

Unpacking Delegative Democracy:

Digging into the Empirical Content of a Rich Theoretical Concept

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Abstract:

The main goal of this paper is to assess some empirical strengths of O'Donnell's concept of delegative democracies. First, I present O'Donnell's definition and the discussions in the literature. Based on the different dimensions in the definition, I provide an empirical classification of Latin American cases. In this descriptive section, I show that there is large variation across cases and, more importantly, variation across time within cases. Second, I try to identify what factors could explain some of these results or, more precisely, why delegative democracies are enduring in some countries, while not in others. Relying on a quantitative analysis, I show that under conditions of economic growth, low inflation, and large public support for democracy, Latin American countries are more likely to be representative than delegative democracies. Empirical results also demonstrate that there is a quadratic relationship between partisan polarization and volatility and the odds of a country being a delegative democracy. When structural conditions deteriorate and public confidence sharply diminishes, the probability of having a delegative democracy increases dramatically.

Introduction

In his work on delegative democracies, Guillermo O'Donnell appealed for more "empirical research, as well as more refined analytical work" on the "new species" he depicted

(O'Donnell, 1994, p.55). This is what I intend to do in this paper: first, I provide an empirical classification of some Latin American cases based on the different dimensions in O'Donnell's definition of delegative democracies.¹ In this descriptive section, I observe cross-case variation between delegative and representative democracies (something O'Donnell obviously recognized), but also variation inside each of the two groups. Even more importantly, there is also within-case variation over time: in some countries, there has been a continuous erosion of their representative democracies; others have been going through a gradual but steady "second transition" to a more representative democracy, while in a third group of cases there has been an oscillating trend or, "recurring delegativeness." Second, I explore some possible causes of this variation by identifying the main conditions under which delegative democracies are more likely to occur and why delegative democracies are enduring and recurrent in some countries, while not in others.

The paper is structured as follows: In the first section, and after reviewing the research and justifying the main contribution of this work to the empirical literature on the topic, I present O'Donnell's definition of delegative democracy and the discussions over the concept. Based on the main dimensions in the definition, I classify cases and analyze the empirical data. In the second part, I review the theoretical argument on the origins of delegative democracies and the conditions that could explain variation among them and representative democracies. I empirically assess some of these propositions relying on a quantitative analysis (descriptive statistics and linear and ordinal logistic regression analysis) and explore whether some specific structural, cultural, and politico-institutional factors in the theoretical argument may account for some of the variation across and within cases. O'Donnell contended that tools in political science cannot be an end in itself. As such, they shall be used to help developing or complementing a theory. He developed the theory; here, I use some simple tools to analyze the empirical content of his work and (hopefully) contribute to more debate on the topic.

In this study I show that under conditions of economic growth, low inflation, and large public support for democracy, Latin American countries are more likely to be representative than delegative democracies. When structural conditions deteriorate and public confidence diminishes, the probability of having a delegative democracy increases dramatically. Empirical results also demonstrate that there is a quadratic relationship between partisan polarization and volatility and the odds of a country being a delegative democracy. I review the main findings and their limitations, and highlight some questions that could be addressed in a future research agenda in the conclusion.

State of Research

O'Donnell's concept of delegative democracy generated stimulating debates, both theoretical and empirical (something the author himself demanded). In the theoretical realm, some of the discussions explored the connections between delegative democracies and the literature on transition from authoritarian rule and democratic consolidation or quality of democracy (Diamond, 1997, p.16; O'Donnell, 1996). Other studies delved into the similarities and differences with other concepts, such as populism,² "*decisionismo*" (Quiroga, 2011), and presidential leadership (Ollier, 2011), or elaborated on the theoretical consequences of delegation on accountability and representation (Stokes, 1999; Quiroga, 2011). Despite the important contributions at the theoretical level, part of this literature developed weak connections and exchanges with empirical studies on the abovementioned concepts. This paper works on the links between these fields.

The empirical research agenda on delegative democracy can be divided into several areas, broadly defined out of the different features of the concept being studied. One of them concentrated on the role of presidential power and executive-legislative relations in weakly

institutionalized democracies, particularly in Latin America.³ Another large body of research focused its efforts on a different attribute of delegative democracies: the weaknesses of control institutions and accountability in its horizontal and societal versions.⁴ A third group studied informal institutions (Levitsky and Helmke, 2006; Levitsky and Murillo, 2009) and a fourth, the specific characteristics of their policymaking process, especially policy switches, and their implications over broader discussions on accountability and representation (Stokes, 1999).

Some empirical work has been conducted in the format of case studies, but most of these works have studied specific dimensions of the concept in a particular case,⁵ without considering all of them together or in a broad comparative way. International organizations, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), or think tanks, such as Freedom House, Polity, or Estado de la Nación, developed comparative analysis by regularly presenting descriptive diagnoses on the functioning of democracies either globally (Freedom House, Polity) or in Latin America (UNDP, 2004).⁶ These studies take different definitions of democracy (see Collier and Levitsky, 1997; and Munck and Verkuilen, 2002, for excellent reviews and critiques on these measures), but none of them specifically focuses on delegative democracy.⁷

These research agendas have significantly advanced our theoretical and empirical knowledge on democracy in Latin America and beyond. Despite the large and productive discussions generated, there is no systematic empirical comparative work, at least to the best of my knowledge, focused specifically on the concept of delegative democracy or large-N empirical study to account for some of the observed features across cases.

Unpacking Delegative Democracy (Its Definition and a Preliminary Classification)

In his well-known work on delegative democracies, O'Donnell introduces a conceptual framework to analyze a "new species," a new type of democracy (O'Donnell, 1994, p.55). Delegative democracies meet Dahl's (1971) criteria for the definition of polyarchy, yet they are neither representative nor consolidated (i.e., institutionalized) democracies because they maintain serious deficits in the mechanisms of horizontal accountability (O'Donnell et al., 2011, p.10). Besides, these democracies are also characterized by informal institutional practices related to the exercise of power: "Delegative democracies rest on the premise that whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office" (O'Donnell, 1994, p.59). As a result of these practices, delegative democracies have not yet transitioned "from a democratically elected *government* to an institutionalized, consolidated democratic *regime*" (O'Donnell, 1994, p.56).

O'Donnell presents a definition that is a full instance of the root definition of polyarchy, but at the same time he provides useful conceptual differentiation and fine-grained distinction by identifying the key attributes of the subtype (Collier and Levitsky, 1997, p.435). Based on O'Donnell's (1994, pp.60-62; and 2011, pp.21-23) characterization, I identified the main features or attributes that define the subtype delegative democracy (and use these features to classify cases across the region in the next section). These attributes are:

- The president is taken to be the embodiment of the nation, custodian, and definer of its interests;
- The policies of his government need bear no resemblance to the promises of his campaign;
- The president's political base is a political movement; the president presents herself as above both political parties and organized interests;

- Other institutions, such as courts and legislatures, are considered impediments to the exercise of power;
- The exercise of power is non-institutionalized;
- The president nominates isolated and shielded *técnicos* to office;
- Extremely weak or nonexistent horizontal accountability; and
- Swift policymaking (and a higher likelihood of gross mistakes, hazardous implementation, and the president taking responsibility for the outcome).

