or shrinking), so long as the later territorial State can be relatively easily traced back to the earlier territorial State.

One example clarifies what we mean by relatively settled boundaries. It is common to assert that Latin American States were born when they either declared independence from their colonial rulers or militarily defeated the forces loyal to the colonial rulers. However, in most cases, following independence a battle between caudillos to control territory ensued. Thus, we date the birth of modern States in Latin America to the time when one force controlled military challenges to their dominance and set up a central government over a well-defined territory. For example, in the case of Argentina, though a revolution ended the authority of the Spanish Viceroy in 1810, independence from Spain was declared in 1816, and even a constitution deemed to be Argentina's first constitution was approved in 1853, the Argentine State was not born until Mitre's defeat of Urquiza in the Battle of Pavón in 1861 and Mitre's election as president of a unified country in 1862. That is, we do not consider the boundaries of Argentina's territory to be settled while contending forces battled against each other for control of territories and the outcome of this battle was still an open question.

In turn, a couple of examples illustrate the idea of continuity of a modern State despite changes in territorial boundaries. The birth of Sweden is conventionally dated to 1560 because Gustav Vasa is credited with developing a State that concentrated and centralized power (i.e., creating a modern State), even though the current territorial boundary of Sweden does not coincide with the boundary of Sweden in 1560 (it used to encompass what is today Finland). Or, in the case of the United States, the birth of the country can be dated in 1783, when the Treaty of Paris set the boundaries between the British Empire in North America and the United States of America, and George Washington is seen as the father of the country even though the territory of the country expanded greatly from 13 to the 50 states it had by 1959. Thus, though the idea of territorial consolidation does not rule out the possibility of change, that change has to fall short of the creation of what would be considered a new State.

1.2 State Capacity

Coercive Capacity: Violence Monopolization

The most critical property of the State—indeed, it is essential to the existence of the State—is its coercive capacity. Without a minimal amount of coercive capacity—which enables a state builder to control the use of violence and pacify a country—there cannot be territorial consolidation. Nonetheless, modern States can vary in the extent to which they secure the monopolization of violence.

The indicators we use to measure a State's coercive capacity are (1) the presence of a large standing army; (2) the lack of any domestic challenger to the State's monopoly of violence (e.g., an armed caudillo, a guerrilla organization, an armed drug cartel, a subnational unit that uses military force to disregard orders from the central government); and (3) the lack of the presence of foreign troops that challenge a State's monopoly of violence.²

We treat periods when an organized domestic military force challenges a standing army, but falls short of successful secession and hence the creation of a new State, as periods when the original State endures but lacks the monopoly of power (e.g., the US during 1861–65). Following Tilly, these periods could be understood as involving multiple contenting sovereignties and as a revolutionary *situation* as opposed to a revolutionary *outcome*.³ We treat periods when an organized international military force challenges a standing army, but falls short of the elimination of the State (such as through its full or partial incorporation into a new territorial unit), as periods when the original State endures but the country is *occupied* (e.g., France 1940–44).

Administrative Capacity: Bureaucratization

Another key property of the State is administrative capacity. Again, as with the State's coercive capacity, a minimal amount of administrative capacity is required for a modern

² For a useful discussion of the monopoly of violence in the contemporary period, see Herbert Wulf, "The Challenges of Re-establishing a Public Monopoly of Violence," in Marlies Glasius and Mary Kaldor, eds., *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe: Project, Principles, Practicalities*. London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 20–40.

³ Charles Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492–1992*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1993, pp. 8–16.

State to exist. That is, the capacity to raise taxes to fund the military is indispensable for a modern State to exist. However, beyond that minimum, modern States can vary considerably in terms of their administrative capacity.

The indicator we use to measure a State's coercive capacity is the formation of a permanent civil service that has been bureaucratized. Bureaucratization is understood, following Weber, as the transformation of a public administration in such a way that the individual officials who staff the public administration "are appointed and function according to the following criteria: (1) They are personally free and subject to authority only with respect to their impersonal official obligations. (2) They are organized in a clearly defined hierarchy of offices. (3) Each office has a clearly defined sphere of competence in the legal sense. (4) The office is filled by a free contractual relationship ... (5) Candidates are selected on the basis of technical qualifications. In the most rational case, this is tested by examination or guaranteed by diplomas certifying technical training, or both. They are *appointed*, not elected. (6) They are remunerated by fixed salaries in money (7) The office is treated as the sole, or at least the primary, occupation of the incumbent. (8) It constitutes a career. There is a system of "promotion" according to seniority or to achievement, or both. Promotion is dependent on the judgment of superiors. (9) The official works entirely separated from ownership of the means of administration and without appropriation of his position. (10) He is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of the office."⁴ We contrast a bureaucratic administration to a patrimonial administration, an administration "based not on the official's commitment to an impersonal purpose and not on obedience to abstract norms, but on a strictly personal loyalty."⁵

No civil service undergoes a qualitative change between bureaucratic and patrimonial administration in one rapid step. Change can be introduced step by step, one area of the civil service at a time (e.g., ministry by ministry, and level by level within a ministry). Even a sudden change in practice takes time to filtrate through large

⁴ Max Weber, *Economy and Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978 [1922], pp. 220–21; see also Ch. 11.

