

The Political Regimes Project

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The Political Regimes Project is a comprehensive effort to study the determinants and comparative performance of political regimes. The main goal of the project is to assemble and analyze a large cross-national dataset containing indicators of the three basic political regime types (democracy, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism) and a variety of political regime subtypes (e.g., parliamentary democracy, bureaucratic authoritarianism). This dataset will contain yearly measures of political regime type and subtype for 117 major countries from 1946 (or a country's first full year of independence) through 1988. The author plans to use this dataset as the basis for a comprehensive study of the determinants and performance of political regimes, and will eventually make the dataset available to other researchers. The comprehensive scope of the Political Regimes Database, its time series properties, and the elaborate typology of regimes that it is based upon will enable researchers to examine political regimes in novel ways that may yield valuable new insights.

Questions about democracy and other types of political regime have been a central focus of political inquiry since the time of Aristotle. Research on political regimes has remained at the forefront of modern political science and political sociology throughout the post-World War II era, as researchers have grappled with problems such as the origins of totalitarianism (Arendt 1951; Friedrich and Brzezinski 1965), the prospects for democratization in underdeveloped societies (Lerner 1958; Lipset 1960; Huntington 1968), the emergence of authoritarianism in certain newly industrializing countries (O'Donnell 1973; Stepan 1973; Linz 1978), and the comparative performance of different regime types (Powell 1982; Weede 1983; Sloan and Tedin 1987). Recently, a number of major studies have appeared on the democratic transitions currently occurring in Latin America and elsewhere (O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986; Baloyra 1987; Malloy and Seligson 1987).

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Most of the literature on political regimes has focused on two basic issues. First, many of these studies have examined the *determinants* of political regime type: the social, economic, political, psychological, and cultural factors that determine what type of regime exists in a particular country. Second, a growing body of literature has examined the *comparative performance* of different types of regime in such areas as promoting political stability, resolving intrasocietal conflict, promoting economic growth, and reducing inequality. Most of the pioneering work in these two areas consisted of case studies focusing on one or a few countries. However, broad, cross-national studies utilizing quantitative data have made important contributions to this literature by enabling researchers to use comprehensive samples and employ rigorous analytical methods (e.g., Lipset 1960; Cnudde and Neubauer 1969; Bollen 1979; Powell 1982).

This article describes the conceptual foundations and data collection procedures being used by the author to assemble a cross-national dataset on political regimes called the Political Regimes Database. This dataset is similar to those already mentioned in both its conceptual and its methodological foundations. It is designed to address questions about the determinants and performance of political regimes similar to those addressed in these earlier studies. However, the Political Regimes Database differs from most of the datasets used in these earlier studies in three important ways. First, it classifies countries into three main regime types (democratic, totalitarian, and authoritarian), as well as a variety of subtypes, rather than according to a simple democracy-autocracy continuum, as most earlier studies do. Second, it employs richer definitions of regime type which yield more robust empirical measures. Third, it contains not only cross-national data on most countries in the world but also yearly time series data covering the entire post-World War II period, enabling researchers to address complex questions about the timing and dynamics of issues pertaining to political regimes.

The Conceptual Foundations of the Political Regimes Database

A dataset of this kind must be based on definitions of the main types of political regime that are both widely accepted and easily operationalized. This section discusses the basic definitions used in developing the Political Regimes Database. The next section then discusses how these definitions are operationalized and the coding procedures used to collect empirical data on the different political regime types.

A political regime is a set of rules, procedures, and understandings which govern relations between the state and society in a particular country (Macridis 1986:2). Three main types of political regime are commonly referred to in the literature: democratic, totalitarian, and authoritarian. In addition, many variations exist on each of these basic regime types, yielding a wide variety of political regime subtypes.

A democratic regime is defined by Robert Dahl (1971: 2-3) as a regime in which the state is highly responsive to the preferences of society because all adult citizens are free to formulate their preferences, to signify their preferences to other citizens and to the state, and to have their preferences weighed without discrimination in the