In contrast, the main features that characterize representative democracies are a series of constitutional restrictions and historically embedded practices to institutionalize the exercise of power, strong horizontal accountability, an institutionalized legislature, slow and incremental decision-making, a decisive coalition of broadly supported political leaders who take great care in creating and strengthening democratic political institutions, and a clear distinction between the public and private interests of office holders (O'Donnell, 1994, pp.56, 61-64).

Based on the previous definition, I categorize countries in the region as delegative or representative democracies. I classify each country from 1980 or from its transition to democracy if that occurred later, until the last year for which we have access to data (2010). First, I follow O'Donnell's own classification in his 1994 piece: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru are delegative democracies (pp.56); Chile and Uruguay are classified as representative democracies (pp.56, 63-64).

O'Donnell's work on delegative democracy is, above all, theoretical. Its immense strength in this realm (that can be measured by the amount of discussion it generated in the literature) rivals with the enormous empirical challenges it left. I find some of these challenges in this initial classification. One of them is that it does not explicitly incorporate a dynamic component into it: democratic regimes are either delegative or representative, and it is not

clear whether this situation can change over time.⁸ However, we *can* see some changes during the period of analysis in the main defining features of delegative democracies. Brazil is a case in point. O'Donnell classified Brazil into the first group. At the time he wrote the article, this country was under the presidency of Fernando Collor de Mello, the epitome of this new species (we can roughly say the same about the previous presidency of José Sarney). However, some features of this delegative democracy began to change during Itamar Franco (for instance, the interim president worked along with Congress instead of bypassing it as Collor did).⁹ Arguably, some of these trends continued during Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and many of them were reinforced during Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and more recently with Dilma Rousseff.¹⁰ Venezuela is another case where there has also been variation over time. One could probably classify it as a relatively institutionalized democracy from 1959 until 1999 (despite all the problems this democracy had at the time), but it looks more like a delegative democracy after that.¹¹

Another problem is how to classify cases that do not clearly belong to one group or the other. In other words, it is not clear where the cut point between the two categories, delegative and representative democracy, should be and also the boundary between a delegative democracy and an authoritarian regime. This may be a problem as we intend to classify other cases in the region or outside it (such as post-communist countries, an option O'Donnell considered possible). Mexico, for instance, is a case in point. To begin with, some of the basic elements in Dahl's definition of polyarchy were seriously questioned during most years of PRI rule, especially until 1994.¹² Therefore, I decided to code it since this year and not before it. Moreover, in the post-1994 classification, several of the features in the definition of delegative democracy are present (e.g., non-institutionalized exercise of power or isolated and shielded *técnicos* during some periods), but others are not (such as a

political movement being the presidents' political base or the weakness of Congress in some periods).

Based on these impressions, I try to incorporate a dynamic component into the initial classification: with the help of several country specialists,¹³ I classify each president-year in 11 cases (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela) in all of the main dimensions that define delegative democracies according to O'Donnell. With this classification, one country can be either a delegative or representative democracy depending on the category it fits at a moment in time, but then change in some of its dimensions in another (as happened in Brazil or Venezuela). Table 1 reports the final country experts' codings. These results are the averages of the coding each of the experts made.¹⁴

As the values taken in each dimension add up to each of the two categories (delegative or representative), we can also incorporate a cut point for each of the two. Each of the dimensions of delegative democracies is coded 1 if it is present in the country in a given year, 0 otherwise; all the values add up to an index of "delegativeness," divided in eight categories¹⁵ that range from 0 (full representative democracy) to 8 (full delegative democracy; i.e., all the dimensions in the definition of delegative democracy are present in the country in a year) (See Table 1). I run a test of internal consistency to estimate the reliability of the index. The value of Cronbach's alpha is .87, indicating high internal consistency across the eight items in the index and that this set of items measures a single unidimensional latent construct.

– Table 1; Graphs 1-4 about here –

Results indicate some variation over time, particularly in the group O'Donnell classified as delegative democracies. I distinguish different tendencies that I cluster into four different

categories: recurrent (or cyclical) delegative democracies, eroding delegative democracies, intensifying delegative democracies, and stable representative democracies.¹⁶ Using this classification, I do not analyze their final or average scores but the tendencies the cases show over time. The first three categories reveal significant variation inside the delegative group.

I examine recurrent delegative democracies first. I include Argentina, Ecuador, and Colombia in this group. The average index for Argentina is the highest for the cases and years covered in the study (5.3 out of a maximum of 8) with a high standard deviation (2.8), indicating substantial variation across time as a result of a cyclical trend.¹⁷ The classification for Ecuador reveals a similar trend, although with lower average results (the average of the overall index is 3.35; the standard deviation is 2.49). Colombia, despite not being classified as a delegative democracy in the initial coding, alternates periods in the delegative and the representative camps (and that is the reason why I classified it as “recurrent”). The average value is relatively low and in the representative camp (2.74), but with a relatively high standard deviation (2.1) that reflects the cycles across time (See Graph 1).¹⁸

I include Brazil and Peru in the group of eroding delegative democracies. The average index for Peru is 4.51 with a standard deviation of 2.19, indicating also variation over time but with a different trend than in the previous group: during the early years of Alberto Fujimori, the index was at its highest (8).¹⁹ But scores decreased since then²⁰ to enter a period with low average values in the index. Brazil, despite being categorized as a delegative democracy in O’Donnell’s first classification, reveals a smaller average value than all the previous cases (except Colombia) and a similar trend than Peru. The average index is relatively low (2.85), but with a large standard deviation (2.13). From the 1985 transition to Collor’s impeachment, this case was clearly a delegative democracy: the values for the index range from 5 during Sarney’s presidency to 7 during Collor’s. But these values decreased dramatically after that (See Graph 2).²¹

Venezuela, Bolivia, and Paraguay are intensifying delegative democracies. Venezuela was classified as a representative democracy at the beginning of the period under study, during Luis Herrera Campins's term in office (who scored 1) or during Jaime Lusinchi's (3), but moved progressively into the delegative camp.²² It finally entered into a clear delegative phase with Hugo Chávez, who scores the highest value in the index. Interestingly, Venezuela has a high average value for the index over the period (3.97), with a high standard deviation (3.2).²³ Paraguay has a mid-range average value (4.06) and a relatively low standard deviation (1.3), with the highest values at the end of the period under analysis, during the presidencies of Duarte Frutos (6 during the first two years in office) and Fernando Lugo (6). Bolivia has even lower average values: the index for the entire period is 2.69, in the representative camp rather than in the delegative, with a relatively high standard deviation (of almost 2). But the trend is similar to the one in the previous two cases: values are at their highest at the end of the period under study (6 during Evo Morales's government; See Graph 3).

