Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research
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Research Note

DEMOCRACY WITH ADJECTIVES
Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research

By DAVID COLLIER and STEVEN LEVITSKY*

THE recent global wave of democratization has presented scholars with the challenge of dealing conceptually with a great diversity of postauthoritarian regimes. Although the new national political regimes in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the former communist world share important attributes of democracy, many of them differ profoundly both from each other and from the democracies in advanced industrial countries. Indeed, many are not considered fully democratic.

This article argues that scholars respond to this challenge by pursuing two potentially contradictory goals. On the one hand, researchers attempt to increase *analytic differentiation* in order to capture the diverse forms of democracy that have emerged. On the other hand, scholars are concerned with *conceptual validity*. Specifically, they seek to avoid the problem of conceptual stretching that arises when the concept of democracy is applied to cases for which, by relevant scholarly standards, it is not appropriate.[1] The result has been a proliferation of alternative conceptual forms, including a surprising number of subtypes

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[1] Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review* 64 (December 1970); and David Collier and James E. Mahon, Jr., "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis," *American Political Science Review* 87 (December 1993).

involving democracy "with adjectives."[2] Examples from among the hundreds of subtypes that have appeared include "authoritarian democracy," "neopatrimonial democracy," "military-dominated democracy," and "protodemocracy."

This proliferation has occurred despite the efforts by leading analysts to standardize usage of the term democracy on the basis of procedural definitions in the tradition of Joseph Schumpeter and Robert A. Dahl.[3] In important respects this standardization has been successful. Yet as democratization has continued and attention has focused on an increasingly diverse set of cases, the proliferation of subtypes and other conceptual innovations has continued. Hence, given the risk of growing conceptual confusion, the earlier effort to standardize usage must now be supplemented by assessing the structure of meaning that underlies these diverse forms of the concept.

This article initiates this assessment, focusing on qualitative categories[4] employed in the study of recent cases of democratization at the level of national political regimes, with particular attention to work on Latin America.[5] Our goal is twofold: to make more comprehensible the complex structure of the alternative strategies of conceptual innovation that have emerged and to examine the trade-offs among these strategies. We begin with Sartori's well-known strategies of moving up and down a ladder of generality—strategies aimed at avoiding conceptual stretching and increasing differentiation, respectively. Because this approach cannot be used to pursue both goals at once, we find that scholars have often turned to other strategies: creating "diminished" subtypes of democracy, "precising" the definition of democracy by adding defining attributes, and shifting the overarching concept with which democracy is associated (for example, from democratic *regime* to democratic *state*).

[2] A parallel expression, "democracy without adjectives," appeared in debates in Latin America among observers concerned with the persistence of incomplete and qualified forms of democracy. See, for instance, Enrique Krauze, *Por una democracia sin adjetivos* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz/Planeta, 1986).

[3] Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1947); and Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

[4] Along with the qualitative categories that are the focus of this discussion, valuable quantitative indicators have been developed for comparing recent cases of democratization. Ultimately, it will be productive to bring together insights about the strategies of conceptual innovation employed in these alternative approaches. However, an essential prior step, which is our present concern, is to learn more about the conceptual innovations introduced by scholars who employ qualitative categories.

[5] We are thus not primarily concerned with the literature on advanced industrial democracies, although this literature is an important point of reference in the studies we are examining. In a few places, we have included recent studies of countries that are not actually part of the current episode of democratization, but whose relatively new democracies are a point of comparison in the studies under review, for example, Colombia. We also include a few references to other historical cases that have been used in recent scholarship as important points of analytic contrast.

More broadly, the analysis seeks to encourage scholars to be more careful in their definition and use of concepts. The subtypes and other conceptual forms examined here are, after all, generally critical components of the main substantive arguments presented by these researchers, often advancing the author's overall characterization of the case or cases in question. These are the "data containers" that convey the most salient facts about the regimes under discussion.[6] If one is to describe the new regimes adequately, these data containers must be employed in a clear and appropriate manner.

Improved description, in turn, is essential for assessing the *causes* and *consequences* of democracy, which is a central goal of this literature. Many studies have treated democracy as an outcome to be explained, including major works of comparative-historical analysis and old and new studies of "social requisites."[7] Other analyses have looked at the impact of democracy and of specific types of democracy on economic growth, income distribution, economic liberalization and adjustment, and international conflict.[8] In these studies, the results of causal assessment can be strongly influenced by the meaning of democracy employed by the author.[9] We hope that the present discussion can serve as a step toward a greater consistency and clarity of meaning that will provide a more adequate basis for assessing causal relationships.

[6] Sartori (fn. 1), 1039.

[7] Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); Gregory M. Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy: Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review* 53 (March 1959); and idem, "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited," *American Sociological Review* 59 (February 1994); John B. Londregan and Keith T. Poole, "Does High Income Promote Democracy?" *World Politics* 49 (October 1996); and Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics* 49 (January 1997).

[8] Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Political Regimes and Economic Growth," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7 (Summer 1993); Kenneth A. Bollen and Robert W. Jackman, "Political Democracy and the Size Distribution of Income," *American Sociological Review* 50 (August 1985); Larry Sirowy and Alex Inkeles, "The Effects of Democracy on Economic Growth and Inequality: A Review," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 25 (Spring 1990); Karen L. Remmer, "The Politics of Economic Stabilization: IMF Standby Programs in Latin America, 1954–1984," *Comparative Politics* 19 (October 1986); Barbara Stallings and Robert Kaufman, eds., *Debt and Democracy in Latin America* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989); Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post–Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds., *Debating the Democratic Peace: An International Security Reader* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996); Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach, "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarianism versus Presidentialism," *World Politics* 46 (October 1993); Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); and Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5 (January 1994).

[9] See, for example, Kenneth A. Bollen and Robert W. Jackman, "Democracy, Stability, and Dichotomies," *American Sociological Review* 54 (August 1989), 613–16; and Russett (fn. 8), 15–16.