TABLE 1
A Typology of Political Regimes

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Democracy</u>	<u>Totalitarianism</u>	<u>Authoritarianism</u>
1) Freedoms of Organization and Expression (2a-c, 1b)	Y	N	N
2) Representative Process for Selecting Government Officials (3a, 3b)	Y	N	N
3) Representative State Institutions (1a, 1b)	Y	N	?
4) Number and Character of Political Parties (2d)	>1	1t	?
5) "Totalist" Ideology (1c, 5b)	N	Y	N
6) State/Party Domination of Societal Organizations (5i, 5j)	N	Y	?
7) Political Repression (4a-c)	N	Y	Y

conduct of state policymaking. Dahl goes on to list eight basic requirements necessary for these conditions to hold, including freedoms of organization and expression, the universal rights to vote, run for public office, and compete for political support, the existence of alternative sources of information and free and fair elections, and the existence of institutions for making state policy responsive to public expressions of preference. Carl Friedrich (1969: cited in Linz 1975: 187-188) defines a totalitarian regime as one in which the state is guided by a "totalist" ideology, is controlled by a single, mass-mobilizational political party backed up by a pervasive secret police, and maintains monopolies on mass communications, the coercive apparatus, and other societal organizations. Juan Linz (1970: 255) defines an authoritarian regime as one in which the state is controlled by one leader (or a small group of leaders), affords very limited political pluralism, is not guided by an elaborate ideology, does not seek or permit extensive political mobilization, and exercises power in ways that are formally ill-defined, though actually quite predictable.

These definitions, with some minor modifications, suggest that the three main political regime types can be fully defined and adequately distinguished from one another with the seven-dimensional typology shown in Table 1.

The first three dimensions of this typology embody the eight essential requirements for democracy identified by Dahl. The first dimension incorporates three of these requirements: freedoms of organization and expression, and the existence of alternative sources of information.¹ The second dimension incorporates four more of Dahl's requirements: it identifies whether the process for selecting government officials is representative in the sense that it is determined by free and fair elections in which all adult citizens can vote, run for office, and compete for support. The third dimension of the typology embodies Dahl's last essential requirement for democracy: it identifies whether state institutions are representative in the sense that they are structured in a way that makes state policy responsive to public expressions of preference. As indicated in the first column of the table, democratic regimes must have affirmative values (i.e., "Y") on each of these dimensions. Although totali-

tarian and authoritarian regimes may possess formally representative institutions such as a parliament that are rendered nonrepresentative by the nature of the selection process or by the extralegal use of coercion by the state (“?” on dimension three).

The next three dimensions of the typology refer mainly to characteristics of totalitarian regimes. Totalitarian regimes have a single political party with a totalitarian (i.e., vanguard, mass-mobilizational) character (“1t” on dimension four). By contrast, democratic regimes almost inevitably have two or more nontotalitarian parties (“>1”). Although authoritarian regimes may have political parties, these parties are nontotalitarian and rarely have much political significance (“?”). Totalitarian regimes also have an official ideology that is “totalist” in the sense that it guides much of the activity of the state and the party, producing a “total” politicization of society (“Y” on dimension five). Although democratic and authoritarian regimes may have guiding ideologies, they are never “totalist” in this sense (“N”). The state and/or the party also control a variety of societal organizations in a totalitarian regime, including the mass media, labor unions, schools, and productive establishments (“Y” on dimension six). Although the state and political parties may also control such organizations in democratic and authoritarian regimes, this control is never so extensive in a democratic regime (“N”) and rarely so in an authoritarian regime (“?”). Finally, repression does not occur systematically in democratic regimes (“N” on dimension seven), but generally does in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes (“Y”).

Most of the dimensions in this typology are clearly continuous rather than dichotomous, as depicted in Table 1. Moreover, the characterizations given in Table 1 of democracy, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism in terms of these seven dimensions clearly omit several theoretically possible political regime configurations, such as a nondemocratic regime which is not repressive. These two considerations suggest that some political regimes in practice may actually lie somewhere between the three ideal-typic regime types depicted in Table 1 and therefore should be described in such terms as “partial democracy” or “limited authoritarianism” (Wesson 1987: ix) rather than simply “democracy” or “authoritarianism.” This issue will be discussed further in the article, where more detailed measures of political regime type are introduced.

The typology shown in Table 1 also does not embody a number of other factors that are not central to the definitions of democracy, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism but which nevertheless can be important characteristics of political regimes. These additional regime characteristics identify certain *subtypes* of democratic, totalitarian, and authoritarian regimes. Exhibit 1 lists some of the more important political regime subtypes that have been identified in the literature.