Chile and Uruguay are stable representative democracies. There is very little variation inside this more institutionalized group. Chile scored 1 during Aylwin's, Frei's, and Bachelet's terms because shielded *técnicos* were present during these governments. The average index and the standard deviation are very low (0.6 and 0.4). In Uruguay, there are no changes over time: all the country specialists coding this country agreed that none of the dimensions of delegative democracy have been present in this case since 1985.

Some cases do not clearly fit into any of the categories or tendencies and are difficult to classify; Mexico is clearly one of them. Its overall index is much larger than the previous two cases, but relatively low compared to the rest (2.1), with a low standard deviation (0.9) indicating a steadier trend than in the other categories (See Graph 4).

Very interestingly, the average index for the 11 cases in the region for the 30 years under study (1980-2010, without considering the years of authoritarian rule) is relatively low: 3.11, or in the “very weakly representative” category.²⁴ The standard deviation, though, is relatively high (2.46), revealing the large variation among cases and across time, particularly in the delegative group, that we see in the previous analysis of each case.

The results of this classification effort may contribute to the empirical study and better understanding of delegative democracies in the region, and even beyond it. In this sense, we can use the index and the classification to measure delegativeness in post-communist countries (something O’Donnell himself encouraged) and even other institutionalized democracies in which some of these dimensions may be present (such as the US, especially during the George W. Bush era, or nowadays in some European countries where shielded *técnicos* are in office, swift policy-making seems to be widespread, and horizontal accountability may be imperiled). We could probably see that the concept of delegative democracy (or some of its specific dimensions) does not necessarily relate only to a circumscribed geographical area. Furthermore, this short (and somewhat sketchy) analysis can be useful to analyze all together the dimensions that the literature tended to study separately.²⁵ This is precisely one of the main strengths in the concept of delegative democracy: the capacity to integrate all these dimensions into a unique theoretical framework.

The previous classification effort also serves one of the main purposes of this paper: to highlight that delegative democracies vary and have more precision about this fact. There is cross-case variation between delegative and representative democracies and inside each of these two groups. For instance, there are clear differences among delegative democracies, between the most delegative cases (such as Argentina and Venezuela) and others less delegative (such as Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil). But even more importantly, there is also

variation over time within cases: the index increased over time in some countries (Venezuela and Bolivia), declined in others (Brazil and Peru), and revealed an oscillating trend and “recurring delegativeness” in a third set of cases (Argentina and Ecuador).

What explains these variations among cases? Why are delegative democracies enduring and recurrent in some countries, while not in others? What accounts for the progressive decline in delegativeness in some cases? In the next section, I put forward O’Donnell’s argument to explain the emergence of delegative democracies and the recurring trends in some of these cases. In doing so, I try to identify some of the main factors in the theoretical argument that may account for some variation across cases.

The Emergence of Delegative Democracies

In this section, I analyze the main conditions under which delegative democracies emerged.²⁶ To begin with, O’Donnell claims this is not a recent process. He stresses that the plebiscitary tendencies of delegative democracies were detectable in most Latin American countries long before the present and that they have been studied under the chapter of authoritarianism, caesarism, bonapartism, caudillismo, or populism. It is not the aim of this paper to enter into the theoretical discussion or the historical details to differentiate these concepts (for a theoretical discussion on the topic, see Collier and Levitsky, 1997; Diamond, 1997), but rather to assess the main factors that contribute to the emergence of delegative democracies.

O’Donnell also underscores the relevance of previous democratic experiences. “Delegative democracy is not alien to the democratic tradition” (O’Donnell, 1994, p.60).²⁷ These legacies and their long-lasting influence can be studied using a historical comparative analysis or in-depth within-case studies (relying, for instance, on some tools such as process tracing or path dependency analysis). I rely on a different methodological approach to empirically assess

whether some of the factors leading to the outcome in the theoretical argument are relevant across cases and years, and if so, how much.

When talking about the emergence of delegative democracy, O'Donnell mainly refers to the experience of some specific countries after their transitions to democracy. Being loyal to his epistemological tradition, he presented a theoretically bounded argument. Bearing this in mind, a crucial feature that recurrently appears in his theoretical account is the economic crisis. The emergence of delegative democracies is very much linked to “the depth of the crisis that these countries inherited from their respective authoritarian regimes” (O'Donnell, 1994, p.65).²⁸ By economic crisis, the author means high inflation, economic stagnation, financial crisis of the state, huge foreign and domestic public debt, increased inequality, and deterioration in welfare provisions (O'Donnell, 1994, p.63).²⁹

Other elements in the theoretical claim that explain the emergence of delegative democracies are linked to the abovementioned crises: a strong sense of urgency in the population (O'Donnell, 1994, p.65), low confidence in government and low prestige of all parties and politicians that translate into demands for urgent action and delegation in the person of the president (O'Donnell, 1994, p.65).

I cluster these claims into a structural and cultural component and, based on them, I formulate the first set of hypotheses: delegative democracies are more likely to *emerge* when economic crises are deeper (structural component) and confidence in government, parties, and politicians is lower (cultural component) (I further specify these hypotheses below).

Explaining “Delegativeness”? Stability and Change in Delegative Democracies

Can we explain why there is a recurring cycle of delegation in some democracies? And more generally, can we account for changes in the delegative democracy index? O'Donnell had a

clear theoretical argument on the conditions for the emergence of delegative democracies after transitions to democracy. What he called the “cycle of crisis” can explain recurring trends in some delegative cases: for him, the logic of delegation means that the executive does nothing to strengthen other institutions, placing enormous responsibility on the president. In a context of crisis, the fate of his government depends on policies that entail substantial costs for many parts of the population. Policymaking under conditions of despair can result in this shift from governmental omnipotence (during the enactment of stabilization packages) to impotence, when failures accumulate. Under those conditions, a new cycle of crisis, delegation, and concentration of power will take place (O’Donnell, 1994, pp.66-67). This part of the argument does not appear to be historically bounded to transitions from authoritarian rule (although it describes some trends after the implementation of stabilization packages in the cases he selected) and seems to have more extension (in Sartori’s 1970 terms): weakly institutionalized democracies may suffer from “recurrent cycles” of crises and delegation.

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate the relevance of some other factors in the argument using the methodological approach I chose.³⁰ The role of economic crisis or individual perceptions about political institutions and politicians can be empirically assessed using quantitative tools and the data we have available. I focus on these variables, recognizing the limitations in the approach and the relevance of the missing conditions in the argument. Hence, we could expect a cycle of delegation to begin when economic crises are deep (or recurrent; this is the economic component) and confidence in government, parties, and politicians (or confidence in democracy as a whole) is low (or drops drastically; this is the cultural component).