⁵ Max Weber, *Economy and Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978 [1922], pp. 1006; Chs. 12 and 13.

organizations such as public administrations. Nonetheless, the literature on advanced cases usually identifies certain periods when the public administration of a country undergoes a qualitative change from a patrimonial to a bureaucratic administration, and when we find consensus among students of public administration, we rely on this expert assessment. For example, most of the literature concurs in dating the transformation of the US's public administration from a patrimonial to a bureaucratic one from 1883 through the 1920s. The literature usually agrees on the beginning of such transformations, in that it can be commonly identified by an important piece of legislation (e.g., the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act in 1883 in the case of the US). There is frequently less agreement about the dating of the completion of this transformation; in that case, we opt for the view that has greatest support.⁶

In addition to the qualitative distinction between patrimonial and bureaucratic administrations, it is possible to make quantitative distinctions within the categories of patrimonial and bureaucratic administrations. Since we focus on Latin America in our study, and the general consensus in the literature is that no country has made a transition from a patrimonial to a bureaucratic administration,⁷ we draw attention to the more relevant distinction between patrimonial and semi-patrimonial administrations.

Again, no civil service undergoes a quantitative change between a patrimonial and semi-patrimonial administration in one rapid step. Nonetheless, we draw on expert assessments of the impact of reforms that identify those reforms that, while falling short of a process of bureaucratization that transforms the nature of the system, introduce significant change in sufficient areas of the public administration to merit the label of a semi-patrimonial administration. In coding whether reforms introduce significant change

⁶ We do not rely on quantitative datasets on state capacity because of the poor quality of the historical data reaching back to the early 19th century and the still highly questionable validity of data on state capacity. One key problem, from the perspective of our research aims, is the tendency in measurement to treat all variation as involving differences of degree. It is crucial to be able to identify both qualitative, discontinuous changes, such as those involved in the transition from a patrimonial administration to a bureaucratic administration, and quantitative, continuous changes, such as those involved in the perfecting of a bureaucratic administration. Yet this distinction is overlooked and erased when producers of data treat all differences as differences along a continuum. The production of data that distinguishes between discontinuous and continuous change is a task that needs to be addressed.

⁷ This is the conclusion of the authoritative assessment by Merilee S. Grindle, *Jobs for the Boys: Patronage and the State in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012, pp. 8, 12, 150–51, 239.

in sufficient areas, we rely on experts who focus not just on legislative initiatives but also on de facto practices,⁸ and who largely converge on the assessment that only Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, and Uruguay have made significant strides to break with patrimonial practices.⁹

1.3 Democracy

We conceptualize democracy as a type of political regime, which is understood as rules concerning access to the government offices that are endowed with the authority to exercise State power. In addition, we rely on (1) the concept of *minimal democracy*, to distinguish democracies from dictatorships, and (2) the concept of *high-quality democracy*, to distinguish regimes that have different degrees of democracy (we use the labels of low-quality and high-quality democracy to anchor each end of this continuum).

Minimal Democracy

We identify countries as minimal democracies when they meet three sets of criteria:

- 1) *Voters*. The suffrage is extended to a sizable proportion of non-elites, such that economic restrictions do not essentially limit participation to members of the upper class. Other restrictions (e.g., based on race) do not limit participation to members of the elite. Elections are not determined by fraud.
- 2) *Candidates*. Elections must be competitive, without the proscriptions of any key parties or leaders.
- 3) *Elective Offices*: Legislative offices must be elected. In presidential system, the president must be elected. In parliamentary systems, the executive must be responsible to the parliament (i.e., monarchies must be parliamentary monarchies and republics must be parliamentary republics). In other systems, the executive must be directly and/or indirectly accountable to the electorate. The removal from

⁸ On the problem with measurement based on legal documents, see Merilee S. Grindle, *Jobs for the Boys: Patronage and the State in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012, pp. 143–51.

⁹ The Inter-American Development Bank has collected valuable data on the public administration. See Koldo Echebarria, ed., *Informe sobre la situación del servicio civil en América Latina*. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 2006; and Juan Carlos Cortázar, Mariano Lafuente, and Mario Sanginés, eds., *Al servicio del ciudadano: una década de reformas del servicio civil en América Latina (2004-13)*. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank. However, we do not use these data in our longitudinal analysis because it only covers the 2004 and 2011/13 years. It also places all countries on a continuum, and thus does not consider the qualitative distinctions we focus on.

government office must respect the right to complete constitutionally-mandated terms in office.