It merits emphasis that these strategies of conceptual innovation are by no means unique to qualitative research on recent democratization. They are found in many conceptual domains, both in the social sciences and beyond.[10] A further goal of this article is therefore to advance the broader understanding of how qualitative researchers deal with these basic issues of analytic differentiation and conceptual validity.

I. Definitions of Democracy in Research on Recent Democratization

In his famous analysis of "essentially contested concepts," the philosopher W. B. Gallie argues that democracy is "*the* appraisive political concept *par excellence*."[11] Correspondingly, one finds endless disputes over appropriate meaning and definition. However, the goal of Gallie's analysis is not simply to underscore the importance of such disputes, but to show that a recognition of the contested status of a given concept opens the possibility of understanding each meaning within its own framework. With reference to democracy, he argues that "politics being the art of the possible, democratic targets will be raised or lowered as circumstances alter," and he insists that these alternative standards should be taken seriously on their own terms.[12]

In this spirit, we focus on the procedural definitions that have been most widely employed in research on recent democratization at the level of national political regimes. These definitions refer to democratic *procedures*, rather than to substantive policies or other outcomes that might be viewed as democratic. These definitions are also "minimal," in that they deliberately focus on the smallest possible number of attributes that are still seen as producing a viable standard for democracy; not surprisingly, there is disagreement about which attributes are needed for the definition to be viable. For example, most of these scholars differentiate what they view as the more specifically political features of the regime from characteristics of the society and economy, on the

[10] For an analysis that focuses on some of these same strategies with reference to another social science concept, see David Collier, "Trajectory of a Concept: 'Corporatism' in the Study of Latin American Politics," in Peter H. Smith, ed., *Latin America in Comparative Perspective: New Approaches to Method and Analysis* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995). For discussions by linguists and cognitive scientists of the intuitive structure that underlies these strategies, see D. A. Cruse, *Lexical Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), chap. 6; George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), chaps. 2, 6; and John R. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), chaps. 2–3.

[11] W. B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1956), 184; emphasis in original.

[12] Ibid., quote at 186; see also pp. 178, 189, 190, 193.

grounds that the latter are more appropriately analyzed as potential causes or consequences of democracy, rather than as features of democracy itself.[13]

Within this framework, we focus on a "procedural minimum" definition that presumes fully contested elections with full suffrage and the absence of massive fraud, combined with effective guarantees of civil liberties, including freedom of speech, assembly, and association.[14] However, there is by no means consensus on a single definition. Some scholars, for example, have created an "*expanded* procedural minimum" definition by adding the criterion that elected governments must have effective power to govern—which, as we will see below, is a crucial issue in some countries.

II. SARTORI'S STRATEGIES

We first consider Sartori's strategies for achieving differentiation and avoiding conceptual stretching. Sartori builds on a basic insight about the organization of concepts: a significant aspect of the relationship between the meaning of concepts and the range of cases to which they apply can be understood in terms of a "ladder of generality."[15] This ladder is based on a pattern of inverse variation between the number of defining attributes and number of cases. Thus, concepts with *fewer* defining attributes commonly apply to *more* cases and are therefore higher on the ladder of generality, whereas concepts with *more* defining attributes apply to *fewer* cases and hence are lower on the ladder.

[13] For discussions of procedural definitions, see Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), chap. 2; Samuel P. Huntington, "The Modest Meaning of Democracy," in Robert A. Pastor, ed., *Democracy in the Americas: Stopping the Pendulum* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1989); Schumpeter (fn.3); and Dahl (fn. 3). On minimal definitions, see Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 28; and Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 9. On treating characteristics of the society and economy as a cause or consequence of democracy, see Juan J. Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science,* vol. 3 (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 182; and Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," *Comparative Politics* 23 (October 1990), 2.

[14] O'Donnell and Schmitter (fn. 13), 8 (but see note 33 below); Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, "Preface," in Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, eds., *Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1989), xvi; Di Palma (fn. 13), 16. See also Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 5.

[15] Sartori (fn. 1), 1040, actually refers to a ladder of "abstraction." However, because the term *abstract* is often understood in contrast to *concrete*, this label can be confusing. We therefore find that "ladder of generality" expresses the intended meaning more clearly.

DIFFERENTIATION

One of Sartori's goals is to show how conceptual differentiation can be increased by moving *down* the ladder of generality to concepts that have more defining attributes and fit a narrower range of cases. These concepts provide the more fine-grained distinctions that for some purposes are invaluable to the researcher.[16] This move down the ladder is often accomplished through the creation of what we will call "classical" subtypes of democracy.[17] Classical subtypes are understood as *full* instances of the root definition[18] of democracy in relation to which they are formed, at the same time that they are differentiated vis-à-vis other classical subtypes of this concept. Thus, "parliamentary democracy," "multiparty democracy," and "federal democracy" are all considered *definitely* democratic (by whatever standard the author is using), at the same time that each is considered a particular *type* of democracy (see Figure 1). In research on recent cases of democratization, the use of classical subtypes to achieve differentiation is found, for example, in the important debate on the consequences of parliamentary, as opposed to presidential, democracy.[19]

Moving down the ladder of generality provides useful differentiation, and the subtypes just noted play an important role in the recent literature. Yet subtypes formed in this manner may leave the analyst vulnerable to conceptual stretching, because they presume the cases under discussion are definitely democracies. If the particular case being studied is less than fully democratic, then the use of these subtypes as a tool of conceptual differentiation may not be appropriate. Analysts therefore seek concepts that distinguish among different *degrees* of democracy, in addition to distinguishing among different *types* of democracy. Because classical subtypes of democracy only contribute to the second of these two goals, they have not been the most common means of conceptual differentiation in studies of recent democratization.

[16] Sartori (fn. 1), 1041.

[17] We refer to these as classical subtypes because they fit within the "classical" understanding of categorization discussed by such authors as Lakoff (fn. 10), 9 and passim; and Taylor (fn. 10), chap. 2.

[18] In referring to the root definition, we do not imply that it is the "correct" definition of the relevant concept (in this case, of democracy). It is simply the definition that, for a particular author, is the point of departure in forming the subtype. We will occasionally use the expression "root concept" to refer to the concept (again, in the present context, democracy) that is the point of departure for the various conceptual innovations analyzed here.