I must be very clear: here, I am not trying to empirically evaluate O’Donnell’s argument since he did not attempt to explain variation across cases; rather I am pushing it forward to

test some of its possible implications and its reach. I will explore whether the structural and cultural components in the abovementioned hypothesis account for changes in the index of delegative democracies. That is, whether delegative democracies are more likely to *intensify* (values in the index will be higher) when economic crises are deeper and confidence in democracy, government, parties, and politicians is lower. Following the logic in the model, we could expect delegative democracies to *weaken* (values in the index will be lower) when the economic context is more favorable and confidence in government, parties, and politicians is higher (second hypothesis). I test these propositions and see whether there is empirical support for them in the next sections.

Variables and Data

To explain changes across and within cases over time, I use the values of the delegative democracy index. Each of the eight main features that define delegative democracies according to O'Donnell (1994, pp.60-62) are coded³¹ 1 in case the dimension is present in a country in a given year, 0 otherwise. The index is composed by the simple (un-weighted) sum of all values present in a country in a given year (See Variables' Description and Data Sources in the Appendix).

I grouped the main independent variables into a structural and cultural components or dimensions. In relation to the structural factors, I use economic and fiscal variables to account for economic crisis: inflation (natural logarithm of the annual percentage change in consumer prices, to normalize the data), economic growth (annual percentage change in GDP), public debt (total debt stock as a percentage of gross national income), and inequality (measured using the Gini index). I also include (the natural logarithm of) GDP per capita to control for differences in income across cases. I accessed data on these variables from the

World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI) & Global Development Finance (GDF) (See Variables' Description and Data Sources in the Appendix).

I include data on individual confidence in government, parties, and Congress as well as variables to measure support for democracy and satisfaction with democracy and test the relevance of the cultural component. Pairwise correlations among these variables for the selected cases are high, so I report basic descriptive statistics for all of them (See Table 3) and use only one of them, support for democracy, in the regression analysis.³²

These data are available from Latinobarómetro for all the cases in this study. As indicated above, the main problem with these series is that data is only available for recent years (after 1995 and, for some variables, 1997), so we cannot analyze the legacies from authoritarian rule in terms of individual perceptions. However, we can explore whether changes in these variables have an impact on the outcome. In other words, we can investigate whether diminishing levels of individuals' confidence in politicians or political institutions affect the delegativeness of the democratic regime.

O'Donnell also stressed the role of party system fragmentation, institutionalization, and polarization in delegative democracies in a later piece (2011, pp.24-27; see also Ollier, 2011). This is a third component or an alternative argument, which I call politico-institutional. I use some proxies that could measure how hard (or easy) it is for the president to construct political power in her party or coalition and in Congress (and not only in public opinion). I use data on party systems' fragmentation and polarization (Coppedge, 2007), assuming (in line with several other works in the literature) that presidents will have more difficulties governing in a more fragmented and polarized party system, especially in presidential systems (Sartori, 1976; Linz, 1978; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995; Diamond, 1997). Under conditions of high fragmentation and polarization, we would expect larger chances of a cycle of crisis and delegation. These data are available for longer time series (1973-2009). I also

included two variables measuring the institutional power of the president. To that effect, I use Shugart and Carey's (1992, p.155) index of presidential institutional powers and Negretto's (2009, p.139) index of legislative presidential powers³³ (See Variables' Description and Data Sources).

Model

In the first part of the analysis I provide a basic descriptive analysis of the values the main variables take before and after the transition from authoritarian rule to delegative and representative democracies. Here I explore the legacies of authoritarian regimes after their transitions to democracy. In the second part of this section, I explore whether there is empirical support for the hypotheses presented above relying on regression analysis.

When trying to account for changes in the index of delegative democracy, I run an ordered logistic regression, which is specifically designed for ordinal outcomes. The dependent variable in this study is ordinal since it has several categories, ranging from a full representative to a full delegative democracy, with no precise distinctions among them.³⁴ Long and Freese (2001, p.137) claim that ordinal variables are often coded as consecutive integers from 1 to the number of categories. They argue that perhaps as a consequence of this coding, it is tempting to analyze ordinal outcomes with the linear regression model. However, they alert that an ordinal dependent variable violates the assumptions of the linear regression model and this can lead to incorrect conclusions (see also McKelvey and Zavoina, 1975, p.117; and Winship and Mare, 1984, pp.521–523). I follow the authors' recommendation that with ordinal outcomes it is much better to use models that avoid the assumption that the distances between categories are equal. In order to test for robustness in the results, I also run

a simple linear (OLS) regression and a linear regression with panel corrected standard errors (PCSEs) to account for the panel structure in the data.

Descriptive Statistics

First, I analyze the values in the different dimensions of the variable economic crisis in each of the countries that transitioned to democracy during the 1980s. Here, I take O'Donnell's classification to divide delegative and representative democracies.

– Table 2 about here –

I evaluate economic growth first. Some delegative democracies received a heavy burden in terms of economic growth from previous authoritarian regimes.³⁵ Argentina experienced the largest fall in GDP before the transition to democracy, followed by Bolivia, and Brazil. On the contrary, Chile, a case in the representative camp, inherited a much more healthy economy. These cases support the argument on the role of economic crisis played during the transition from authoritarian rule to delegative or representative democracies. However, other cases do not fit the theoretical expectations very well. Some representative democracies did not receive a comfortable economic situation from their authoritarian governments (e.g., Uruguay), and other delegative democracies did not inherit economic turmoil (e.g., Paraguay, Peru, and Ecuador).³⁶

In terms of inflation, Brazil and Argentina inherited the highest values from their transitions to democracy. These values were relatively high in the case of Bolivia but relatively low in the case of Ecuador and Peru. The two cases of representative democracies, Chile and Uruguay, received moderate to relatively high levels of inflation after their transitions. These

averages, though, were much lower than in the Argentine and Brazilian cases (especially for Chile).

Other variables do not seem to support the theoretical expectations. The legacy in external debt stocks (as a percentage of gross national income) is very diverse.³⁷ In terms of inequality, results are even less conclusive: most of the cases have high Gini indexes for income distribution. Delegative and representative democracies are among the most and least unequal countries.³⁸ Finally, and contrary to what we could have expected, delegative democracies had lighter legacies in terms of unemployment rates than representative ones.³⁹

Summing up, delegative democracies received a somewhat heavier burden from their authoritarian regimes in terms of economic growth and inflation, especially in Argentina and Brazil compared to Chile. But the same conclusion cannot be reached for other variables, such as unemployment rates and debt burden. The economic legacy in Uruguay seems to be as heavy as in the delegative cases for some variables, despite being a representative democracy after 1985. There are also some cases in the delegative group that performed better than representative democracies in some variables.