One important factor that distinguishes different subtypes of democratic regime is the nature of the rules and procedures governing representation, which are typically spelled out in a country’s constitution. Two key aspects of these rules and procedures have received considerable attention in the literature on democratic regimes: the distinction between presidential and parliamentary forms of executive-legislative relationship, and the distinction between majoritarian and representational electoral

EXHIBIT 1**Political Regime Types and Sub-Types****Democratic Regimes**

presidential vs. parliamentary (3c)
 majoritarian vs. representational (3d)
 two-party vs. multi-party (2d, 2e)
 distribution of power among parties (2d)
 extremist multi-party (2f, 2g)
 consociational (5a)

Totalitarian Regimes

type of ideology (1c)
 populist (5c)

Authoritarian Regimes

traditional (5d)
 military (5e)
 bureaucratic (5f, 5i)
 corporatist (5g)
 racial/ethnic "democracy" (1c)
 post-totalitarian (1c, 2d, 5b, 5f, 5h)
 mobilizational (5b)
 personalistic (5h)
 populist (5c)

systems (Powell 1982: 54-73). Another important distinction among democratic regimes concerns the nature of their party systems. Three important aspects of party systems have received considerable attention in the literature: the number of significant political parties operating at the national level, the distribution of power among these parties, and the existence of extremist parties in a multiparty system (Sartori 1976: 131-216; Powell 1982: 74-110). A third important distinction among democratic regimes concerns the existence of consociational mechanisms which serve to promote compromise and consensus among societal groups, including federalist systems, special legislative practices, and state agencies that facilitate intergroup compromise (McRae 1974; Lijphart 1977).²

Linz (1975: 191, 230-240) has suggested that useful distinctions can be made among totalitarian regimes on the basis of differences in the nature and importance of the guiding ideology, the party, other mass organizations, and the leader or leadership group. Fundamental differences in the ideological bases of Soviet and Nazi totalitarianism and the implications of these differences for institutional structure and leadership style suggest that the distinction between "Left" and "Right" totalitarianism is quite significant. Moreover, the Khomeini regime in contemporary Iran fits the totalitarian model quite closely yet differs substantially from the Soviet and Nazi examples, suggesting that other types of ideology can provide a basis for totalitarianism (Macridis 1986: 246-249). Charismatic leadership and very high levels of mass mobilization have been important features of both the Khomeini regime and the Castro regime in Cuba, suggesting that populist totalitarianism may

be a useful subtype. Unfortunately, the predominance of the Soviet model of totalitarianism has restricted the variation in this regime type, making it difficult to distinguish genuine subtypes of totalitarianism from anomalies caused by cultural and other differences.

Linz (1975: 252-350) has also developed a useful typology of authoritarian regimes.³ The two most basic subtypes distinguished by Linz are traditional⁴ and bureaucratic-military authoritarian regimes. Traditional authoritarian regimes are those in which the ruling authority (generally a single person) maintains itself in power primarily through a combination of appeals to traditional legitimacy, patron-client ties, and repression, which is carried out by an apparatus bound to the ruling authority through personal loyalties. Authoritarian regimes that are wholly or partly traditional include those in Morocco, Oman, Nepal, and Ethiopia under Haile Selassie. Linz defines bureaucratic-military authoritarian regimes as those governed by a coalition of military officers and technocrats who act pragmatically (rather than ideologically) within the limits of their bureaucratic mentality. Given the large number of military regimes and the recent prominence of "bureaucratic authoritarianism" in countries like Argentina and South Korea (O'Donnell 1973; Im 1987), it is perhaps best to distinguish simple military authoritarian regimes from bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, where a powerful group of technocrats uses the state apparatus to try to rationalize and develop the economy.

Three other well-known subtypes of authoritarian regime identified by Linz are corporatist (or organic-statist) authoritarian regimes, racial and ethnic "democracies," and post-totalitarian regimes. Corporatist authoritarian regimes are those in which corporatist institutions (Schmitter 1974) are used extensively by the state to coopt and demobilize powerful interest groups. Authoritarian corporatism appears in a variety of forms and is an important component of many authoritarian regimes, although it has been most widely studied in Latin America (Malloy 1977; Hammergren 1977). Racial and ethnic "democracies" are authoritarian regimes in which certain racial or ethnic groups enjoy full democratic rights while others are largely or entirely denied these rights, as in South Africa today. Post-totalitarian regimes are those in which totalitarian institutions such as the party, the secret police, and the state-controlled mass media have been firmly established, but where the following conditions exist: ideological orthodoxy has declined in favor of growing routinization, the use of repression has declined, the state's top leadership is less personalized and more secure, and the level of mass mobilization has declined substantially. All of the Eastern European Communist countries (except perhaps Albania) can be considered post-totalitarian in the mid-1980s.

Finally, Linz identifies several kinds of authoritarian regime that resemble totalitarianism in certain ways and can be classified together as mobilizational authoritarian regimes. One well-known variant of this subtype is the Fascist (or post-democratic mobilizational) regime, which generally contains a single mass party that promotes a fair amount of popular mobilization and follows an ideology that is not very coherent and not really "totalist." Italy under Mussolini, and Spain in the early Franco era, are good examples of Fascist regimes. Postindependence mobilizational regimes, such as those that appeared in many African countries after decolonization,

also usually have a single, mobilizational party and a guiding ideology, although neither is generally as prominent as under fascism. Pretotalitarian regimes, such as those that existed briefly in Germany and in several Eastern European Communist countries before the emergence of full totalitarianism, generally consist of an emerging totalitarian party in competition with one or more other parties in a highly unstable and unpredictable situation.