A country that meets these criteria is a democracy; otherwise it is a dictatorship. However, a country that only meets these criteria is a restricted democracy.

The standard of democracy has a key implication for an analysis of the relationship between the State and democracy. The higher the threshold needed to qualify as a democracy, the more likely the path followed by countries will be classified as a State-first path. In turn, the lower the threshold needed to qualify as a democracy, the more likely countries will not be seen as following a State-first path. For example, if the UK is seen as being a democracy only in 1928 (when women gained the same voting rights as men), the UK would be a case in which state capacity was developed before democracy. However, if the UK is seen as being a democracy, if restricted, in 1876, and then democratized until 1928, the UK would be a case in which state capacity was built jointly with democracy.

High-Quality Democracy

Since minimal democracies are restricted democracy, we also distinguish among democracies in terms of their “quality” (which is actually a distinction of degree, that is, quantity). The low end of the “democratic quality” continuum corresponds to the concept of minimal democracy, which could be labeled as *low-quality democracy*. The high end of this continuum corresponds to the concept of *high-quality democracy*, which is reached when regimes meet four sets of criteria:¹⁰

- 1) *Voters*. The suffrage is extended to essentially all adults. The right to vote must be effectively guaranteed, such that voting is not affected by violence or vote buying or electoral fraud.
- 2) *Candidates*. Elections must be competitive, without any proscriptions of parties or leaders, and campaigns must not be marred by violence or the undue use of public or private resources.

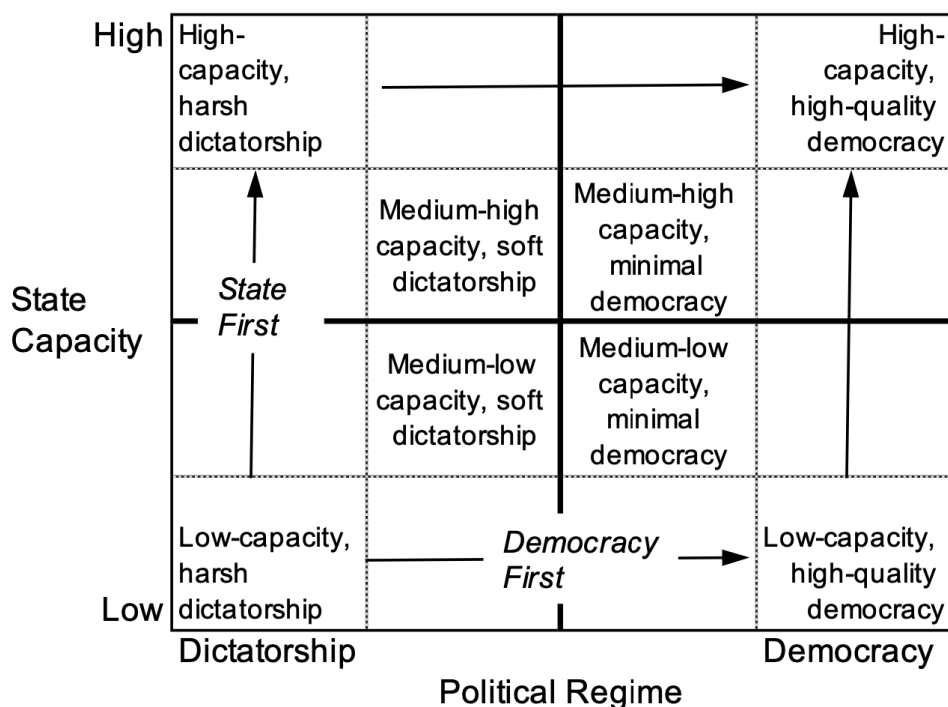
¹⁰ These four issues correspond to what Rokkan calls the four institutional thresholds in the development of democracy: the thresholds of incorporation, legitimation, representation, and executive power. Stein Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, and Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Processes of Development*. New York, NY: David McKay, 1970, pp. 79–96. See also Gerardo L. Munck, “What is Democracy? A Reconceptualization of the Quality of Democracy.” *Democratization* 23(1) 2016: 1–26.

- 3) *Votes to Seats*. The translation of votes to seats must be relatively proportional, such that the number of votes needed to elect a representative is roughly the same in all jurisdictions of a country.
- 4) *Elective Offices*: Legislative offices must be elected. In presidential system, the president must be elected. In parliamentary systems, the executive must be responsible to the parliament. The removal from government office must respect the right to complete constitutionally-mandated terms in office. In addition, actual rotation in office should occur and the law-making process should not be unduly affected by unelected actors (e.g., the military, the judiciary, the public administration).