Some questions can be raised regarding Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela. O'Donnell's argument was very likely restricted in scope and reach, and perhaps very much based in the Southern Cone cases (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay) and Peru, so this may limit the capacity of the theory to travel beyond the cases he explicitly referred to (although he recognized some post-communist countries can be included in the delegative group). In any case, and despite the theoretical and empirical prudence of the author, I explore the empirical incidence of economic crisis on the likelihood of a country being a delegative or representative democracy in the following sections.

Before that, I examine whether individual perceptions (confidence in political institutions, support for democracy, and satisfaction with democracy) vary across the two categories.

Some interesting results emerge out of basic descriptive statistics: about 60 percent of citizens in delegative democracies (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru) support democracy as preferable to any other form of government;⁴⁰ this average is 9.2 points higher in representative democracies (e.g., Uruguay and Chile). The average of those who report not being satisfied at all with democracy is 21 percent in the delegative camp, while it is 11 percent in the representative one.⁴¹ Those not having confidence in parties are almost 52 percent in the first group and 33 in the second. These sharp differences are similar for those not having confidence in Congress (40 percent versus 21 percent), not having confidence in the government (67 percent versus 48 percent), and not having confidence in the president (65 percent versus 46 percent).⁴² The average of respondents who agreed with the statement: “democracy can work without the national Congress” was 40 percent in the delegative group, 22 in the representative one. The average of those who agreed with the statement “in case of difficulties, the president can bypass Congress and parties” was 41 against 26 percent.⁴³

These figures indicate that individual political perceptions vary between delegative and representative democracies. In line with O’Donnell’s theoretical expectations, citizens report more support and satisfaction with democracy as well as less distrust in parties, Congress, government, and the president in more institutionalized democracies.⁴⁴

– Table 3 about here –

It is difficult to assess presidential popularity in delegative democracies and its variation from wide public support to general vilification with the partial data we have. Ideally, we would need measures of presidential support for each year in each country.⁴⁵ We only have responses on confidence in the president for eight years in each country between 1997 and 2007 (there are no data for years 1999 and 2002). Taking into account these limitations, the

average confidence in the president for these years in delegative democracies is 35 percent compared to 54 percent in representative democracies.⁴⁶

These basic descriptive statistics show some variation in the values the main variables take in delegative and representative democracies. These results offer some preliminary support for O'Donnell's expectations. The next step is to analyze whether changes in these independent variables produce changes in the outcome. To do this, I turn to another tool, regression analysis.

Regression Results

Regression results support some of the main theoretical expectations in the model to account for variations in the delegative democracy index. I run an ordered logistic regression model and control robustness of results with a simple linear regression (OLS) and a linear regression with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE). The outcomes across models show little variation, with substantive conclusions holding in all of them, so I only report results from the first.

According to the results, more inflation positively affects the odds of a country being a delegative democracy. The coefficient for this variable is robust and statistically significant. More economic growth, on the contrary, has a negative effect on those odds, but the coefficient is very small and the statistical significance is below the accepted standards.

The cultural variable is robust and statistically significant in the ordered logistic model (and moves in the expected direction in the PCSE regression). As we theoretically expected, larger support for democracy reduces the probability of having a delegative democracy.

There is some empirical support for alternative arguments also. Volatility positively affects the odds of a country being a delegative democracy, as we anticipated. However, more party

system fragmentation and polarization are negatively associated to the probability of having a delegative democracy in a given year. Results for fragmentation are not statistically significant ($p=.155$; see Table 4). These results suggest the opposite than what we theoretically expected: some level of party system fragmentation and polarization might be good for having a representative democracy in the sense that under low levels of both variables more negotiation might be needed to take decisions or pass bills in Congress (and hence, less unilateral imposition is possible). We could argue that party system fragmentation and polarization have a U-shaped relationship with the index of delegative democracy.⁴⁷ To test this, I decided to include the squared term of both independent variables, generating a quadratic curve. Regression results with these new variables and Graphs 5 and 6 effectively indicate that there is a quadratic relationship between party system fragmentation and polarization:⁴⁸ holding all other variables constant, the probability of having a delegative democracy diminishes as the values for both independent variables augment, to increase again in a U-shaped relationship.⁴⁹

– Graphs 5 and 6 about here –

The advantage in the ordered logistic regression (besides the ones mentioned in the models' section) is that I can calculate predicted probabilities for each of the categories in the dependent variable. Out of the results, when all variables in the model are at their means, the countries in the sample have 76 percent probability of being in one of the four categories in the representative camp. The larger probabilities are in the two categories next to the full representative democracy (almost fully representative, with 24 percent and weakly representative, with 29 percent). The predicted probabilities of being in the delegative democracy camp are only 21 percent, with the different categories ranging from 6 to 5 percent each. Under more negative economic conditions (no growth and average inflation⁵⁰), the probabilities of being a representative democracy diminish to 65 percent (or 11 percent

less than in an average scenario). Under very critical economic conditions (the lowest values in GDP growth, the highest inflation⁵¹), and all the other variables at their means, a country has a 63 percent probability of being in any of the delegative democracy categories. The largest predicted probability, 33 percent, is that of being a fully delegative democracy.

Now I include individual perceptions supporting democracy into the analysis. When all the variables are at their means and support for democracy at its highest, the largest probability (38 percent) is that of being an almost fully representative democracy. All the categories in the representative camp add up to 92 percent. When support for democracy diminishes to the minimum (34 percent), economic growth is at the lowest, and inflation at the highest values, the predicted probability of being in any of the categories in the delegative camp is 86 percent. The largest probability (55 percent) is that of being a fully delegative democracy.

– Table 4 about here –

Discussion

These results indicate that under very critical economic conditions and dramatic drops in public opinion's confidence in democracy, there is 86 percent probability for a given country to be a delegative democracy. Argentina was under conditions similar to these twice in recent history (in 1988-1990 and 2001-2002) and both times ended up in the delegative camp. Crises in this country were regularly larger and more recurrent than in Brazil, for instance, a case that moved gradually into the representative camp.⁵²

When conditions of crisis urge presidents to concentrate political power and take swift policy decisions, and when individual perceptions are more prone to delegation, the key is whether presidents can concentrate political power or are forced to negotiate. This brings the political (or partisan) dimension into the analysis, vis-à-vis structural and cultural variables.

Argentine presidents, for instance, although forced to negotiate permanently, were able to concentrate more political power in Congress and inside their parties than any of their Brazilian counterparts ever did.⁵³ Under conditions of recurrent crises, more concentration, delegation, and rushed policymaking have been more likely in Argentina than in Brazil. There, and especially after Collor's term in office, policymaking has been more protracted and slow but also more negotiated and, in the end, more institutionalized (as the classification shows).