Two other subtypes of authoritarian regime are frequently referred to in the literature. Personalistic authoritarian regimes are those in which heads of government rule arbitrarily, exercising authority mainly through patronage networks and coercion rather than through institutions and formal rules (Jackson and Rosberg 1982: 10-12). Most political regimes in postcolonial Africa have had a highly personalistic character. Populist authoritarian regimes are mobilizational regimes in which a strong, charismatic, manipulative leader rules through a coalition involving key lower class groups (Dix 1985), in the manner of Peron in Argentina and Nasser in Egypt.

The political regime subtypes listed in Exhibit 1 are not all mutually exclusive. For example, parliamentary consociational democracies and corporatist bureaucratic authoritarian regimes can clearly exist (e.g., Belgium and Brazil in the 1970s, respectively); and personalistic and populist authoritarian regimes overlap considerably with traditional and mobilizational authoritarian regimes (respectively). Moreover, some of the subtypes associated with one of the basic regime types identified above can obviously be applied to the others, for example, traditional, corporatist, or populist democracy (Coleman 1960; Katzenstein 1984; Dix 1985). Finally, as with the typology given in Table 1, some regimes in practice may not fit clearly into any of the subtypes listed in Exhibit 1.

Variables in the Political Regimes Database

Exhibit 2 contains a list of the 35 variables included in the Political Regimes Database. Values for each variable are coded on a yearly basis from 1946 (or a country's first full year of independence) through 1988 for the 117 countries that were independent and had a population of at least one million in 1970.⁵ Most of these variables are categorical rather than continuous, and most have simple ordinal properties. The permissible values each variable can assume are listed beside it in parentheses. These variables are of two basic types: variables that are used to identify the political regime types and subtypes listed in Table 1 and Exhibit 1 (variables 1a-5j), and a few variables that are included for use as dependent or independent variables in the analysis of the regime type data (variables 6a-h),

Variables 1a-c, 2a-d, 3a-b, 4a-c, 5b, 5i, and 5j embody the seven dimensions of the typology introduced here and therefore serve to distinguish the three basic political regime types. (See Table 1 for a summary of the variables associated with each dimension.) The first dimension of the typology ("freedoms of organization and expression") is embodied in variables 2a-c, which address these freedoms directly, and in variable 1b ("existence of the rule of law"), since citizens are not really free to organize or express themselves if they are not assured of protection

EXHIBIT 2
Variables Contained in the Political Regimes Database

1) Exercise of Authority

- a) Representative Institutions and Law (yes, no; yes, no)
- b) Existence of the Rule of Law (yes, no)
- c) Type of Official Ideology (totalists, guiding, none; Marxist-Leninist, nationalist, religious, exclusionary, other)

2) Political Participation

- a) Freedom of Speech and Press (yes, moderate, low)
- b) Freedom of Association (yes, moderate, low)
- c) Freedom of Organization (yes, moderate, low)
- d) Number and Character of Political Parties (0, 1, 2, >2; totalitarian, hegemonic, predominant)
- e) Party Fractionalization (index)
- f) Extremist Parties (left, right, left + right)
- g) Extremist Party Vote (percent)

3) Leadership Selection

- a) Representative Selection Process (yes, no; yes, no)
- b) Representative Government (yes, no)
- c) Executive-Legislative System (presidential, parliamentary, none)
- d) Electoral System (majoritarian, representational, none)

4) Fundamental Human Rights

- a) Existence of Political Prisoners (high, moderate, none)
- b) Abuse of Political Prisoners (high, moderate, none)
- c) General Climate of Repression (high, moderate, none)

5) Other Political Regime Characteristics

- a) Consociational Institutions (high, moderate, low)
- b) Mobilizational Regime (high, moderate, low)
- c) Populist Regime (high, moderate, low)
- d) Traditionalistic Regime (high, moderate, low)
- e) Military Leadership (high, moderate, low)
- f) Technocratic Leadership (high, moderate, low)
- g) Corporatist Institutions (high, moderate, low)
- h) Personalistic Leadership (high, moderate, low)
- i) State Role in Economic Planning (high, moderate, low)
- J) State Involvement in Political Socialization (high, moderate, low)

6) Miscellaneous Indicators

- a) Level of Popular Political Activity (high, moderate, low)
 - b) Degree of State Ownership of Means of Production (high, moderate, low)
 - c) Extent of State-Sponsored Social Welfare Programs (high, moderate, low)
 - d) International Alignment (east, west, non-aligned)
 - e) Changes of Government (0, 1, 2, >2)
 - f) Acts of Non-Violent Popular Unrest (0, 1, 2, >2)
 - g) Acts of Violent Unrest (0, 1, 2, >2)
 - h) Extremist Guerrilla Groups (left, right, left + right)
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Note: All variable values can also be designated as "probable." See note 12.

under the law from their political opponents.⁶ The second dimension ("representative process for selecting top state officials") is embodied in variables 3a and 3b.