[19] Linz and Valenzuela (fn. 8); Stepan and Skach (fn. 8); and Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives, and Outcomes* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

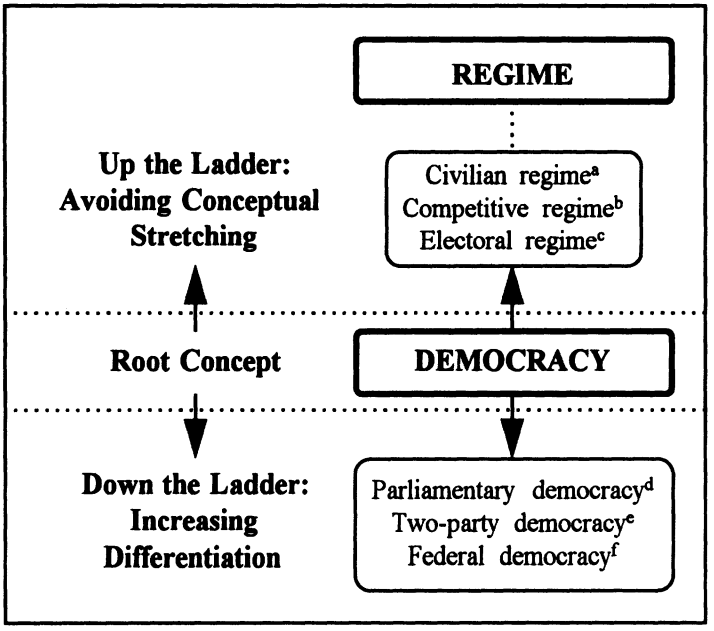

FIGURE 1
THE LADDER OF GENERALITY:
INCREASING DIFFERENTIATION VERSUS AVOIDING
CONCEPTUAL STRETCHING

[a]John A. Booth, "Framework for Analysis," in John A. Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson, eds., *Elections and Democracy in Central America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 26.

[b]Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 354.

[c]James Petras and Fernando Ignacio Leiva, *Democracy and Poverty in Chile: The Limits to Electoral Politics* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 89.

[d]Juan J. Linz. "Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does It Make a Difference?" in Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 3.

[e]Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The Political Regimes Project," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 25 (Spring 1990), 113.

[f]Raymond Duncan Gastil, "The Comparative Survey of Freedom: Experiences and Suggestions," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 25 (Spring 1990), 35.

AVOIDING CONCEPTUAL STRETCHING

Sartori's proposal for avoiding conceptual stretching is to move *up* the ladder of generality to concepts that have fewer defining attributes and correspondingly fit a broader range of cases.[20] In the present context,

[20] Sartori (fn. 1), 1041.

this involves concepts located *above* democracy on the ladder of generality. Scholars commonly view democracy as a specific type in relation to the overarching concept of regime. Hence, if they have misgivings as to whether a particular case is really a *democratic* regime, they can move up the ladder and simply call it a regime.

However, because shifting to a concept as general as regime entails a great loss of conceptual differentiation, scholars have typically moved to an intermediate level (Figure 1)—adding adjectives to the term regime and thereby generating classical subtypes to differentiate specific *types* of regime. The resulting subtypes remain more general than the concept of democracy, in that they encompass not only democracies but also some *non*-democracies. Examples include "civilian regime," "competitive regime," and "electoral regime." Although scholars thus achieve some conceptual differentiation in relation to regime, they do not specifically commit themselves to the idea that the case under discussion is a democracy. A similar pattern is followed when scholars use a synonym for regime, as in "civilian rule" and "competitive polity."[21]

Although climbing the ladder of generality helps to avoid conceptual stretching, it has an important drawback. Because these subtypes remain *more general* than the concept of democracy, this approach leads to a loss of conceptual differentiation. Thus, taken together, Sartori's two strategies can advance one or the other of these goals, but not both at once. As a consequence, many scholars have turned to other strategies.

III. Diminished Subtypes

An alternative strategy of conceptual innovation, that of creating "diminished" subtypes,[22] can contribute both to achieving differentiation and to avoiding conceptual stretching. It is a strategy widely used in the literature on recent democratization. Two points are crucial for understanding diminished subtypes. First, in contrast to the classical subtypes discussed above, diminished subtypes are *not* full instances of the root definition of "democracy" employed by the author who presents the subtype. For example, "limited-suffrage democracy" and "tutelary democracy" are understood as less than complete instances of democ-

[21] See, respectively, Richard Wilson, "Continued Counterinsurgency: Civilian Rule in Guatemala," in Barry Gills, Joel Rocamora, and Richard Wilson, eds., *Low Intensity Democracy: Political Power in the New World Order* (London: Pluto Press, 1993); and Terry Lynn Karl, "Democracy by Design: The Christian Democratic Party in El Salvador," in Giuseppe Di Palma and Laurence Whitehead, eds., *The Central American Impasse* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

[22] The idea of diminished subtypes builds on the discussion of radial concepts in Collier and Mahon (fn. 1), 850–52. See also Lakoff (fn. 10), chap. 6.

racy because they lack one or more of its defining attributes.[23] Consequently, in using these subtypes the analyst makes a more modest claim about the extent of democratization and is therefore less vulnerable to conceptual stretching.

The second point concerns differentiation. Because diminished subtypes represent an incomplete form of democracy, they might be seen as having *fewer* defining attributes, with the consequence that they would be *higher* on the ladder of generality and would therefore provide less, rather than more, differentiation. However, the distinctive feature of diminished subtypes is that they generally identify specific attributes of democracy that are *missing*, thereby establishing the diminished character of the subtype, at the same time that they identify other attributes of democracy that are *present*. Because they specify missing attributes, they also increase differentiation, and the diminished subtype in fact refers to a *different* set of cases than does the root definition of democracy.