Some Final Comments

This work intends to contribute to the literature on delegative democracies that Guillermo O'Donnell inaugurated, first, by providing a classification of the cases and presenting some evidence to account for variation among them and within the two groups, delegative and representative democracies. This classification and descriptive effort can be useful for exploring and analyzing delegative democracies in more detail as well as for explaining causes and consequences of specific changes in some dimensions. As Collier and Levitsky (1997, p.432) stressed, "improved description (...) is essential for assessing the *causes* and *consequences* of democracy" (emphasis in the original text).

This classification also intends to contribute to empirical analysis of democracies in Latin America and for comparing them with other cases and regions. Some of the dimensions in the concept may be present even in institutionalized democracies, particularly under conditions of crisis. If that is the case, we could argue that delegative democracy is not a phenomenon circumscribed to a geographical area (or cultural community) but rather a more general phenomenon. Once again, if that is the case, a more detailed empirical analysis can contribute to the broader theoretical discussion.

This paper also shows that Latin American countries have larger probabilities of being (weakly) representative rather than (fully) delegative democracies. It is only when economic conditions deteriorate dramatically or when support for democracy in the population erodes significantly or when partisan volatility and polarization augment substantially that the probabilities of ending in the delegative camp increase. The theoretical argument and the empirical results reveal a paradox. A key way to end the cycle of delegation requires weakening the factors that explained its emergence, strength, and the very sources of power of the delegative president: the context of urgency under economic crisis and the lack of public confidence in democratic institutions.

This paper shows that O'Donnell's conceptual framework is a powerful device to analyze and understand institutionalizing, de-institutionalizing, and institutionalized democracies. Unpacking delegative democracy, I demonstrated that instances of this concept vary and I argue that this variation may not only be circumscribed to Latin America. Although clearly more research is needed, the findings in this work may be empirically and theoretically meaningful for discussions on delegative democracies in particular and democratic regimes in general.

Appendix

Variables' Description and Data Sources

Dependent Variables	Description	Source	Years
Delegative Democracy (dummy)	DD: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru; RD: Chile, Uruguay Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela.	O'Donnell's (1994) classification.	1980-2011
Index of Delegative Democracy (IDD)	Eight categories: fully representative (value of 0 in the index), almost fully representative (1), weakly representative (2), very weakly representative (3), representative-delegative (4), very weakly delegative (5), weakly delegative (6), almost fully delegative (7), and fully delegative democracy (8).	Author's and country specialists' classification.	1980-2011
Independent Variables	Description	Source	Years
Inflation	Natural logarithm of the annual percentage change in consumer prices; GDP deflator.	World Devt. Indic. (WDI) & Global Devt. Finance (GDF)	1972-2010
Economic growth	Annual percentage change in GDP	WDI-GDF	1972-2010
GDP per capita	Natural logarithm of GDP per capita (constant values)	WDI-GDF	1972-2010
Public debt	External debt stocks as a percentage of gross national income (GNI).	WDI-GDF	1980-2010
Inequality	GINI index	WDI-GDF	1981-2009
Unemployment	Total unemployment as a share of the total labor force.	WDI-GDF	1981-2009
Confidence in government	Percentage of respondents having "no confidence at all" in government.	Latinobarómetro	1995-2010
Confidence in the president	Percentage of respondents having "no confidence at all" in the president.	Latinobarómetro	1997-2007
Confidence in parties and Congress	Percentage of respondents having "no confidence at all" in parties and Congress.	Latinobarómetro	1995-2010
Support for democracy	Percentage of respondents agreeing with the statement: "Democracy is preferable to any other form of government."	Latinobarómetro	1995-2010
Satisfaction w/ democr.	Percentage of respondents "Not being satisfied at all with democracy."	Latinobarómetro	1995-2010
Fragmentation	Effective Number of Parties, in term of seats.	Coppedge (2007)	1973-2009
Polarization	Coppedge's Index of Polarization (IP), which measures the dispersion of the vote away from the relative center of the party system.	Coppedge (2007)	1973-2009
Volatility	Pedersen's Index of Volatility: sum of the absolute value of the changes in all parties' vote shares from one election to the next, divided by two.	Coppedge (2007)	1973-2009

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¹ The original piece on delegative democracy first appeared published in Portuguese (in CEBRAP's *Revista Novos Estudos*) in 1991, then in Spanish (*Cuadernos del CLAEH*) and in English (*Kellogg Institute's Working Papers*), both in 1992 and, later on, in 1994 (*Journal of Democracy*). It was reproduced in several other places (including O'Donnell's *Contrapuntos*, 1997; and *Counterpoints*, 1999). O'Donnell presented new thoughts on delegative democracy in O'Donnell, 2011.

² Some authors argued that the two concepts, delegative democracy and populism, are very similar, particularly in their cultural components (Peruzzotti, 2001, pp.136-137). Nevertheless, O'Donnell and Wolfson (1993, pp.164-165) clearly differentiated between the two (See also O'Donnell et al., 2011, pp.14-15; O'Donnell, 2011, pp.30-31; and Weffort, 1993, p.171 for further differentiation between the two concepts). He claimed that although the two concepts share some common characteristics, populism (at least in Latin America)

led to larger political mobilization and organization, although vertically controlled, and coincided with periods of expansion of the national economy. On the contrary, delegative democracies tended to demobilize their populations, with the exception of periods in which they needed their plebiscitary support, and coincided with periods of profound economic crisis. In the definition I use, delegative democracy is not the same as populism.

³ A part of this debate focused on whether the president effectively “governs alone” (Ferreira Rubio and Goretti, 1996; Negretto, 2002) or negotiates with Congress when producing legislation, and if it does under what conditions (Mustapic, 2000; Panizza, 2000; Llanos, 1998, 2001; Peruzzotti, 2001; Cox and Morgenstern, 2001; Cox et al., 2001; Negretto, 2001, 2006).

⁴ See, for instance, Larkins, 1998; Smulovitz and Peruzzotti, 2000; Dodson and Jackson, 2004; Stanley, 2005; Canache and Allison, 2005; Peruzzotti and Smulovitz, 2006; Przeworski, 2006; O’Donnell, 2006; Anderson, 2006. Some of these scholars paid particular attention to these aspects of delegative democracies during the neoliberal economic reforms of the 1990s (Roberts, 1995; Conaghan, et al., 1997; Samuels, 2004; Weyland, 2004), but other authors underlined that this was “something more than a simple momentary authoritarian deviation” (O’Donnell et al., 2011, p.13).

⁵ See, for instance, Kubiček, 1994; Larkins, 1998; Álvarez, 2000; Avritzer, 2000; Schmidt, 2000; Croissant, 2003; Morgan Kelly, 2003; Anderson, 2006. Ippolito-O’Donnell (2011, p.54) presents a list of case studies that applied the concept of delegative democracy in the analysis of different countries, including Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, the Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Ukraine, and Venezuela.

⁶ Some studies concentrated on a particular sub-region, such as Central America (Programa Estado de la Nación-Región, 2011) or particular cases, such as Costa Rica (Programa Estado

de la Nación, 2010). Ippolito-O'Donnell (2011) conducted public opinion polls in Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo to study citizens' representations on delegation.