Variable 3a asks whether an explicit set of rules exists for selecting all top state officials and, if so, whether these rules are representative in the sense that the highest such officials are chosen through free and fair elections, all adult citizens can vote, run, and compete freely for support in these elections (except under extraordinary circumstances), and all top state officials who are not elected in this way are appointed by higher officials who are.⁷ Variable 3b asks whether the current government was selected through such a representative process. The third dimension of the typology (“representative state institutions and laws”) is embodied in variable 1b (“existence of the rule of law”) and variable 1a, which asks whether the rights of citizens and the structure of government are formally specified in a body of law, whether this body of law (if one exists) is representative in the sense that it forces state policy to reflect popular preferences,⁸ and whether these laws are actually enforced by the state.⁹

Variables 1c, 2d, 4a-c, 5b, 5i, and 5j embody the remaining dimensions of the typology. The fourth dimension (“number and character of political parties”) is embodied in variable 2d, which indicates the number of political parties and whether a single party is totalitarian. The fifth dimension (“totalist ideology”) is embodied in variable 1c, which indicates whether state policy is guided by a totalist ideology, and in variable 5b, which indicates whether the regime is mobilizational. The sixth dimension (“state/party domination of societal organizations”) is embodied in variables 5i and 5j, which indicate the degree to which the state and/or the ruling party dominate the economy and institutions like schools and the mass media. The seventh dimension of the typology (“political repression”) is embodied in variables 4a-c, which ask whether political prisoners exist, how badly they are treated, and whether a more general climate of repression exists.

Table 2 shows how the three basic political regime types are operationalized in terms of the permissible values of variables 1a-c, 2a-d, 3a-b, 4a-c, 5b, 5i, and 5j. It is evident that certain configurations of these 15 variables do not correspond to any of the three basic regime types as they are operationalized here (e.g., a regime without representative institutions and law [1a = no] but where repression does not occur [4a-c = no]). A regime of this kind can be referred to as a “partial democracy,” “partial totalitarianism,” or “partial authoritarianism,” depending on which of the three basic regime types it most closely resembles. Measures of these “partial” categories can be operationalized in terms of the 15 variables used to define the three basic regime types, much like the operationalizations of these three regime types show in Table 2. Moreover, since most of these 15 variables have simple ordinal properties, ordinal measures of the “degree” of democracy, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism can be constructed from them. Ordinal measures of this kind would make distinctions of “degree” among the partial regimes of each type and would distinguish the “degree” to which each partial regime differs from the corresponding “full” regime type, which would have the highest permissible value on the ordinal measure. For example, an ordinal measure of the “degree of democracy” could be constructed that would distinguish among the partial democracies as well as each partial democracy from a full democracy, whose value would lie at one endpoint of the measure. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to develop

such measures here, it should be noted that a "degree of democracy" measure of this kind would closely resemble those developed by Dahl (1971), Bollen (1980), Coppedge and Reinicke (1988), and other scholars.¹⁰

Variables 1c, 2d-g, 3c-d, and 5a-i identify the political regime subtypes discussed above. (A summary of the variables corresponding to each subtype is given in Exhibit 1.) Presidential, parliamentary, majoritarian, and representational democratic regimes are identified with the appropriate values of variables 3c and 3d. Two-party, multiparty and extremist multiparty democratic regimes are identified with variables 2d and 2f, which draw on Sartori's (1976:285) classification of party systems, and alternatively with variables 2e and 2g, which provide continuous measures of party fractionalization and the percentage of the vote going to extremist parties (Powell 1982: 74-96). Consociational democratic regimes are identified with

TABLE 2
Characterizations of the Three Main Political Regime Types in Terms of the
Variables in the Political Regimes Database