The inclusion and exclusion of cases that occurs with a diminished subtype, as opposed to moving up or down the ladder of generality, can be illustrated with the examples of contemporary Britain, the United States, and Guatemala (Figure 2). Britain and the United States, but probably *not* Guatemala (at least up through the mid-1990s), would be seen as democratic in terms of the procedural minimum definition. If we climb the ladder of generality, we find that the broader concept of "electoral regime"[24] encompasses all three cases. Lower down on the ladder the classical subtype "parliamentary democracy" would include one of the two democracies, that is, Britain. By contrast, the diminished subtype "illiberal democracy" would include only Guatemala, the case that specifically did *not* fit the root definition of democracy.[25]

Figure 3 presents some examples of the many diminished subtypes that have been generated in relation to the procedural minimum and expanded procedural minimum definitions of democracy noted above. In many instances, scholars created diminished subtypes in which more than one component attribute of democracy is missing, but for the pur-

[23] Because they are less than complete instances, it might be objected that they are not really "subtypes" of democracy at all. Drawing on a term from cognitive linguistics, one can refer to them as conceptual "blends" that are derived in part from the concept of democracy. However, to avoid referring repeatedly to "subtypes and blends," it seems simpler in the discussion below to call them subtypes. See Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, "Conceptual Projection and Middle Spaces," Report no. 9401, Department of Cognitive Science (San Diego: University of California, San Diego, 1994).

[24] This subtype is understood to have the meaning explained above in the discussion of Figure 1.

[25] Regarding illiberal democracy, see Figure 3. Two further points about diminished subtypes should be underscored. First, if scholars fail to identify the root definition of democracy in relation to which they form subtypes, it is difficult to determine whether a given subtype is classical or diminished.

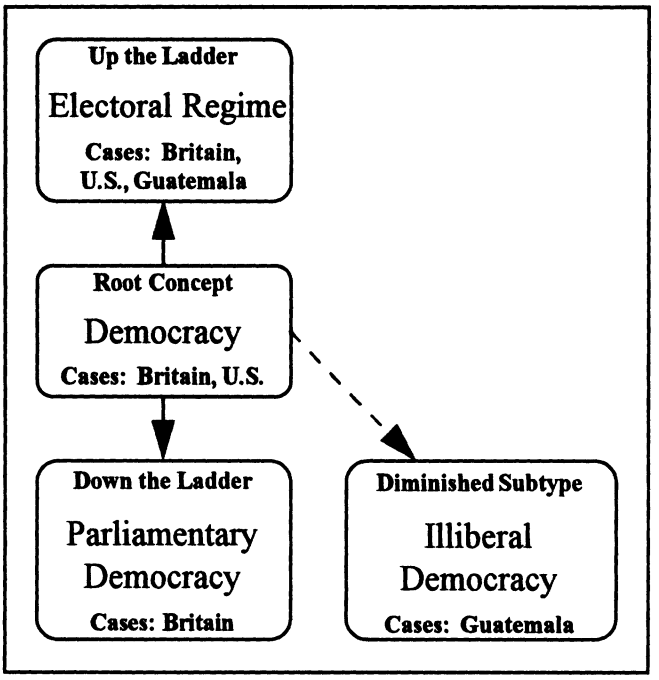

FIGURE 2
INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION OF CASES:
LADDER OF GENERALITY VERSUS DIMINISHED SUBTYPES

pose of illustration we focus on examples in which the author has been reasonably careful in isolating a single missing attribute. The subtypes in the first group (1a) refer to cases where the missing attribute is full suffrage. Here we find terms such as "male" or "oligarchical" democracy, which are used in pointing to the contrast between contemporary cases and historical cases prior to the advent of universal suffrage. Where the attribute of full contestation is missing (1b), as when important parties

Second, the fact that a subtype refers to what might be understood as a "problematic" feature of democracy does not necessarily mean that it is a diminished subtype. For example, O'Donnell's concept of "delegative democracy," which refers to cases with weak horizontal accountability among the branches of government, in fact meets his minimum definition of democracy, given that he does not include horizontal accountability in the definition. See O'Donnell (fn. 8), 56. Hence, in his usage, delegative democracy is a classical subtype. For a discussion of subtypes that refer to "problematic" democracies, see a longer version of the present analysis in David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy 'with Adjectives': Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," Working Paper no. 230 (Notre Dame, Ind.: The Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame, 1996), 20–26. The above characterization of delegative democracy as a classical subtype should be understood as correcting the assessment of this subtype presented in Collier (fn. 10), 147–48.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">1. Diminished from Procedural Minimum Definition</th></tr>
<tr><td>(1a)
Missing Attribute:
Full Suffrage
Limited democracy[a]
Male democracy[b]
Oligarchical democracy[c]</td><td>(1b)
Missing Attribute:
Full Contestation
Controlled democracy[d]
De facto one-party democracy[e]
Restrictive democracy[f]</td><td>(1c)
Missing Attribute:
Civil Liberties
Electoral democracy[g]
Hard democracy[h]
Illiberal democracy[i]</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">2. Diminished from Expanded Procedural Minimum Definition</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Missing Attribute: Elected Government
Has Effective Power to Govern
Guarded democracy[j]
Protected democracy[k]
Tutelary democracy[l]</td></tr>
</table>

FIGURE 3
PARTIAL DEMOCRACIES: EXAMPLES OF DIMINISHED SUBTYPES

[a]Ronald P. Archer, "Party Strength and Weakness in Colombia's Besieged Democracy," in Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, eds., *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 166.

[b]Georg Sorensen, *Democracy and Democratization: Process and Prospects in a Changing World* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993), 20.

[c] Jonathan Hartlyn and Arturo Valenzuela, "Democracy in Latin America since 1930," in Leslie Bethell, ed., *The Cambridge History of Latin America,* vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 99.

[d]Bruce Michael Bagley, "Colombia: National Front and Economic Development," in Robert Wesson, ed., *Politics, Policies, and Economic Development in Latin America* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1984), 125.

[e]Adrian Leftwich, "Governance, Democracy, and Development in the Third World," *Third World Quarterly* 14 (1993), 613.

[f]Carlos H. Waisman, "Argentina: Autarkic Industrialization and Illegitaimacy," in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Democracy in Developing Countries: Latin America* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1989), 69.