⁷ Ippolito-O'Donnell (2011) is an exception to this, but she conducted the polls only in one year, 1992. Latinobarómetro asked questions directly related to perceptions on delegation in their polls, but only in one year also, 2003.

⁸ O'Donnell recognized changes over time in delegative democracies in his 2011 piece.

⁹ I further analyze several other changes below.

¹⁰ O'Donnell et al. (2011, p.13) acknowledged these changes that led the Brazilian case into a more institutionalized direction, although Weffort questioned this in a comment in this paper.

¹¹ Other authors classify Venezuela during Chávez as a competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way, 2010, pp. 4, 16, 32, 82, 178) or as semi-democratic (Pérez Liñan and Mainwaring, forthcoming).

¹² Peru from the April 5, 1992 coup until 1995 could be considered an authoritarian regime, and not a delegative democracy. Some scholars could also argue that Venezuela today is an authoritarian regime, and not a delegative democracy. Due to these claims, I acknowledge that I am including cases that had competitive elections during the period but that were questioned in their democratic credentials by some readers. I owe this comment to Scott Mainwaring.

¹³ Marcelo Escolar (Universidad Nacional de San Martín), Marcelo Leiras (Universidad de San Andrés), and Ignacio Labaqui and Ignacio Mamone (Universidad Católica Argentina) helped me classify and code Argentina; George Avelino (Fundação Getulio Vargas-São Paulo), Marcus Melo (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco), and Ximena Simpson (Universidad Nacional de San Martín) with Brazil; René Mayorga (Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios and Flacso) and John Crabtree (University of Oxford) with Bolivia; Carlos Huneeus (Universidad de Chile) and Alfredo Roberto Joignant Rondon

(Universidad Diego Portales) with Chile; Claudia Dangond Gibsone and José Cepeda (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana) with Colombia; Andrés Mejía Acosta (University of Sussex), Santiago Basabe (FLACSO Ecuador), and John Polga Hacimovich (University of Pittsburgh) with Ecuador; Claudia Maldonado Trujillo, Guillermo Cejudo, and Juan Fernando Ibarra (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, CIDE) with the Mexican case; Diego Abente Brun (National Endowment for Democracy and Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya, CADEP), Andrew Nickson (University of Birmingham), and Dominica Zabala (London School of Economics) with Paraguay; Carlos Meléndez (University of Notre Dame), Eduardo Dargent Bocanegra (University of Texas, Austin), and Arturo Maldonado (Vanderbilt University) with Peru; David Altman (Universidad Católica de Chile), Juan Andrés Moraes, and Rafael Piñeiro (Universidad de la República) assisted me with Uruguay; Angel Alvarez (Universidad Central de Venezuela), Maria Isabel Puerta Riera (Universidad de Carabobo), José Enrique Molina Vega (Universidad del Zulia) helped me with Venezuela.

¹⁴ The coding for each country is available upon request. I recognize the limitations in the strategy of country experts' coding and the need to move toward more reliable indicators. Both Daniel Brinks and Gerardo Munck recommended me this. An alternative measure could rely on observable and easier to operationalize institutional dimensions. The dimensions that can be included are accountability, regulatory quality, rule of law, government effectiveness, and control of corruption (from the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators). These are useful measures for the institutional dimensions in the index of delegative democracies. But there is a high cost in relying solely on them: they mostly measure institutional variables (related to accountability), leaving aside other important "informal" dimensions of delegative democracies (mostly linked to the exercise of power). O'Donnell considered these dimensions crucial. Hence, in this work, I will use the experts' coding, recognizing the

limitations in this strategy, and leave for future research more sophisticated, observable measures of delegativeness both in its formal (institutional) and informal dimensions.

¹⁵ These categories are: fully representative (value of 0 in the index), almost fully representative (1), weakly representative (2), very weakly representative (3), representative-delegative (4), very weakly delegative (5), weakly delegative (6), almost fully delegative (7), and fully delegative democracy (8).

¹⁶ In a later piece, O'Donnell (2011, p.28) argued that delegative democracies can take different paths: to a representative democracy, another crisis can lead to a new delegative democracy, and a third possibility is the gradual descend (*deslizamiento*) into authoritarianism.

¹⁷ In fact, Argentina's index oscillated from 1 during most of Alfonsín's term in office, to a maximum of 8 during the early years of Menem (the period O'Donnell refers to in his article). Peruzzotti (2001, pp.148-149), in his critique to O'Donnell's argument (1994), claimed that "Both in its rhetoric and political practices, the [Alfonsín] government disconfirmed the delegativeness argument. Under Alfonsín's administration, the executive power made a conscious effort at political self-limitation, particularly in relation to the judicial power." This cycle repeats itself again during De la Rúa's administration (it had a 1 during the first year in office and 3 in the second), Duhalde's (5) and the Kirchners' (7 during Néstor Kirchner's and between 6 and 8 during Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's term).

¹⁸ It scores relatively high values at the beginning of the period under consideration, during the presidency of Julio César Turbay (5); followed by low values in the following presidency, during the first two years of Belisario Betancourt (0), who then entered into a more delegative phase (5 in the last year of his term). These ups and downs continued: low values during César Gaviria's presidency contrasted with higher values during Ernesto Samper's and

Álvaro Uribe's at the end of his second term. O'Donnell (2011, p.24), also classified Uribe's presidency as delegative.

¹⁹ Scott Mainwaring argues that Peru met no reasonable threshold of being a democracy between 1992 and 1995. For him this is not a case of a delegative democracy but rather an authoritarian regime. If we agree on this classification, we should exclude Peru during those years from the analysis. I decided to keep the original classification made by the country experts in the paper, mentioning this disagreement in the classification. Substantive results do not change if we exclude these four country-years from the regression analysis.

²⁰ The values in the index decreased to 7 after 1996 and 6 later on: the president did not oppose his campaign policies once in office during his second term (1995-2000) and the courts and Congress were not impediments to him. The president did not clash with them but not because they were independent powers and separation among them was guaranteed, but rather because they were loyal (and subordinated) to the president (mechanisms of horizontal accountability remained very weak). We could probably revise this dimension to express more precisely the type of relations between the executive and the legislative and judiciary that we refer to when we examine a delegative democracy.

²¹ Cardoso's government scored 3 during the first two years in office, 2 in the following two years and during his second term in office. Lula's presidency has even lower values (1).

²² Carlos Andrés Pérez's second presidency scored 5 and Rafael Caldera began his government with a 2 during the first two years in office, but moved to 4 in the last three.

²³ The persistently high values during Chávez's terms in office contribute to this overall high average value. The average for the presidencies before Chávez was 3.6, and the standard deviation, 1.7.

²⁴ It would be interesting to compare this average with the values for other regions, such as post-communist or Southern countries in Europe.