1.4 State-and-Regime Paths

We distinguish between three State-and-regime paths: State-first, democracy-first, and State and democracy co-evolution. Countries follow the State-first path when they develop state capacity to a very high degree before beginning a process of democratization, and even of liberalization (i.e., they go through the “high capacity, harsh dictatorship” cell in Figure A1). Countries follow the democracy-first path when they become a high-quality democracy before developing high state capacity (i.e., they go through the “low capacity, high-quality democracy” cell in Figure A1). Finally, countries follow the State and democracy co-evolution path when they develop both state capacity and democracy in rough balance, the building of state capacity not fully outpacing democratization and vice versa. Thus, in the co-evolution path, countries do not ever combine a very high state capacity and harsh dictatorship, or a high-quality democracy and very low state capacity (i.e., they avoid the upper left and bottom right corners in Figure A1).

Figure A1. State-and-Regime Paths



A key point worth underscoring is that a country that follows the co-evolution path does not move directly, in one step, from having a low capacity, harsh dictatorship to having a high capacity, high-quality democracy. The option of paths was framed in the 1960s, and to a considerable extent still today, as one between sequencing and simultaneity, in which the State-first and the democracy-first paths are treating as involving at least two steps, which can be sequenced. In contrast, what we call the State and democracy co-evolution path is portrayed as necessarily involving the tackling of two tasks (state building and democratization) in one single step or simultaneously.¹¹ In

¹¹ Dankwart A Rustow, *A World of Nations: Problems of Political Modernization*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1967, pp. 123–26. This way of framing the options of path, which mistakenly treats the co-evolution path as involving a non-sequenced, simultaneous development of both state capacity and democracy is also adopted in some quantitative analyses that conceptualize the transition between a low state capacity dictatorship to a high state capacity, high-quality democracy as occurring in one big jump. See Haakon Gjerløw, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Tore Wig, and Matthew Charles Wilson, “Stairways to Denmark: Does the Sequence of State-Building and Democratization Matter for Economic Development?” *V-Dem Working Paper* 2018:72, 2018, Figure 3, pp. 30. We avoid this problem by including intermediary categories between low and high state capacity, and between dictatorship and high-quality democracy.

contrast to this influential way of framing the discussion, we consider that the State and democracy co-evolution path does not necessarily involve simultaneity and most likely entails multiple steps, gains in state capacity or democratization being followed by gains in the other dimension, in many successive steps.¹² That is, breaking with a rather common view, we do not contrast the State-first and democracy-first paths and the State and democracy co-evolution path by treating the first two as paths involving the sequencing of tasks and the co-evolution path as not involving the sequencing of tasks and hence faster or necessarily less reformist.

Finally, we summarize the paths followed by countries broadly in terms of these three paths. However, we note that greater detail and nuance could be added to this characterization. At times countries make progress toward a high-capacity democracy, and at times undergo regressions (e.g., the US in 1861–65, Argentina 1970–80) or move sideways. Countries that follow the co-evolution path can either start by developing state capacity (e.g., France, Brazil) or democratizing (e.g., Belgium, Paraguay), and can place more emphasis overall on state building than democracy or vice versa. In addition, the pace of developments can vary considerably in countries that follow a similar path.¹³ Thus, the classification of countries in terms of three paths is not intended as a full account of the path countries follow.

¹² We develop the idea of sequencing in the context of the co-evolution path by introducing the intermediary categories of semi-patrimonialism and minimal democracy. We focus on these distinctions because the distinctions within patrimonialism and within democracy are crucial to understanding variation in the paths followed by Latin American countries. However, a more systematic approach would formulate with more care the distinctions we introduce in Figure A.1 between harsh and soft dictatorship, and between medium-high and high state capacity.

¹³ An example of such a nuanced portrayal of paths is provided by Tilly. See the figures he provides of the paths followed by France and Switzerland in Charles Tilly, *Contention and Democracy in Europe, 1650–2000*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 101, 174.

2 Data Sources

This part of the appendix provides the sources used in coding the data presented in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5. These sources were also used in the case studies in section 4. They are organized by region (starting with Latin American countries, continuing with European countries, and finishing with Other Advanced Countries), and within each region general sources are first provided and then sources are provided country-by-country. Within each category, the following headings are used: (1) territorial consolidation, (2) state coercive capacity, (3) state administrative capacity, and (4) regimes and democracy.

2.1 Latin American Countries

General Sources

Territorial Consolidation

- Centeno, Miguel A. 2002. *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
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State Coercive Capacity

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State Administrative Capacity

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Regimes and Democracy

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Argentina

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