[g]Axel Hadenius, "The Duration of Democracy: Institutional vs. Socio-economic Factors," in David Beetham, ed. *Defining and Measuring Democracy* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 69.

[h]Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 9. This is our translation of their *democradura.* In English they refer to this as "limited democracy," the same term used in 1a above, but they make it clear that their meaning corresponds to 1c.

[i]Donald Emmerson, "Region and Recalcitrance: Questioning Democracy in Southeast Asia" (Paper presented at the World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Berlin, 1994), 14.

[j]Edelberto Torres Rivas, "La gobernabilidad centroamericana en los noventa," *America Latina, Hoy* 2 (June 1994), 27. This is our translation of his *democracia vigilada.*

[k]Brian Loveman, " 'Protected Democracies' and Military Guardianship: Political Transitions in Latin America, 1978–1993," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 36 (Summer 1994), 108–11.

[l]Adam Przeworski, "Democracy as a Contingent Outcome of Conflicts," in Jon Elster and Rune Slagstad, eds., *Constitutionalism and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 60–61.

are banned from electoral competition, we find terms such as "controlled" and "restrictive" democracy. Where civil liberties are incomplete (1c), scholars have used terms such as "electoral" and "illiberal" democracy.

The subtypes in the final group (2), introduced by the scholars who created the expanded procedural minimum definition, provide a useful reminder that the meaning of the subtypes depends on the root definition of democracy in relation to which they are formed. From the point of departure of that definition, these scholars introduced diminished subtypes in which the missing attribute is the effective power of the elected government to govern. These subtypes therefore do not meet the expanded procedural minimum standard for democracy, although they do meet the procedural minimum standard. Examples that refer to cases where the military is seen as having an inordinate degree of political power include "protected" and "tutelary" democracy.

Diminished subtypes, then, are a useful means to avoid conceptual stretching in cases that are less than fully democratic. They also provide differentiation by creating new analytic categories. Various scholars have pointed to the need to move beyond a dichotomous conceptualization of authoritarianism and democracy and recognize the "hybrid" or "mixed" character of many postauthoritarian regimes.[26] Figure 3 suggests that this recognition has indeed occurred, and on a rather large scale.

For countries that are less than fully democratic, however, the question arises as to whether it would be better to avoid identifying them as subtypes of democracy, for example, in cases of gross violations of civil liberties and/or severe restrictions on electoral competition. An example of such questioning is Bruce Bagley's rejection of the numerous diminished subtypes of democracy that have been applied to the National Front period in Colombia (1958–74); these include "restricted," "controlled," "limited," "oligarchical," "elitist," and "elitist-pluralist" democracy. Bagley instead characterizes Colombia as a subtype of au-

[26] James M. Malloy, "The Politics of Transition in Latin America," in James M. Malloy and Mitchell A. Seligson, eds., *Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transition in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 256–57; Catherine M. Conaghan and Rosario Espinal, "Unlikely Transitions to Uncertain Regimes? Democracy without Compromise in the Dominican Republic and Ecuador," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 22 (October 1990), 555; Jonathan Hartlyn, "Crisis-Ridden Elections (Again) in the Dominican Republic: Neopatrimonialism, Presidentialism, and Weak Electoral Oversight," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 36 (Winter 1994), 93–96; Terry Lynn Karl, "The Hybrid Regimes of Central America," *Journal of Democracy* 6 (Summer 1995); and Francisco Weffort, *Qual democracia?* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992), 89–90.

thoritarianism: as an "inclusionary authoritarian regime."[27] Other scholars have addressed this issue by climbing the ladder of generality to labels such as "civilian," "competitive," or "electoral" regime, which are found in the upper part of Figure 1. A third option is to use dismissive subtypes like those noted above, such as "facade democracy," in which the adjective essentially cancels the democratic character of the subtype. Scholars should be self-conscious about the analytic and normative implications of choosing to form subtypes in relation to democracy, as opposed to some other concept.

IV. Precising the Definition of Democracy

Another strategy of conceptual innovation focuses on the definition of democracy itself and is concerned with "precising" the definition by adding defining attributes.[28] As the concept is extended to new settings, researchers may confront a particular case that is classified as a democracy on the basis of a commonly accepted definition yet is not seen as fully democratic in light of a larger shared understanding of the concept. This mismatch between the case and the formal definition may lead analysts to make explicit one or more criteria that are implicitly understood to be part of the overall meaning, but that are not included in the definition. The result is a new definition intended to change the way a particular case is classified. Although this procedure of precising the definition could be seen as raising the standard for democracy, it can also be understood as adapting the definition to a new context. This innovation increases conceptual differentiation, by adding a further criterion for establishing the cutoff between democracy and nondemocracy. The strategy may thereby also avoid conceptual stretching because it does not apply the label "democracy" to cases that, in light of this new criterion, the analyst sees as incompletely democratic. Although the use of this strategy may arise from a concern with adapting the concept of democracy to fit a particular context, the modified definition should not be understood as being relevant only to that context. Indeed, the modified definition can also provide new insight into other cases for which the significance of the new defining attributes had not previously been fully appreciated.

[27] Bagley, "Colombia: National Front and Economic Development," in Robert Wesson, ed., *Politics, Policies, and Economic Development in Latin America* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1984), 125–27.

[28] See Giovanni Sartori, "Guidelines for Concept Analysis," in Sartori, ed., *Social Science Concepts: A Systematic Analysis* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1984), 81; and Irving M. Copi and Carl Cohen, *Introduction to Logic*, 9th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 173–75. In *Social Science Concepts* (p. 42), Sartori also uses this as a verb, as in "to precise" a definition.