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Democracy</u>	<u>Totalitarianism</u>	<u>Authoritarianism</u>
1a	yes-yes	yes-no	any
1b	yes	any	no
1c	none or guiding	any totalist	none or guiding
2a	yes	low	moderate or low
2b	yes	low	moderate or low
2c	yes	low	moderate or low
2d	2 or >2	1-totalitarian	any
2e			
2f			
2g			
3a	yes-yes	no or yes-no	any
3b	yes	no	no
3c			
3d			
4a	no	any	any
4b	no	any	any
4c	no	high	high or moderate
5a			
5b	any	high	any
5c			
5d			
5e			
5f			
5g			
5h			
5i	any	high	any
5j	low	high	any
6a			
6b			
6c			
6d			
6e			
6f			
6g			
6h			

high values of variable 5a. Different ideological subtypes of totalitarianism, as well as racial and ethnic “democracies,” are identified with variable 1c. Populist totalitarianism and authoritarianism are identified with high values of variable 5c. Military, corporatist, mobilizational, and personalistic authoritarianism are identified with high values of variables 5e, 5g, 5b, and 5h (respectively). Bureaucratic authoritarianism is identified with high values of variables 5f and 5i. Finally, post-totalitarian authoritarian regimes are identified with the variable values shown for totalitarianism in Table 2, except that they have guiding rather than totalist ideologies (variable 1c); they have nontotalitarian single parties (variable 2d); they are not highly mobilizational (variable 5b); they do not have highly personalistic leadership (variable 5h); they are at least moderately technocratic (variable 5f); they are usually not highly repressive (variables 4a-c); and they have succeeded totalitarian regimes chronologically.

Variables 1a-5j therefore delineate a complex typology in which political regimes are classified in two basic ways: (1) according to the three basic regime types (democracy, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism) and the “partial” categories corresponding to these three basic regime types; and (2) according to the regime subtypes listed in Exhibit 1. In the first of these classification systems, regimes can be distinguished with ordinal measures that embody the “degree” of democracy, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism. In the second classification system, regimes of each basic type are distinguished according to the qualitative criteria embodied in the corresponding sub-types.¹¹ As mentioned earlier, some of the subtypes associated with one basic regime type can be applied to others, providing further possibilities for classifying regimes; and variables 6b-d can be used to classify regimes further according to their international alignment and type of economic system. The research issues that will be addressed by the author with these data are outlined in the following section.

The variables listed in Exhibit 2 are coded by research assistants in a procedure designed to maximize the accuracy of the data. This procedure currently entails three basic steps for each country. First, the research assistant studies the recent history of the country by examining sources like *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, *The Political Handbook of the World*, the *Encyclopedia of the Third World*, reference works published by organizations such as Amnesty International and Europa Publications, and appropriate books and articles on the country. Second, the research assistant writes a detailed yearly chronology on the country using these sources. As the research assistant writes each yearly entry in this chronology, he or she assigns appropriate values to each of the 35 variables for that year, using decision rules¹² developed by the author. The text of the chronology is written in a way that explains why each value was assigned to each variable.¹³ Third, when the chronology and list of variable values have been completed for a particular country, the author examines them in detail and returns them to the research assistant for any necessary revisions. This last step is repeated until the author is satisfied with the quality of the chronology and variable list. To date, studies embodying these three steps have been completed for sixteen countries. The regime types and subtypes identified for these sixteen countries are shown in Exhibit 3.

EXHIBIT 3
Regime Types and Sub-Types for Sixteen Selected Countries

Burma

1948-1961 authoritarian
 1962-1987 military authoritarian

China

1949-1978 Marxist totalitarian
 1979-1987 post-totalitarian authoritarian

Cambodia

1954-1969 traditional authoritarian
 1970-1974 military authoritarian
 1975-1978 Marxist totalitarian
 1979-1987 military authoritarian

Japan

1946-1952 partial democracy
 1953-1987 parliamentary majoritarian democracy

Laos

1954-1959 traditional authoritarian
 1960-1974 military authoritarian
 1975-1987 Marxist totalitarian

Liberia

1946-1979 personalistic authoritarian
 1980-1985 military authoritarian
 1986-1987 personalistic authoritarian

Mexico

1946-1987 corporatist bureaucratic authoritarian

Nigeria

1960-1965 partial democracy
 1966-1979 military authoritarian
 1980-1983 partial democracy
 1984-1987 military authoritarian

North Korea

1948-1987 Marxist totalitarian

North Vietnam/Vietnam

1955-1987 Marxist totalitarian

Philippines

1946-1947 presidential representational democracy
 1948-1971 partial democracy
 1972-1985 personalistic authoritarian
 1986-1987 partial democracy

Singapore

1966-1987 personalistic authoritarian

South Korea

1949-1960 partial democracy
 1961-1985 military authoritarian

South Vietnam

1955-1963 personalistic authoritarian
 1964-1974 military authoritarian

Taiwan

1948-1987 personalistic authoritarian

Turkey

1946-1959 partial democracy
 1960 military authoritarian
 1961-1979 partial democracy
 1980-1982 military authoritarian
 1983-1987 partial democracy