²⁵ Such as executive-legislative or executive-judiciary relations, horizontal accountability, informal institutions, campaign promises and policy switches, types of policymaking, political parties and political movements, presidential discourses, among others.

²⁶ Diamond (1997, p.18), when studying the causes of democratic consolidation, also noted “it is hard to separate the concept from some of its causes.”

²⁷ Redemocratization was crucial in Uruguay and Chile. These two countries had a “strongly institutionalized legislature, and a series of constitutional restrictions and historically embedded practices,” long before their authoritarian governments. These institutions and practices reemerged after democratization and contributed to put limits to the way presidents have exercised power (O’Donnell, 1994, p.64).

²⁸ See also O’Donnell (1993, pp.176-180) for a detailed link between the two variables; and O’Donnell, 2011, pp.23-24 for further precision. In this latter piece, O’Donnell argues that some delegative democracies also emerged as a consequence of “serious socio-economic crises and/or in some cases, prolonged and violent situations of internal war (Fujimori and Uribe)” (O’Donnell, 2011, p.24).

²⁹ Several authors developed the link between times of economic crises and the need of a president with temporarily heightened powers (see Anderson, 2006, p.162).

³⁰ That is the case, as indicated above, of the existence of historically embedded practices previous to the democratic transition. Others, such as a “decisive segment of the political leadership recognizing the self-destructive quality of those cycles, and agreeing to change the terms on which they compete and govern” (O’Donnell, 1994, p.68), are very difficult to assess.

³¹ At least three different country specialists classified each case: two persons help me coding all the cases and each of the cases had two, three, and up to four coders each (depending on the replies I received). The final coding is available upon request and will be available online.

³² Pairwise correlation between support for democracy (percentage of respondents who agree with the statement “democracy is preferable to any other form of government”) and satisfaction with democracy (here I include the percentage of respondents in the three categories that include “very satisfied,” “fairly satisfied,” and “not very satisfied,” excluding “not at all satisfied”) is .7. Pairwise correlations among confidence in parties, Congress, and government oscillate between .7 and .9. All correlations are statistically significant (at less than 1 percent).

³³ Scott Mainwaring advised me to include these variables.

³⁴ These categories are: fully representative, almost fully representative, weakly representative, very weakly representative, representative-delegative, very weakly delegative, weakly delegative, almost fully delegative, and fully delegative democracy.

³⁵ I take the period of two or four years before the transition to democracy because, first, I assume the effect of these periods is stronger than more extended ones, and second, because we have data available for all cases in these years. Whenever available, I present the average values for all years under authoritarian rule.

³⁶ If we take all the years of dictatorship for which we have data, the average economic growth during authoritarian regimes for the best performers is 7.42 percent in Ecuador (1972-1979), 5.4 in Paraguay (1961-1989), and 6.2 in Brazil (1964-1985). The poorest performers were Argentina (1 percent between 1976 and 1983), and Uruguay (1.1 percent between 1973 and 1985). We can see that among better and worse performers, there are cases in the delegative and representative category after their transition to democracy. The average for all authoritarian regimes is 3.9, and 3.2 for all the years of democracy. Representative democracies grew at an average 4.24 percent for the period; delegative democracies at 2.98 percent.

³⁷ Argentina and Brazil received a debt stock equivalent to 51 and 52 percent of their GNI. These values are similar for Bolivia: 55 percent. Uruguay got 48 percent (and if we take four years the value reaches 71 percent), while Chile got 77 percent (100 percent if we consider four years). This variable does not seem to be very supportive of the theoretical argument.

³⁸ The least unequal cases at the time of the transition were Uruguay, with a gini index of 44 in 1981 (42 in 1989), and Argentina, with a gini of 45 in 1986. These values can be compared to a much higher 56 for Chile in 1990, 59 for Brazil in 1986, and 50 for Ecuador in 1987 (data at the time of transition to democracy in these cases are available only for these years).

³⁹ Peru had an unemployment rate of 3 percent average for the two years before the transition to democracy, Brazil's was 4.5, and Argentina's 5 percent. Chile had 5.5 percent and Uruguay 12.5 percent (values are very similar for all cases if we average the last four years of dictatorship).

⁴⁰ Here, I report the percentage of respondents agreeing with the statement: "Democracy is preferable to any other form of government."

⁴¹ I report the percentage of respondents "Not being satisfied at all with democracy."

⁴² I report the percentage of respondents having "no confidence at all" in parties, Congress, government, and the president.

⁴³ This can be an acceptable proxy for what O'Donnell referred to as "a strong sense of urgency" differentiating delegative from representative democracies.

⁴⁴ Concerns over the direction of causality are pertinent here. For obvious reasons, I do not get into the details of these debates here.

⁴⁵ The Executive Approval Database (managed by Carlin, Hartlyn, and Martinez-Gallardo) compiles this information, but it is still under construction and does not cover all cases and years I study in this work.

⁴⁶ As a measure of variations in presidential support, the standard deviation in the first group is 17 points, slightly larger than the 15 points in the second group. One difference between the two is that in delegative democracies the minimum value is 7, a bit less than half of the score in representative ones (15 percent), even when the maximum is similar in both (72 and 78, respectively).

⁴⁷ I owe this comment to Daniel Brinks.

⁴⁸ The threshold for the effective number of parties is above 5-6 parties and for volatility is around 65; mean values for both variables are 4 and 40, respectively.

⁴⁹ I also run an additional model including Shugart and Carey's (1992, p.155) index of presidential institutional powers and Negretto's (2009, p.139) index of legislative presidential powers. The coefficients for both variables move in the expected direction but only the first one is robust and statistically significant, indicating that institutionally powerful presidents and delegative democracies tend to be empirically associated. The number of cases drops to 111 because the first index is not available for Bolivia, while the Pseudo R-squared increase to .22 in the Ordinal Logit model.

⁵⁰ The mean value of inflation for the selected cases and years is 131 percent a year.

⁵¹ The lowest value in GDP growth is -11.8 (Peru in 1983; and -11.7 in 1989; Argentina decreased -10.9 in 2002), and the highest inflation is 12,300 percent (Bolivia in 1985), followed by Peru (6,837 in 1990), Argentina (3,058 in 1989), and Brazil (2,736 in 1990).

⁵² Brazil's GDP grew at an average of 2.6 percent between 1985 and 2002. Its GDP decreased only in three years, at an average of -1.7 percent. Argentina's GDP grew to half of Brazil's during the period (1.4 percent between 1983 and 2002), decreasing in nine years out of twenty. The largest falls were a -7.6 in 1985, a -7.5 in 1989, and a -11 percent collapse in 2002. Brazil never experienced anything similar.

⁵³ We can take for instance two powerful presidents in each country: Carlos Menem and Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Although both of them could reach majorities to pass crucial bills, Menem's party controlled almost four times the share of seats in the Chamber of Deputies that Cardoso's party controlled.