One example of precising the definition is the emergence of the standard of an expanded procedural minimum, noted above. In several Central American countries, as well as in South American cases such as Chile and Paraguay, one legacy of authoritarian rule has been the persistence of "reserved domains" of military power over which elected governments have little or no authority.[29] Hence, despite free or relatively free elections, civilian governments in these countries are seen by some analysts as lacking effective power to govern. In light of these authoritarian legacies, and often in response to claims that because these countries have held free elections they are "democratic," some scholars have modified the procedural minimum definition of democracy by specifying as an explicit criterion that the elected government must to a reasonable degree have effective power to rule. With this revised definition, countries such as Chile, El Salvador, and Paraguay have been excluded by some scholars from the set of cases classified as democracies, even though they held relatively free elections.[30] These scholars have thus adapted the definition to explicitly include an attribute that is often taken for granted in studies of advanced industrial democracies but that is absent in these Latin American cases.

This revised definition has received substantial acceptance, although there certainly has not been full agreement on the treatment of specific cases. For example, in analyzing Chile in the post-1990 period, Rhoda Rabkin takes exception to the usage adopted by scholars who introduced the expanded procedural minimum definition. She argues that the problem of civilian control of the military does not represent a sufficient challenge to the democratically elected government to qualify Chile as a "borderline" democracy.[31]

Two other initiatives to precise the definition have not received similar acceptance, but they usefully serve to illustrate the issues that arise with this strategy. The first is found in discussions of what might be called a Tocquevillean definition of democracy that includes a focus on selected aspects of social relations. In analyzing postauthoritarian Brazil, scholars such as Francisco Weffort and Guillermo O'Donnell

[29] J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Democratic Consolidation in Post-Transitional Settings: Notion, Process, and Facilitating Conditions," in Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela, eds., *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 70.

[30] Karl (fn. 13), 2; Valenzuela (fn. 29); and Brian Loveman, "'Protected Democracies' and Military Guardianship: Political Transitions in Latin America, 1979–1993," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 36 (Summer 1994). See also Humberto Rubin, "One Step Away from Democracy" *Journal of Democracy* 1 (Fall 1990).

[31] Rhoda Rabkin, "The Aylwin Government and 'Tutelary' Democracy: A Concept in Search of a Case?" *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 34 (Winter 1992–93), 165.

have been struck by the degree to which rights of citizenship are undermined by the pervasive semifeudal and authoritarian social relations that persist in some regions of the country. In light of this concern, they have precised the definition of democracy so as to exclude Brazil. Thus, Weffort adds the definitional requirement of "some level of social equality" for a country to be considered a democracy, and O'Donnell introduces a similar stipulation.[32] In adopting this usage, these authors view themselves as remaining within the procedural framework. Yet introducing issues of social relations nonetheless represents an important departure from earlier procedural definitions. We will see in the next section that O'Donnell has subsequently arrived at an alternative means of incorporating this set of concerns into his conceptualization of democracy.

Another effort to precise the definition has arisen from a concern that in many new democracies in Latin America and in former communist countries, elected presidents at times make extensive use of decree power, circumvent democratic institutions such as the legislature and political parties, and govern in a plebiscitarian manner that is seen as having strong authoritarian undercurrents. In the Latin American context prominent examples include Carlos Menem in Argentina, Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil, and, in the most extreme case, Alberto Fujimori in Peru. The concern with these authoritarian tendencies has led some authors to include checks on executive power in their procedural criteria for democracy and thus to exclude cases of unconstrained presidentialism.[33] However, this innovation has likewise not been widely adopted.

Precising the definition can thus usefully serve both to introduce finer differentiation and to avoid conceptual stretching, and the associated debates have raised essential issues about the meaning that scholars wish to attach to the term "democracy." Yet caution is in order. Among the alternative strategies of conceptual innovation examined in this article, precising in a sense introduces the most drastic change: it modifies the definition of democracy itself. If an innovation based on

[32] Francisco Weffort, "New Democracies, Which Democracies?" Working Paper no. 198, Latin American Program (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1992), 18; Weffort (fn. 26), 100–101; Guillermo O'Donnell, "Challenges to Democratization in Brazil," *World Policy Journal* 5 (1988), 297–98; and idem, "Transitions, Continuities, and Paradoxes," in Mainwaring, O'Donnell, and Valenzuela (fn. 29), 48–49.

[33] Authors who have employed horizontal accountability in their definitions include Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is . . . and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2 (Summer 1991), 76, 87; and Alan R. Ball, *Modern Politics and Government*, 5th ed. (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1994), 45–46. O'Donnell and Schmitter (fn. 13), 8, actually include it in their formal definition, but it appears to play no role in their subsequent analysis.

precising is widely accepted, it has the important effect of changing the definitional point of departure with reference to which all of the other strategies are pursued, in effect unsettling the "semantic field" in which these scholars are working.[34] By contrast, the introduction of a new subtype does not affect the semantic field in the same way. In a literature in which conceptual confusion is a recurring problem, the analytic gains from precising the definition must be weighted against the cost of unsettling the semantic field.

Hence, it is important that scholars avoid "definitional gerrymandering,"[35] in the sense of introducing a new definition every time they encounter a somewhat anomalous case. However, the contrast between the first example (adding the criterion of effective power to govern) and the third example (adding horizontal accountability) shows that scholars may in fact impose constructive limits on precising. In the first example, the inability of elected governments to exercise effective power was seen as invalidating their democratic character. By contrast, in the third example, involving heavy-handed assertions of power by the president, a crucial point is that these presidents *are* elected leaders. Hence, it might be argued that it is appropriate to treat these regimes as meeting a minimal standard for democracy and to avoid precising—as long as (1) they maintain presidential elections and a general respect for civil liberties and the legislature and (2) opposition parties are not banned or dissolved (as occurred in Peru in 1992).

Finally, the initiative of precising can raise the issue of bringing back into the definition of democracy attributes that scholars previously had explicitly decided to exclude. An example is the concern with social relationships in the Tocquevillean approach. These authors could be seen as remaining within a procedural framework, in the sense that they argue that political participation becomes less meaningful in the context of extreme social inequality. However, this conceptual innovation reintroduces features of social relations in a way that nonetheless represents a major shift from earlier recommendations about which attributes should be included in definitions of democracy.

V. Shifting the Overarching Concept

Yet another strategy of conceptual innovation is to shift the overarching concept, in relation to which democracy is seen as a specific instance—that is, as a classical subtype. Thus, although scholars most commonly

[34] On the problem of unsettling the semantic field, see Sartori (fn. 28), 51–54.