In addition, the author hopes to hire academic specialists on each of the 117 countries to examine the chronology and variable list developed for each country and recommend any further revisions that may be necessary. These revisions will then be made by a research assistant and checked by the author. This fourth step in the data coding procedure would serve essentially as an external validity check on the three preceding steps, helping to ensure the accuracy of the data.¹⁴

Research Objectives

The author intends to use the Political Regimes Database to study the determinants and comparative performance of the various political regime types and subtypes contained in the Database. He also intends to make the Database available to other researchers.¹⁵ This section outlines the main research questions of each kind that will be addressed by the author and the main advantages offered by the Database in studying these issues.

In a recent review of literature on the determinants of democracy, Samuel Huntington (1984) distinguished between two basic types of determinants: broad, structural characteristics of a society which serve essentially as preconditions for democracy, and political processes which result in the installation or breakdown of democracy. Huntington's classification provides a useful starting point for delineating the determinants of regime type more generally. The first group of determinants identified by Huntington includes factors such as a society's level of economic development (Lipset 1960; Cutright 1963; Neubauer 1967); the particular nature of its economic development (Moore 1966; O'Donnell 1973; Gasiorowski 1988); characteristics of its political system (Dahl 1971; Lijphart 1977; Diamond, Lipset, and Linz 1987); aspects of its political culture (Pye and Verba 1965; Bollen and Jackman 1985); and various international factors (Gourevitch 1978; Muller 1985; Gasiorowski 1986; Whitehead 1986). The second group includes the effect of institutionalization on democracy (Huntington 1968); cyclical and dialectical patterns of democratization (Huntington 1984: 210-211); and democratic installations or breakdowns caused by legitimation crises (Rustow 1970; Kaufman 1976; Linz 1978; Baloyra 1987).

Studies of the comparative performance of political regimes have examined whether some types of regime are more successful than others in achieving policy goals such as promoting economic growth (Weede 1983; Goldsmith 1986); reducing inequality (Jackman 1975; Muller 1988); implementing certain kinds of social programs (Moon and Dixon 1985; Sloan and Tedin 1987); reducing intrasocietal conflict and violence (Hibbs 1973; Powell 1982); and avoiding or engaging in international war (Merritt and Zinnes 1988). A large body of literature also exists on the comparative performance of military and civilian regimes, which can be regarded as aspects of political regime type (Nordlinger 1970; Jackman 1976; Remmer 1978; Ravenhill 1980).

The author intends to replicate and extend these studies using the Political Regimes Database. The conceptual framework and coding procedures used to create the Database contain a number of features that will permit this to be done in new and innovative ways. The comprehensive typology of political regimes used in constructing the Database will make possible studies of the determinants and performance of nondemocratic regimes and processes of transition among different regime types and subtypes. The large number of countries represented in the Database (117) will enable researchers to undertake comprehensive studies of these research issues. The existence of time series data for each country will facilitate analyses of processes and sequences of regime transition, the stability of regimes over time, the effect of regime change on performance, and various kinds of time-delay and cumulative effects. The multidimensional typology and the large number of component

variables contained in the Database will enable researchers to study alternative conceptualizations of regime type and to use the component variables themselves as dependent or independent variables in empirical analyses.

Finally, the use of detailed historical research to assemble the Database gives the data a high degree of validity, eliminates the problem of missing values in the data,¹⁶ and makes possible the study of regime characteristics that cannot be measured easily in any other way, such as the existence of the rule of law, populism, and personalistic leadership.

The current centrality of the concepts of democracy, totalitarianism, and authoritarianism in the fields of comparative politics and political sociology and the shortcomings of the existing empirical literature on these regime types suggest that the Political Regimes Database may make possible important new contributions in the various areas of research it touches upon. Moreover, with the growing realization that politics plays a key role in economic performance, the growing importance of political unrest in underdeveloped countries for U.S. foreign policy and for international politics more generally, and the increasing interest in the United States and elsewhere in democracy and human rights, research based on the Political Regimes Database may have considerable practical significance as well.