[35] Jennifer Whiting, personal communication, suggested this term.

view democracy as a subtype of the overarching concept "regime" (and the procedural criteria for democracy discussed above would routinely be understood as applying to the regime), some recent literature has understood democracy as a subtype in relation to other overarching concepts, as in "democratic government" and "democratic state." Hence, when a given country is labeled "democratic," the meaning can vary according to the overarching concept to which the term is attached.

A shift in the overarching concept can yield an alternative standard for declaring a particular case to be a democracy, yet without either modifying or stretching the concept of "democratic regime." As can be seen in Figure 4, scholars have used this strategy to create a standard that can be either less or more demanding. For example, a scholar who finds Brazilian democracy in the immediate post-1985 period to be so poorly institutionalized that it appears inappropriate to use the overarching label "regime" may refer to a "democratic situation." This distinction follows the example of Juan Linz's analysis of Brazil during the earlier post-1964 authoritarian period: he introduced the concept of an "authoritarian situation" to take account of the weak institutionalization of national political structures.[36] Other analysts concerned with the immediate post-1985 period in Brazil have referred to "democratic government" in order to suggest that although a particular government (that is, the head of state and the immediate political leadership that surrounds the head of state) has been elected democratically, the ongoing functioning of democratic procedures is not necessarily assured. By shifting the overarching concept from regime to government in this way, scholars lower the standard for applying the label "democratic."

Alternatively, by shifting the overarching concept from "regime" to "state," O'Donnell establishes a more demanding standard for labeling particular countries a democracy. Writing after Brazil's presidential election of 1989, which led scholars to reinterpret Brazil as having a democratic *regime*, O'Donnell raises questions about the democratic character of the *state* in Brazil, as well as in some other South American countries. He suggests that, in the context of the "neofeudalized" and at times "sultanistic" political relationships found in many parts of the country, the national state does not protect basic rights of citizenship,

[36] See Juan J. Linz, "The Future of an Authoritarian Situation or the Institutionalization of an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Brazil," in Alfred Stepan, ed., *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies, Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973). Malloy uses "democratic moment" to convey a similar meaning. See Malloy (fn. 26), 236.

Author	Lowering the Standard		Point of Departure	Raising the Standard
	Democratic Situation	Democratic Government	Democratic Regime	Democratic State
Duncan Baretta and Markoff[a]	Yes		No	
Hagopian and Mainwaring[b]		Yes	No	
O'Donnell (1988)[c]		Yes	No	
O'Donnell (1993)[d]			Yes	No

FIGURE 4
SHIFTING THE OVERARCHING CONCEPT:
CHARACTERIZING POST-1985 BRAZIL

[a]Silvio Duncan Baretta and John Markoff, "Brazil's *Abertura:* Transition to What?" in James M. Malloy and Mitchell A. Seligson, eds., *Authoritarians and Democrats: Regime Transition in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 62.

[b]Frances Hagopian and Scott Mainwaring, "Democracy in Brazil: Problems and Prospects," *World Policy Journal* 4 (Summer 1987), 485.

[c]Guillermo O'Donnell, "Challenges to Democratization in Brazil," *World Policy Journal* 5 (Spring 1988), 281.

[d]Guillermo O'Donnell, "On the State, Democratization, and Some Conceptual Problems," *World Development* 21 (August 1993), 1360.

and specifically the rights of citizens to fair and equal protection in their social and economic relationships. This failure may not directly influence the functioning of the regime, in the sense of directly affecting the elections and associated civil liberties that are core features of the procedural understanding of a democratic regime. However, O'Donnell argues, this failure of the legal and bureaucratic institutions of the public sector to protect and promote a broader set of democratic rights of citizens is a crucial feature of the Brazilian state. Hence, although he recognizes that countries like Brazil have a democratic "regime," he *excludes* them from the set of countries he considers to have democratic "states." This shift in the overarching concept constitutes another way of making a more differentiated assessment of what is deemed to be an incomplete case of democracy, specifically by estab-

lishing a higher and a lower standard for democracy and declaring that these countries meet only the lower standard.[37]

From the standpoint of maintaining a procedural definition of democracy, this innovation can be seen as a better solution to the problem that O'Donnell and others initially tried to address by creating the Tocquevillean definition. Thus, in conjunction with shifting the overarching concept, democratic "regime" continues to have a procedural definition, and this concern with the broader functioning of citizenship in the context of authoritarian patterns of social relations is addressed via the concept of the state.

To summarize, the strategy of shifting among alternative overarching concepts can serve to introduce finer differentiation by creating an additional analytic category. When the strategy is used to lower the standard for declaring a case to be a democracy, it can also help avoid stretching the concept of a democratic regime. When the strategy is used to raise the standard it is not relevant to the problem of conceptual stretching, because it is not concerned with avoiding what might be seen as the mistake of calling a given case a democratic regime. Rather, it provides *additional* information about cases that are accepted as having democratic regimes.

VI. Concluding Observations

We have examined strategies of conceptual innovation used by analysts of recent democratization as they seek to meet a twofold challenge: increasing analytic differentiation in order to adequately characterize the diverse regimes that have emerged in recent years and maintaining conceptual validity by avoiding conceptual stretching. Our goal has been both to make more comprehensible the complex structure of these strategies and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies. Even when these scholars proceed intuitively, rather than self-consciously, they tend to operate within this structure, which, as noted above, is by no means unique to research on recent democratization.[38] Yet, in the interest of conceptual and analytic clarity, it is far more desirable for them to proceed self-consciously, with a full awareness of the trade-offs among the different strategies.

Figure 5 provides an overview of this analytic structure. Conceptual innovation has occurred at the three levels of the root concept of democ-

[37] Guillermo O'Donnell, "On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries," *World Development* 21, no. 8 (1993), 1359 and passim.

[38] See again references in note 10.