Notes

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1. "Freedom of expression" and "alternative sources of information" are quite similar in practice and are therefore combined here and in the variables introduced below.
2. For other typologies of democratic regimes see Almond and Powell (1966: 259-271) and Lijphart (1977: 105-119).
3. For other typologies of authoritarian regimes see Almond and Powell (1966: 271-191), Huntington (1970), and Perlmutter (1981). Each of these typologies includes totalitarianism as a subtype of authoritarianism.
4. Although Linz (1975: 252-264) does not consider traditional regimes to be authoritarian (because they are not "modern"), they clearly fit the definition of authoritarianism given above.
5. Countries that were not independent by 1970 are excluded from the Database because the relatively short span of years available for them would preclude their use in many of the analyses to be undertaken in the project. Countries with a population of less than one million by 1970 are excluded because their small size is likely to introduce complicating anomalies into the analysis, and because appropriate data for them are often difficult to obtain.
6. This latter criterion implies that a country cannot be considered democratic if domestic unrest routinely prevents citizens from exercising their political freedoms. Although this criterion is not generally regarded as a requirement for democracy, it is essential for excluding cases like contemporary El Salvador and Colombia, where legitimate democratic institutions appear to exist and full political freedoms are apparently permitted by the state, but where civil war and death squad activity routinely prevent citizens from exercising these freedoms. This criterion can easily be dropped by researchers using the Database.

For these and all other variables in the Database which identify regime types and subtypes, permissible values are defined in ways that facilitate these identifications. For example, variable 3a is defined in a way that clearly distinguishes between democratic and nondemocratic methods for selecting government officials. (See note 12.) Three permissible values ("yes," "moderate," and "low") can appear for variables 2a-c and for many other variables in the Database, enabling researchers to make simple ordinal distinctions among regimes with these variables. Only three categories are used for these variables because initial data collection efforts indicated that the use of four or more categories had an adverse effect on intercoder reliability.

7. Variable 3a asks two interrelated questions: whether such rules exist, and whether they are representative. (See note 12.) This variable can therefore take on three possible values: yes, such rules exist, and, yes, they are representative; yes, they exist, and, no, they are not representative; and, no, they do not exist.
8. Variable 1a also asks two interrelated questions and can take on three possible values. (See note 7.)
9. The empirical measure of democracy embodied in variables 1a-b, 2a-c, and 3a-b is based explicitly on Dahl's eight requirements for democracy. This measure is therefore *an improvement over* Dahl's (1971: 231-243)

empirical measure, which was based on component variables developed for other purposes, and is very similar to the measure recently developed by two of Dahl's students (Coppedge and Reinicke 1988). It is also quite similar to Bollen's (1980) measure of democracy, which has been used very widely by other scholars. The major difference between this measure and Bollen's is that it does not include as a component variable Taylor and Hudson's (1972) measure of the number of government sanctions, which really has nothing to do with democracy as this term is commonly conceived. For a good review of many other empirical measures of democracy see the discussion in Bollen (1980).

10. The main difference between the measure described here and those developed by these other authors is that full democracies can be explicitly identified and distinguished from partial democracies with this measure, because all full democracies receive the highest permissible value, whereas no clear distinction is made between full and partial democracies by these other authors. This implies that distinctions of the "degree" of democracy can be made only among partial democracies and *not* among full democracies, as is done by these other authors. For example, this measure could make ordinal distinctions between partial democracies such as Mexico and Turkey, and could also make ordinal distinctions between these two countries and a full democracy such as the United States, but could *not* make ordinal distinctions among full democracies such as the United States and France. This feature of the measure eliminates the ambiguity that is inherent in distinctions of the latter kind and enables researchers to identify explicitly (and therefore study) transitions between partial and full democracies.
11. Most of the political regime subtypes listed in Exhibit 1 are identified with variables that have simple ordinal properties. Ordinal distinctions can therefore also be made among regimes falling within these subtypes.
12. For example, the decision rule for variable 3a ("representative selection process") reads as follows:
Does a clearly-specified set of rules exist for the selection of all top government officials? (Yes or No).
If so, is this selection process representative in the sense that: (i) the highest offices of government are subject to free and fair elections; (ii) all adult citizens can vote, run for office, and compete freely for support in these elections, except under extraordinary circumstances; and (iii) all top government officials who are not selected through such elections are appointed by higher officials who are? (Yes or No).
All other variables in the Database have similar decision rules. If a research assistant is unable to find enough information to make a definite decision about a particular variable, that individual is instructed to assign a value based on his or her general knowledge of conditions in the country at the time and to designate that value as "probable" (e.g., "yes-probable," "no-probable").
13. Research assistants are instructed to include in the text of the chronology all factual information used to assign values to the variables. After each passage in the text where this has been done, the variable number and value assigned to it are given in parentheses (e.g., "[3a=no]"). The chronologies therefore explain all value assignments made in assembling the Database.
14. The most important task performed by these specialists would be to check any "probable" values assigned by the research assistants. See note 12.
15. This will presumably be done through the Inter University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR).
16. Missing values are obviated by permitting the data coders to code variable values as "probable." See note 12.

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