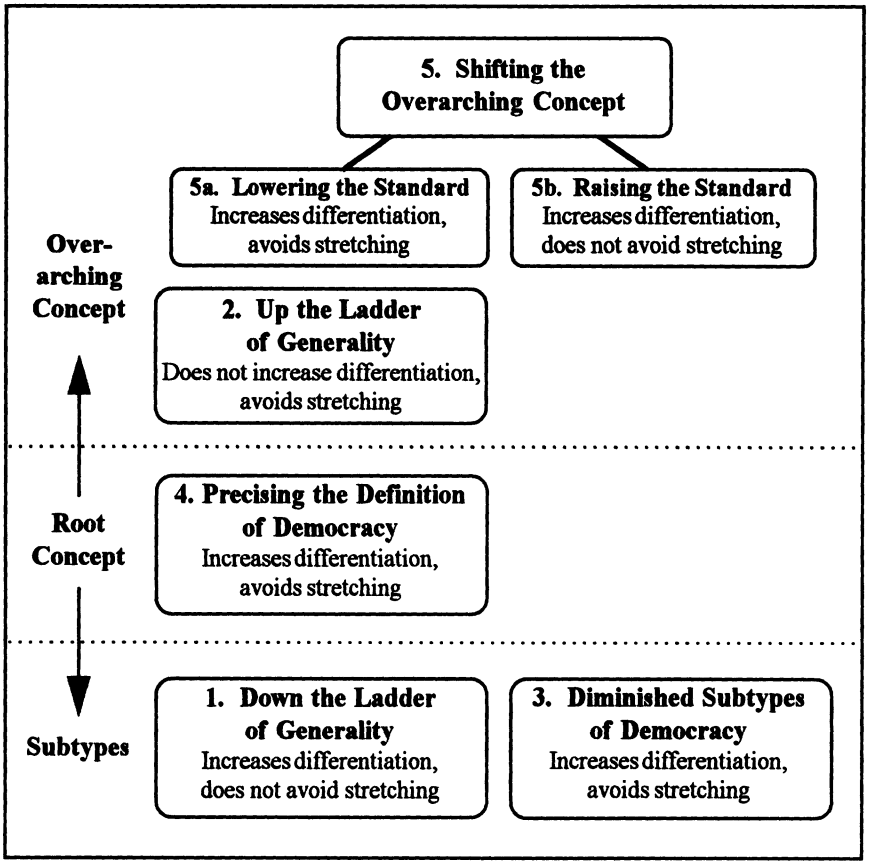

FIGURE 5
EVALUATING THE CONCEPTUAL INNOVATIONS:
CONTRIBUTION TO INCREASING DIFFERENTIATION AND AVOIDING CONCEPTUAL STRETCHING

racy itself, the subtypes, and the overarching concept. We observed that Sartori's strategies of (1) moving down the ladder of generality to classical subtypes of democracy and (2) moving up the ladder to classical subtypes of regime can usefully serve either to increase differentiation or to avoid conceptual stretching, but they cannot do both simultaneously. These two goals can be achieved simultaneously, however, by (3) creating diminished subtypes, (4) precising the definition of democracy by adding defining attributes, and (5a) shifting the overarching concept as a means of lowering the standard. By contrast (5b), shifting the overarching concept to raise the standard for democracy does not serve to

avoid conceptual stretching vis-à-vis the concept of a democratic regime, but it does introduce new differentiation.

We have also underscored issues that are distinctive to particular strategies. Diminished subtypes are useful for characterizing hybrid regimes, but they raise the issue of whether these regimes should in fact be treated as subtypes of democracy, rather than subtypes of authoritarianism or some other concept. The strategy of precising the definition is subject to the perennial problem of scholarly disputes over definitions of democracy, as well as to the problem of imposing limits on definitional gerrymandering. Although the strategy of shifting the overarching concept with the goal of raising the standard is not relevant to the problem of conceptual stretching, it does allow scholars to introduce new analytic issues without abandoning a procedural definition of democracy and of regime.

Finally, these strategies share two common problems. First, given the complex structure of these strategies, the potential for confusion and miscommunication is considerable. It is imperative that scholars clearly define and explicate the conception of democracy they are using so as to situate themselves unambiguously in relation to this structure.

Second, this literature faces a major dilemma in the proliferation of concepts and terms, many of which mean approximately the same thing. The consequence, once again, can be growing scholarly confusion. Although new terms are created in part because scholars are pursuing these goals of differentiation and avoiding conceptual stretching, they may also be introduced with the goal of developing compelling labels that vividly draw attention to novel forms of democracy.[39] In the literature on national political regimes over the past three decades, important analytic innovations have periodically been introduced in conjunction with the creation and/or systematization of concepts and concept labels that vividly capture important constellations of phenomena: for example, "authoritarianism," "polyarchy," "bureaucratic authoritarianism," "corporatism," and "consociational democracy."[40] Correspondingly, the invention of additional concepts that play this same role is an impor-

[39] For a reminder of how important vivid labels can be, one need only look at the impressive evolution of game theory, with its codification of different patterns of political interaction designated by such labels as "prisoners' dilemma," "chicken," "stag hunt," "slippery slope," and "battle of the sexes."

[40] Juan J. Linz, "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain," in Erik Allardt and Yrjö Littunen, eds., *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems: Contributions to Comparative Political Sociology*, Transactions of the Westermarck Society, vol. 10 (Helsinki: Academic Bookstore, 1964); Dahl (fn. 3); Guillermo O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics*, Institute of International Studies, Politics of Modernization Series no. 9 (Berkeley: University of California, 1973); Philippe C. Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?" *Review of Politics* 36 (January 1974); and Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

tant goal in the ongoing study of regimes. However, if research on democratization degenerates into a competition to see who can come up with the next famous concept, the comparative study of regimes will be in serious trouble.

Hence, we propose another major objective of concept usage, one that introduces a further trade-off vis-à-vis the two goals of achieving differentiation and avoiding conceptual stretching. In addition to pursuing these goals, scholars should aim for parsimony and avoid excessive proliferation of new terms and concepts. Otherwise, the advantages that derive from the conceptual refinements discussed in this article will be overridden by the resulting conceptual confusion.